

LOST FOR WORDS

The Need for Languages in
UK Diplomacy and Security



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Lost for Words

The Need for Languages in UK Diplomacy and Security

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Terms of reference

- i. To assess how important languages are in enabling the Government to meet the UK's public policy objectives in the areas of international relations and security.
- ii. To establish how languages are used by the Government in meeting the UK's public policy objectives in the areas of international relations and security.
- iii. To examine what arrangements are currently in place to meet the language needs of the relevant organisations, looking at both:
 - the structures in place to meet the immediate and short term requirements of the organisations; and
 - the evidence of a strategic approach to ensuring a sufficient capacity for long term strategically important languages.
- iv. To assess the role of HEIs in maintaining the UK's capacity for strategically important languages.

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Foreword

Learning and speaking languages has long been a crucial aspect of the British diplomatic tradition: languages are a critical tool through which UK diplomats and external-facing staff in other government departments can deepen their knowledge and build the trust that is necessary to promote and protect British values and interests internationally. As the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, the Rt Hon William Hague MP, recently stated: *“Diplomacy is the art of understanding different cultures, and using this understanding to predict and influence behaviour. Speaking the local language is the essential first step in this process.”*

In an increasingly diverse and interconnected world, language skills are gaining rather than losing their relevance. The Government needs to develop and demonstrate its understanding of foreign countries, their histories, ambitions, cultures, and political systems in order to drive UK diplomatic excellence and maintain national security.

Twenty-seven years ago, the Parker Report, *Speaking for the Future*, highlighted the need for Britain to maintain high quality centres of language teaching so that employees of British Government services, NGOs, media outlets and businesses would be equipped with sufficient cultural and linguistic expertise to interact successfully with foreign partners. This British Academy report, *Lost for Words*, is a first step towards understanding the current level of foreign language capacity among the departments and agencies that constitute the front line of UK diplomacy and security.

The report showcases some encouraging developments – both within government and language education – to ensure we have the linguistic capacity to maintain an influential voice on a global stage. The report also demonstrates, however, persistent deficits in foreign language skills that threaten our future capacity for influence. And it reveals the

challenges that prevent the government and higher education institutions from bridging the language supply system to the diplomatic and security front line. The report concludes that there is much more to be done. If steps are not taken to reverse the current declining trend in language skills, Britain may indeed be in danger of becoming 'lost for words'.

The production of this report required extensive research and review, including input from key users and suppliers of languages in public policy. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has been involved in its production for their hard work – particularly the authors, Anne Breivik and Selina Chen. We are very grateful to the several higher education institutions, government representatives and experts for providing us with the evidence for this inquiry. Finally, I would like to thank my fellow members of the Steering Group for their commitment to the project: Sir Ivor Roberts; Professor Clive Holes FBA; Professor Dame Helen Wallace FBA; Professor Graham Furniss FBA and Rear Admiral Simon Lister.

We hope that this report will serve as a useful platform for a thorough review in the near future of the options available to government and the education sector to overcome the challenges we have highlighted and to take up the broad directions for policy that we have offered.



Dr Robin Niblett
Director, Chatham House
Chair, Lost for Words Inquiry



Executive summary

1. The ability to speak a foreign language is a key element in the formation of relationships, mutual cultural understanding, trust and networks that facilitate interaction and cooperation across borders and societies. The radically different landscape of international engagement and security that confronts Britain today means that language skills can no longer be regarded simply as an optional adjunct to those other skills needed by government employees working in outward-facing roles. Economic, technological, geopolitical and societal shifts over the last few decades mean that language skills for diplomacy and national security are now needed across a growing number of government departments. This in turn creates a premium for skills in a range of languages that are considered harder to acquire for speakers whose first language is English. How well-equipped a society and its government are in terms of languages skills should be regarded as a key indicator of how prepared they are to operate effectively within the fast-changing landscape of global engagement.
2. Traditionally, foreign language skills within government have been viewed as essential for diplomacy, national security and defence. However, the decline in language capacity over the last few years within certain areas of government has raised concern about our future capabilities. If steps are not taken to reverse the current decline in language skills, Britain may be in danger of becoming ‘lost for words’.
3. The British Academy has longstanding concerns about the growing deficit in language skills within the United Kingdom. To our knowledge, there has never been a systematic review that examines how language capacity within the UK affects the Government’s ability to maintain diplomatic relations and deliver national security and defence. Therefore, this inquiry

focuses on the current standing of foreign language skills within the UK Government. Specifically, it seeks to gain a better understanding of:

- the Government's current capacity for foreign languages;
- how this capacity serves the UK's public policy objectives in international relations and security; and
- how the Government's current and future capacity can be supported by wider language learning.

4. This report draws on a formal consultation process, extensive desk research and informal interviews with a range of stakeholders. In providing this preliminary overview, the report paves the way for further research and action, contributing to the case for a sustainable and strategically informed approach to the development and maintenance of language capacity in the UK.

Key findings

5. Language needs and the value of language skills

- Every government department and agency consulted for this inquiry acknowledged that language skills have important benefits in enabling them to meet their objectives. However, government departments do not currently accord language skills the importance that the evidence indicates is necessary.
- Many government departments and agencies believe they can currently 'do the job' – though perhaps not as well – without language skills. While language skills frequently complement other important skills, and need not be essential in their own right, the rather lukewarm message such a response conveys is that languages are important but optional.
- There are, however, signs of growing acknowledgement of the need and importance of languages amongst the departments consulted. It is clear that the lack of language skills among British officials and armed forces is both embarrassing and risks putting the UK at a competitive disadvantage. It was also acknowledged that cultural and linguistic skills will become increasingly important in the future. The newly established FCO Language Centre and the Defence School of Languages

and Culture are potential beacons of commitment to language learning across government.

6. Early and long term investment strategies

- Language learning is resource-intensive and it is clear that many departments would ideally want these skills to be accessible on demand. The procurement of language skills differs across departments with some, such as the Secret Intelligence Agencies, providing long-term investment in language training, while others make extensive use of contractors and interpreters on an ad hoc basis.
- Some departments have taken steps to conserve and build on their investment in language training, through: maintaining databases of language skills, cross-agency skill sharing, retraining and refreshment opportunities, and investment in training and conservation of language-teaching expertise. However, more could be done, and in a more uniform way, to get better value from investment in language training without incurring excessive structural inflexibility.
- There are significant knock-on effects to the supply chain. Language scholarship is a long-term investment and should therefore not simply be regarded solely as the responsibility of the immediate employer. Rather, the problem needs to be tackled in the round.

7. Growing use of native speakers

- It is clear that, across departments, existing language resources could be better utilised. Although there is a general awareness of the dividends arising from this aspect of multiculturalism, with native speakers used by many departments, not enough is done to encourage or develop the skills of native or heritage speakers at the school level. The UK has a diverse population that provides a valuable pool of language resources, particularly for languages that are not commonly taught in schools.
- Greater efforts could be made to reach out to native speakers working elsewhere within the wider Civil Service workforce, encouraging them to feel valued for their skills and to volunteer information about their spoken languages. An engagement strategy of this kind could enable greater integra-

tion and allow government departments, particularly Home Office agencies, to reach into closed communities, potentially producing positive effects for community engagement and the prevention of terrorism.

8. Career progression and incentives

- This inquiry has found that not only are there insufficient incentives to encourage language learning, but there are also, in some cases, longstanding career disincentives to doing so. The perceived stigma attached to language learning remains an issue, despite the existence of various financial incentives to boost its professional profile.
- Language skills and expertise are currently not an explicit part of the job appraisal process for key government departments. Language skills need to be incorporated into appraisals and job descriptions, as a way of giving recognition to their worth and of ensuring that language skills are afforded greater prominence in performance review systems.

9. Cross-departmental collaboration and a strategic approach

- The approach to identifying language requirements appears to be decentralised, not very strategically informed, and somewhat opaque across the relevant parts of government. There appears to be little co-ordination across government to identify current language needs and no overall strategic approach to enable future needs to be met.
- It is encouraging, however, that despite differing language needs, pressures on budgets are leading to some forms of increased collaboration. The FCO's Language Centre, for example, provides a significant opportunity for pooling resources, which should be made systematically available to the staff of other government departments and agencies.

10. Sustaining language capacity

- The report also sets the above findings within the context of the wider infrastructure supporting language learning within schools and universities in the UK. The report concludes that the needs of government departments and agencies are not met by current university provision. Not only is there a general

lack of appreciation and awareness by the departments regarding existing expertise within higher education institutions HEIs but, within HEIs themselves, there has been a marked decline in provision of many of the languages which have strategic importance for defence and diplomacy.

- The fragility of provision for language learning within HEIs cannot be overestimated, and the new funding regime for higher education, introduced in 2012, provides a very different landscape that universities will have to navigate if language studies are to flourish. In the area of lesser-taught or minority languages, student demand is unlikely ever to reach levels that make such provision economically self-sustaining. Declining provision for the study of lesser-taught and minority languages poses a threat to the pool of UK expertise in these areas. However, universities are now exploring different ways to expand their language provision, in some cases by targeting such courses towards vocational ends and expanding joint degree offerings.

Conclusion

11. The current apathy towards language skills across government and the perception that they may in fact be detrimental to an individual's career development and advancement are particularly worrying. These concerns need to be addressed through the establishment of clear policies, strong leadership and significant incentives which recognise and support language learning across the board.
12. It is also clear that the government will not be able to sustain or increase its language capacity without addressing the issue of diminishing supply. Government needs to work closely with all parts of the education system to develop policies that provide a consistent pathway for language learners from primary to tertiary levels. HEIs also need to be engaged to ensure that, where language capacity and expertise in strategically important, lesser-taught minority languages exists, it is supported and maintained.
13. Ultimately, if no action is taken, language skills within government will continue to erode until there are neither the skills within government nor enough new linguists coming through the education system to rebuild its capacity and meet the security,

defence, and diplomacy requirements of the UK. It is clear that these needs can no longer be sustained by individual initiatives within specific sectors. A strategic and consistent policy for languages needs to be developed across government, which addresses the supply, recruitment and development of individuals with language skills.

Main recommendations

- There needs to be a cross-government strategy for language capacity that identifies the language capabilities and requirements of government, and supports the development of these skills.
- This long-term plan needs to:
 - include a regular audit of language capabilities,
 - identify resource sharing opportunities,
 - provide reports on progress.
- Government and HEIs need to work together to provide a sustainable and consistent pathway for language learners and highlight the value of language learning.
- Language skills should be seen as a highly desirable asset for all government staff and not simply as the preserve of a cadre of language specialists.
- Support for vulnerable languages needs to be strengthened, both within HEIs and also through increasing direct strategic connections and partnerships with government.
- The diverse linguistic resources of the UK's ethnic communities need to be mobilised, supported, and given public recognition through a certification of competence.

Introduction

Purpose and scope of the inquiry

Traditionally, foreign language skills within government have been viewed as essential for diplomacy, national security and defence. However, the decline in language capacity over the last few years within certain areas of government has raised concern about the UK's future capabilities. This was highlighted most recently in the case made by the Foreign Affairs Select Committee (FAC) for a renewed emphasis on language skills within the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) – which warned that without a more robust approach, the FCO risks not having enough people with the range of skills necessary for key diplomatic positions.¹ If steps are not taken therefore to reverse the current decline in language skills, Britain may be in danger of becoming 'lost for words'.

To date there has not been, to our knowledge, any systematic review of how language capacity within the United Kingdom (UK) affects the pursuit of policy objectives relating to international engagement and security. Through this report, the British Academy aims to provide the first step towards a more comprehensive review, exploring the use of, and demand for, languages within the relevant governmental and key public sector organisations that primarily focus on diplomacy and national security. This inquiry seeks to gain a better understanding of:

- the current UK Government's capacity for foreign languages;
- how well this capacity serves the UK's public policy objectives in the specific areas of international relations and security; and

¹ *Fifth Report: FCO Performance and Finances 2011–2012*, Foreign Affairs Committee, House of Commons, 19 March 2013 www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmfaaff/690/69002.htm Also see the Government's response: www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm86/8636/8636.pdf, June 2013.

- how wider language learning contributes to the Government's current and future capacity.

In providing this preliminary overview, the report will contribute to the case for a sustainable and strategically informed approach to the development and maintenance of language capacity in the UK – including by setting out ways in which UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) can provide a more effective contribution.

It is our hope that this report can pave the way for further research and action, helping to generate a sustainable and co-ordinated strategic response that has for so long been lacking in relation to language skills in the areas of diplomacy and national security.

Methodology

The research for this report has been undertaken through a process of both formal consultation and informal interviews, including a consultative forum held under the Chatham House Rule. The organisations that have been consulted include government departments and agencies, HEIs, language training providers, and interested third party experts – such as former government officials, business representatives, cultural organisations, researchers and commentators on international affairs.² We received 60 consultation responses and held interviews with representatives from 14 organisations and experts, including: the FCO, the Defence Academy, the Ministry of Defence (MOD), and the Security and Intelligence Agencies (SIA).³ The interviews and consultation responses⁴ were complemented by extensive desk research drawing on, amongst other sources, parliamentary committee reports and previous major reports on language skills – including the Parker review, the Nuffield Inquiry, the Worton Report, and the British Academy's own "*Languages: State of the Nation*" report.⁵

2 The Home Office did not formally respond to the consultation exercise.

3 The Security and Intelligence Agencies consists of GCHQ, MI5 and MI6.

4 The consultation questions and the interview briefing can be found on the Academy's website.

5 Sir Peter Parker, *Speaking for the future: a review of the requirements for diplomacy and commerce for Asian and African languages and area studies*, London: University Grants Committee, 1986, British Academy, *Languages: State of the Nation – Demand and Supply of language skills in the UK* British Academy Report, February 2013

The importance of language skills for diplomacy, national security, and defence

The advent of new technology, economic globalisation, mobility, and the emergence of new forms of governance, actors, threats, and challenges have resulted in greater complexities in the interconnectedness between people, places, and cultures. Major geo-political shifts over the last few decades mean that language skills for diplomacy and national security are now needed across a growing range of government departments; creating a premium for skills in a range of languages that are considered harder to acquire for speakers whose first language is English.

The proliferation of regional and multilateral institutions over this period, and the rising importance of non-state actors, such as corporations and civil society organisations (so-called 'track two' diplomacy), mean that the practice of diplomacy has now become a more multi-faceted and demanding endeavour. At the same time, the globalisation of many traditionally domestic issues – the environment, health, trade, and economic policy – has eroded many of the boundaries between domestic and foreign policy.⁶

Traditional notions of armed conflict have also undergone major changes. Today, ethnic and regional conflicts usually have repercussions beyond their borders. Recent experiences of military interventions have also shown just how vital local engagement is to military success, and how challenging the task of post-conflict reconstruction can be. The national security agenda now encompasses a wider remit of post-conflict peace building, as well as conflict prevention, involving the MOD, Department for International Development (DFID), as well as the FCO.

The post-9/11 era has transformed conventional notions of non-state threats to national security. As a result of the communication revolution – made possible by advances in new technology and greater international mobility – there has been a diversification of the threats posed by terrorism, cybercrime, and organised crime, with networks becoming transnational. The expanded remit and resources devoted to the SIA, the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) and Home Office (HO) reflect the growing significance of these threats, and the need for

⁶ An example of this is the growing importance the FCO attaches to objectives in the areas of energy and the promotion of trade.

new approaches and skills to be developed to counter them. Greater international collaboration and overseas operations are now essential to counter the global nature of threats posed by terrorism and organised crime.

The radically different landscape of international engagement and security that confronts Britain today means that language skills can no longer be regarded simply as an optional adjunct to those other skills needed by government employees working in outward-facing roles. There is a need and a market both for those who have specialist degrees in languages and those with language competences however and wherever acquired. How well-equipped a society and its government are in terms of languages skills should be regarded as a key indicator of how prepared they are to operate effectively within the fast-changing landscape of global engagement.⁷ The report concludes with recommendations on how language skills within government departments and agencies can be better developed, and how a more strategic approach towards investment in future language capacity involving UK HEIs might evolve.

Part one of this report sets out the inquiry's findings on how well-equipped government departments and agencies are with regard to language skills in the key policy areas of diplomacy, national security, law enforcement,⁸ and defence. Drawing on the consultations, the report examines changes in language needs within each area, current practices for identifying language needs, and approaches to the provision of and investment in language skills across relevant parts of government. The report shows that, currently, government departments do not accord language skills the importance that the evidence indicates is necessary, and display a degree of inconsistency and an ad hoc approach to the provision and maintenance of these skills.

Part two sets out the report's findings on the state of the wider infrastructure supporting language learning within schools and universities in the UK, and its impact on, and connections with, the language needs of government. A key finding of the report is that the needs of government departments and agencies are not met by current university provision.

7 Some of these issues will be further explored in a forthcoming British Academy report in 2014 on the UK's soft power assets.

8 By the end of October 2013, Member States are meant to be in compliance with the Directive 2010/64/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 October 2010 on the right to interpretation and translation in criminal proceedings, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:280:0001:0007:en:PDF>.

Not only is there a general lack of appreciation and awareness by the departments regarding existing expertise within HEIs but, within HEIs themselves, there has been a marked decline in provision of many of the languages which have strategic importance for defence and diplomacy.

The report concludes with recommendations on how language skills within government departments and agencies can be better developed, and how a more strategic approach towards investment in future language capacity involving UK HEIs might evolve.

Part one: Key findings

Current Government approaches to language capacity

Languages for diplomacy and international trade

The ability to speak a foreign language is a key element in the formation of relationships, mutual cultural understanding, trust, and networks that facilitate interaction and cooperation across borders and societies.⁹ As such, language skills have traditionally played an important role in facilitating the core objectives of diplomats in communicating and representing their governments.

With Britain's military and economic influence on the wane since decolonisation, and the re-balancing of economic and political power away from the West, the value of languages and cultural awareness for successful relationship-building and influence cannot be overstated. Despite this, the Government has not yet developed a consistent approach to ensure that its linguistic resources are adequate for responding to these major changes. Commercial diplomacy to promote trade is now a key focus of the UK's foreign policy and the recently published International Defence Engagement Strategy – a joint MOD and FCO document – highlights the contribution that the non-operational work of the defence sector makes to the promotion of the UK's influence across the world.¹⁰ Yet, despite the growing demand for language skills, there has been a worrying decline, within both wider society

9 Studies have shown the importance of cultural sensitivity, understanding nuances and local contexts to successful mediation and influence, which can make a decisive difference to outcomes. Raymond Cohen, *Negotiating Across Cultures: Communication Obstacles in International Diplomacy*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1991)

10 Ministry of Defence: International Defence Engagement Strategy, 13 Feb, 2013 www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/73171/defence_engagement_strategy.pdf

and government, in language capacity and in training provision within specific departments.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Geographical expertise and foreign language skills have long been regarded as the hallmarks of the highly esteemed British diplomatic service. Yet in recent decades, these skills were de-prioritised within the FCO, as a result of diminished resources and a reorientation towards managerialism and the development of generic skills.¹¹ Specifically, the closure of the Language Centre in 2007 marked the low point of what had been a gradual decline in language skills amongst diplomats. According to evidence submitted to the FAC in 2011, many key FCO positions were no longer filled by personnel who spoke the local language.¹² In April 2012, figures provided in response to a Parliamentary Question by Stephen Barclay MP showed that only 48 out of a total number of 1900 diplomats were in receipt of extra remuneration because they are fluent in the language of their host country; while over 90% of diplomats received no extra money, indicating that they did not have GCSE equivalent language qualifications for their host country.¹³

The decline in language skills is especially noticeable for languages that are considered 'hard to learn', such as Arabic, Mandarin, and Korean. Inadequate knowledge of Arabic has, for example, been suggested as a reason for the FCO's failure to appreciate the significance of the developments leading to the 'Arab Spring'.¹⁴ In 2010, it was reported that of the 161 British diplomats in Afghanistan, just three spoke Dari or Pashto with any degree of fluency.¹⁵ Nearer home, Britain's ability to be influential within the European Union (EU) has not been helped by a disproportionately low number of British officials in the European Commission. A recent FAC report stressed that the UK's share of the EU population is 12.5% but UK presence among European Commission

11 *Seventh Report – The Role of the FCO in UK Government* Foreign Affairs Committee, House of Commons 27th April, 2011, paras 24–31 www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cm-faff/665/66502.htm

12 *Seventh Report, The Role of the FCO in UK Government*, Foreign Affairs Committee, Chapter 4

13 Daily Hansard – Written answers. Diplomatic Services: Languages HC Deb, 6 February 2012, c49W www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201212/cmhansrd/cm120206/text/120206w0002.htm#12020633000630

14 *Seventh Report: The Role of the FCO in UK Government*, Foreign Affairs Committee, paras 15–23 Foreign Affairs Committee, Second Report British foreign policy and the "Arab Spring", July 2012 paras 24–25 www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cm-faff/80/8002.htm

15 Furlong, Ray "Knowledge of Afghanistan astonishingly thin" BBC News website, 31 July 2010 www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-10726746

staff has fallen from 4.8% in 2010 to 4.3% in June 2013. One reason that was cited in evidence, and subsequently acknowledged as the “largest barrier” by Baroness Warsi, Senior Minister of State for the FCO in Parliament, was a lack of suitable candidates able to meet the language requirements.¹⁶

There have, however, been recent significant developments that are seeking to address these deficiencies. The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, William Hague, has pledged to reverse this decline through the ‘Diplomatic Excellence’ initiative which was launched in 2011. In the FCO, building up language capability is part of its wider ‘Diplomatic Excellence’ initiative to become the best Diplomatic Service in the world. It is explicitly acknowledged that British Diplomats will continue to achieve wider access, deeper understanding and greater insight wherever they are posted when they speak and understand the local language. The aim of this initiative is to ensure that FCO diplomats have “an unrivalled knowledge among diplomats of the history, culture, geography and politics of the countries they are posted to, and to speak the local languages.”¹⁷ In addition, the ‘Diplomatic Excellence’ initiative supports the FCO’s ‘Network Shift’ strategy: the FCO is currently expanding its diplomatic network across the world through investments in new offices and additional staff in emerging powers and growing economies. The FCO has stated that by 2015 it will have opened or upgraded up to 20 posts and deployed around 300 extra staff in more than 20 countries in Asia, Latin America and Africa. 14 posts have been opened or upgraded so far. The expansion of staff will entail greater reliance on the use of locally-engaged staff, and is expected to reach 70% of all overseas staff by 2015.¹⁸

The FCO’s language capability is underpinned by a global network of speaker slots (roles where the ability to communicate effectively in the local language is considered essential). Speaker slots include all Head of Post positions in the vast majority of non-English speaking countries and a wide range of political, commercial, and consular roles in Embassies overseas and Research Analysts in London.

16 Foreign Affairs Committee: *The UK staff presence in the EU institutions*, House of Commons, 2 July 2013 www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmcaff/219/219.pdf. HL Deb 22 October, 2013 Col 882

17 Rt Hon William Hague Foreign Secretary speech on diplomatic tradecraft, 17th October 2013, www.gov.uk/government/speeches/foreign-secretary-speech-on-diplomatic-tradecraft

18 This will however, be at the expense of junior postings for British staff. Foreign Affairs Committee Fifth Report: FCO Performance and Finances 2011–12 House of Commons, Paras 40–52, www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmcaff/690/69009.htm

Before filling a speaker slot role, staff are required to undertake a period of full-time language training (either to refresh existing skills or learn a new language) in the UK and then immersion training in the relevant country. The re-opening of a Language Centre in the FCO's main building by the Foreign Secretary in September 2013, provided a renewed focus and investment in language ability as a core diplomatic skill. In the Foreign Secretary's words:

*"We need more skilled diplomats on the ground in the places that matter, who are able to get under the skin of those countries, who are immersed in their language, culture, politics and history and who have access to decision-makers and can tap into informal networks of influence."*¹⁹

The new Language Centre is a state-of-the-art facility with 40 classrooms offering full, part-time and specialist training including a multi-media centre offering access to thousands of books and online material supporting over eighty languages.

Many stakeholders consulted for the purpose of this inquiry stressed the importance of the significant goodwill and positive perceptions created when an ambassador displays fluency in the local language. Sir Ivor Roberts, a former British ambassador to Yugoslavia, Italy, and Ireland, said that no envoy could do the job properly without speaking the local language:

*"Your job is to represent Britain directly and not simply to filter your message through the foreign ministry or a national capital. Direct engagement through TV and radio is an essential part of your job. If you can't give interviews in a foreign language, then you're not able to do that."*²⁰

Despite several interviewees emphasising that UK diplomats who speak foreign languages usually do so to a high level, and the fact that FCO is ranked as a top performer amongst foreign services in its own internal benchmarking exercise, the FCO is unusual amongst English-

19 Rt Hon William Hague Speech: The best diplomatic service in the world 9 July 2012 www.gov.uk/government/speeches/diplomatic-excellence-in-the-21st-century

20 Daily Telegraph, "Languages are handy for Foreign Office diplomats, MPs to declare " 18 April 2013 www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/10004144/Languages-are-handy-for-Foreign-Office-diplomats-MPs-to-declare.html

speaking foreign ministries in requiring neither a second language skill nor a language aptitude test as part of the recruitment process. The language skills of its intake, by its own admission, are below those of other comparable foreign ministries.

New entrants are required to take a Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT) shortly after they enter the diplomatic service, which is designed to provide a measure of an individual's ability to learn a foreign language. MLAT scores (or qualifications) can then be taken into account when deciding on who should be recruited for a particular speaker position in an overseas post.

In the course of interviews, the FCO's expressed view was that languages were fundamental to its work and that language skills enabled diplomats to do their job better. Although much of the Department's work could be done without language skills, they would enhance the quality of that work.

When the question was raised as part of this inquiry as to whether the FCO would consider making language skills mandatory (either at entry or in the course of a career), there was strong resistance for fear of deterring those who have other highly-developed diplomatic skills and would otherwise make excellent diplomats. The view was that the ability to recruit and train only the best would be artificially constrained if the FCO were able to pick only from the pool of the linguistically gifted or inclined. FCO representatives also noted that a language requirement at entry is highly likely to have an adverse impact on the Department's ability to improve the socio-economic diversity of its intake, in light of the fact that state school pupils are far less likely to study languages than those from private schools. Instead, they are now considering a post-entry language requirement where staff are expected to reach a level of foreign language proficiency within five years of joining the service, not unlike the American approach detailed later in the report. To reach out to graduates, the FCO offers summer placements on its Future Talent Scheme (FTS) for a limited number of undergraduates who are studying a 'hard language' as a means of attracting applicants with critical language skills.²¹

While the FCO offers a language allowance for serving diplomats, the amount available has been substantially reduced. Language allowances

21 www.gov.uk/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-office/about/recruitment

are paid to all officers in 'speaker slots' overseas who have passed within the last five years the appropriate examinations at the target levels set out in their job specifications. To encourage officers to maintain their language skills, particularly in priority languages during their 'home postings', language allowances are also paid to officers in the UK who have re-qualified in hard languages such as Mandarin, Arabic or Russian. The FCO is currently reviewing its language allowances policy as part of wider work to strengthen language capability and is likely to place even more focus on those officers who to maintain their skills in-between postings.

The FCO's current criteria for job appraisal and promotion also do not feature any mention of language skills; a fact which led the FAC to conclude that the course being taken by the FCO is "somewhat at odds with the tone of speeches by the Foreign Secretary"; which spoke of the need to create a culture and a community where cultural knowledge and language skills were valued and expected.²² The FCO is, however, starting to address these issues. To support the implementation of the Diplomatic Excellence initiative, a Diplomatic Curriculum is being developed. The Curriculum will reflect general civil service competencies, but will also be supplemented with more aspects that relate these to skills specific to diplomacy, including language skills. At the time of writing, the FCO has not yet decided whether the framework will be enforced or advisory.

The FCO has taken steps to improve the Department's management information system which will enable it to better coordinate the skills cadre, and to track and pinpoint language skills that can be matched with needs. The consultations revealed that the overall information on available language resources has consequently much improved from two years ago. The FCO is also initiating a talent management system aimed at identifying linguistically-capable staff with potential, to offer them additional support and guidance as part of their professional skills and career development.

In the course of the inquiry, a prevailing view was that the current decentralised job appointment structures in the FCO means that those applying for a speaker slot (particularly with a harder-to-learn language)

22 Foreign Affairs Committee Fifth Report: FCO performances and finances 2011–12 House of Commons 19th March 2013 paras 53–61 www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cm/aff/690/69009.htm

may feel disadvantaged in the “promotion stakes”, due to having to invest the extra time in language learning. Some diplomats expressed concerns about being viewed as too “niche” if they spend long periods in a particular part of the world.²³ To address this issue, the FCO has brought final decision-making about postings back to the centre. While the head of mission makes a recommendation, post-interview, regarding the appointment, the final decision now rests with an appointments board in London. This gives the FCO in London the ability to ensure a more strategic allocation of staff with valuable language skills and a stronger ability to plan for future allocation and provision.

The new FCO Language Centre

Given the impact that the closure of the FCO’s Language Centre had on language skills in 2007, the decision to reinstate it is a very welcome one, particularly in the light of the planned expansions of posts in Asia, Latin America, and Africa. Respondents to the inquiry expressed serious concerns regarding the loss of expertise with the closure of the old centre, including the loss of teaching staff, who had years of experience of teaching languages in a way that addressed the specific needs of diplomats. The new Centre provides training for up to 1000 students, offers language training to other Whitehall staff, and refresher courses at lunchtime and after work to maintain and refresh the language skills of London-based staff. However, it will operate in a rather different way from the old one. In place of in-house staff, language training is outsourced to a single external provider. Some interviewees raised concerns about quality assurance and security of supply when contracting out provision in this way. The concern with streamlining provision through a single provider, as recent experience elsewhere in government has shown, is that the most effective staff may no longer be willing to work for providers on the terms offered. In light of the negative experience of the Ministry of Justice’s recent single provider contract with translators and interpreters, the need to monitor closely the effectiveness of the contracted provider to ensure that performance is not unduly compromised on grounds of cost would appear to be paramount.

By locating the Centre at the heart of its building in central London, the FCO aims to build a community of learners in its midst. In addition to full time language training, it will also be able to facilitate continuing non-job

23 Lord Malloch-Brown “The Foreign Office and the Arab Spring” Lord Mark Malloch-Brown, Huffington Post, January 31, 2012. www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2012/01/31/mark-malloch-brown-arab-spring-foreign-office_n_1244337.html

specific language training through lunchtime and after-work classes and informal language exchanges. The challenge for the FCO remains to ensure that the impact of the Centre is felt outside its 40 classrooms so it can contribute to a culture of language learning across the Department and more widely across government.

Locally engaged staff

Another significant way in which the FCO is boosting its language capacity in missions around the world is through the growing use of locally engaged staff. Staff recruited locally currently account for 66% of the FCO's workforce, although the FAC noted that the actual percentage, when expressed as a proportion of FCO staff working overseas, is 82.5%.²⁴ Recruiting local staff is regarded as an affordable and quick way to 'buy in expertise', including language expertise, and is a widespread practice elsewhere in government, e.g. DFID and UKTI. As local staff is employed on terms and conditions different from those of regular FCO staff, this trend is expected to continue since pressure on budgets remains acute. The FCO regularly reviews its 'speaker slot' footprint to ensure it is aligned to its foreign policy priorities and business needs. For example, in support of its wider Network Shift strategy, once staff currently in training are in place, the FCO will have increased the number of speaker slots in Arabic and Mandarin by 40%, and Latin American Spanish and Portuguese by 20% from 2010 levels. To help staff reach the required levels, the FCO has also recently implemented longer training times for those studying hard languages. Three-quarters of the FCO's language training supports six core languages of Arabic, Mandarin, Russian, French, German and Spanish. Geographical policy departments covering countries that speak these languages encourage staff to join specific 'cadres' that promote them and the posts overseas where they are required. Once staff are qualified in a particular language they are encouraged to keep it fresh and use it for more than one posting during their career.

Whilst the use of locally engaged and contracted-out staff has a strong and understandably appealing economic rationale, given budgetary constraints, there are dangers from an overreliance on buying in outside skills. This may lead to an under-investment in domestic language capacity. Consequently, it is imperative that the FCO monitors the way that this trend impacts on language capacity and developmental opportuni-

²⁴ Foreign Affairs Committee Fifth Report: FCO performances and finances 2011–12 House of Commons 19th March 2013, paras 41

ties for permanent UK staff, who may, as a result, be losing out in terms of early development and valuable experience and exposure.

International trade, investment and development

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), whose responsibilities cover trade, science and business, has an ongoing and regular need for language skills in some of its units. For example, the Europe, Trade and International sub-directorate deals with trade policy and its officials are required to understand dossiers prepared by member countries in their languages. Some posts therefore have language requirements and/or provide language training. Around 80% of those working within these posts are graduates who studied languages at university or acquired one through prior work experience.

The promotion of UK trade interests – promoting exports and encouraging inward investment – falls to UK Trade and Investment (UKTI), which brings together the work of the FCO and BIS. A considerable proportion of UKTI staff are based overseas and around 80% of these are local hires.²⁵ Some of the UK's overseas postings come with language requirements as part of the recruitment criteria. There is a limited budget for language training, which is insufficient to train someone from scratch. Hence some 80% of UK international post-holders are people who have studied a language at university or acquired language skills through prior work experience. UKTI draws its staff from both BIS and FCO and is dependent upon the prior recruitment processes operating in these departments. The new FCO Language Centre will provide additional training resources for UKTI staff.

DFID, which also has a need for language skills for their work across 28 different countries, differs from most other government departments in that most of their advisers working abroad are highly specialised and externally recruited. Language needs and training are assessed on a case-by-case basis depending on the country and the individual. The new FCO Language Centre is expected to become the main language training provider for DFID.

²⁵ UK Trade & Investment, *Annual Report and Accounts 2012–13* p 32, June 2013 London: The Stationery Office

Languages for national security

The rise of international terrorist threats post-9/11 and the growth of cyber-terrorism have meant that the intelligence services have had an expanded and ever more important role to play in safeguarding national security. As a result, they have benefited from increased resources over the last decade, with the agencies' combined budgets almost tripling since 2001.²⁶ Staffing numbers within the Government Communication Headquarters (GCHQ) alone have doubled since 9/11.

The need for advanced specialist language skills has traditionally been strongest within the SIA. GCHQ has long been the biggest employer of graduate linguists and has around 250 linguists covering a wide range of languages, who make up around 10% of its staff.²⁷ MI5 estimates that about 100 of their staff use language skills in the course of their work. In addition to the growing need for greater language capacity, the range of languages sought has changed greatly from Eastern European languages to Mandarin, Farsi, Korean, Somali, West African languages and the many widely divergent regional Arabic dialects.

While the number of linguists employed by the SIA is relatively small, the impact of their work is of critical importance both to the UK Government and to the population as a whole. As representatives from the SIA stated, "the direction of an investigation can hinge on one phrase". Therefore languages are essential when the UK is facing a diversification of threats from overseas.

Graduate linguist recruitment

The recruitment procedure for GCHQ graduate linguists is highly demanding and only a small proportion of applicants who sit the language test are accepted. However, at a time of increased demand for language skills, GCHQ has reported that it struggles to recruit enough high calibre linguists owing to fewer qualified applicants being available. GCHQ has expressed concern at the diminishing number and range of language courses offered by universities, particularly for rarer and more

26 James Kirkup "Intelligence Agencies face first budget cuts in a decade" *Daily Telegraph*, 22 October 2010 www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/spending/spending-review/8079343/Spending-review-intelligence-agencies-face-first-budget-cut-in-a-decade.html

27 Helena Wozniak "For Queen and Country – Fluent speakers of Foreign Languages are in hot demand in the civil and secret services" *Independent*, 15 Oct 2009 www.independent.co.uk/student/career-planning/getting-job-for-queen-and-country-fluent-speakers-of-foreign-languages-are-in-hot-demand-in-the-civil-and-secret-services-1802621.html

esoteric languages.²⁸ To address this linguistic skill shortage, GCHQ has increasingly started to recruit native speakers who do not necessarily have language degrees, but who speak their native language to degree level. GCHQ also re-trains existing staff in languages for which there is a current need.

The SIA have expressed grave concern at the continuing decline in the take-up of languages at schools and universities, and in particular at the steep decline in lesser-taught and minority languages. This has led GCHQ to launch a schools engagement programme in their surrounding area under which GCHQ linguists go into schools to give taster sessions in rare languages. The programme is aimed at encouraging pupils to study languages for GCSE/A-levels and to consider studying languages at university. GCHQ regularly ensures it has a presence during university recruitment days and tends to target universities with ethnically diverse student intakes to reach those with diverse cultural experience and native language skills.

The SIA have also made clear their disquiet with the impact on the range of languages taught at school as a result of decisions made earlier this year by the Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations Board (OCR) exam board:²⁹

“We are concerned that there may be a move away from offering qualifications in languages spoken by native speakers, as these qualifications not only allow speakers to develop their reading and writing skills and to learn about the grammatical structure of their language, but also demonstrate the value of having formally recognised native language skills. We would also support any initiative to increase the number of languages qualifications which cover native speaker or heritage languages.”³⁰

28 Galpin, Richard “GCHQ teaches ‘future spies’ in schools” 8 March 2011 BBC News website www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-12675368

29 Whilst the languages studied within schools are predominantly the main modern European languages, there has until now been provision by which other language skills held by native or heritage speakers are recognised and developed. The Asset Language Scheme provided national level accreditation for achievements in 25 different languages and helps motivate and reward language learning. Recent decisions to reform the Asset language scheme by the exam board OCR, however, will drastically reduce the range of languages that will qualify under that scheme.

30 Private communication.

As discussed in Part Two of the report, reforms to the Asset Language Scheme, which aimed to recognise and develop native language skills amongst Britain's diverse school population, will greatly reduce the range of languages that are examined and taught.

Contract staff

Owing to the kind of language capacity required and the difficulty in recruiting linguists, GCHQ and the other intelligence agencies now make increasing use of native speakers on a contract basis. Contract staff may be security cleared, but have a lower level of clearance than permanent staff. Native speakers who do not meet minimal requirements by way of nationality/residence may also be brought in to work on individual cases from time to time at short notice. The increasing recruitment of native speakers on a contractual basis reflects the growing need for 'street' language skills in intelligence and security operations, particularly for counter-terrorism work.

Staff development

The ongoing investment by the SIA in the language skills of their staff reflects their view that languages are vital to their aims. GCHQ keeps a database of staff with language skills and has adopted a formalised mentoring system whereby new recruits are assigned to a senior linguist who will coach junior staff members to ensure they progress to higher levels of competency in their respective languages. Linguists are offered re-training if new languages are required for which there is no existing capacity and the process from scratch to degree level takes 18 months of intensive training. Training is normally provided by long-standing external contractors using native speakers as tutors.

One of the benefits highlighted with recruiting non-language degree native speakers is that they are less likely to forget the language if it is not used for a few years, while language graduates will need regular refresher courses. However, it can be difficult to retrain native speakers in a different language, particularly if they have not learnt their mother tongue in a formal education setting. The SIA noted that non-graduate native speakers could benefit from short courses within HEIs to develop their reading, writing, and speaking skills, as well as learning about the grammatical structure of their native language.

Uniquely among the organisations consulted for this report, the SIA appreciated the need, and the difficulty, of ensuring the sustainability of supply and "surge capacity" particularly for rare languages. There

is therefore strong encouragement for senior linguists to take on teaching responsibilities, especially if they speak rare languages. It is worth noting that such development opportunities are not available to contract staff.

Career progression and incentives

Both GCHQ and MI5 incentivise language acquisition by paying their linguists a premium, with rare languages attracting the highest premium. However, interviewees reported that language skills and area expertise can present obstacles when it comes to long term career progression and staff retention. The traditional divide between “generalists” and “specialists” within the Civil Service often works to the detriment of specialist roles such as linguists, resulting in restricted opportunities for upward promotion. Those linguists who “rebrand” as generalists in order to move on to managerial levels will often find themselves in positions where their language skills are not utilised.

The SIA are now collaborating on an integrated approach to recruitment, as well as career progression and retention. Current plans reflect the desired move towards a single recruitment process, with joint vacancy advertisements and one language test across the SIA. This will enable agencies to share staff and allow for movement across agencies, so as to offer a greater variety of interesting postings. The SIA also offer staff secondment opportunities within the UK, as well as with partner organisations in the United States (US) and Australia.

Languages for law enforcement and tackling organised crime

The blurring of the line between domestic and international government objectives can be clearly seen in the way that law-enforcement and crime-prevention has taken on global aspects. The Government’s strategy for tackling organised crime states that the international dimensions of organised crime are such that it is now viewed as a threat to UK national security.³¹ Responsibility for tackling serious and organised crime and counter-terrorism fall within the remit of the HO and its agencies, which has led to a demand for language skills within these organizations. While the HO did not formally respond to the consultation, the report explores how languages are used by the Metropolitan

31 Home Office “*Local to Global: Reducing the Risk from Organised Crime*,” July 2011 www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97823/organised-crime-strategy.pdf

Police Service (MPS), as well as in the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA), which was formally disbanded in October 2013, with its responsibilities being taken over by the National Crime Agency.

The MPS is responsible for law enforcement for Greater London which has one of the most ethnically and linguistically diverse populations in the world. In addition, the MPS is also part of the national security infrastructure as the agency responsible for protecting London and the UK against the threat of terrorism. The MPS's Counter Terrorism Command (SO15) works closely with MI5 and other security and intelligence agencies to counter terrorist activities.

Following a review in 2008, the MPS identified the need to develop language skills within the force. It began to ask for information on recruits' cultural awareness and language skills and recently established a language programme which provides language learning to officers across the service. The programme offers training and accreditation at two levels. Level 1 is a one-year course, built around specific policing tasks and mainly targeted at neighbourhood policing, while Level 2 is a longer course which includes formal assessment leading to a nationally accredited qualification and meet the requirements of specialist departments such as SO15. The breadth of languages required by the MPS is matched only by the FCO and is reflected in the range of languages on offer at Level 1: Arabic, Mandarin, Farsi, French, German, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Turkish and Vietnamese.³²

To ensure that the language training provides a good return on investment, the MPS requires officers to submit a business case on application to the programme, outlining their requirement, their motivation for learning and providing real examples of how their language will be put to use or how a lack of language knowledge has impacted on the outcomes of their work.

However, within the MPS minority ethnic groups continue to be under-represented, particularly at a senior level. Black and minority ethnic officers make up only 10.5% of the MPS,³³ which may help explain the existence of a culture of reluctance amongst some officers to volunteer

32 Levels offer range from beginner to GCSE level, with a focus on conversational skills.

33 Home Office, Police workforce, England and Wales, 31 March 2013 www.gov.uk/government/publications/police-workforce-england-and-wales-31-march-2013/police-workforce-england-and-wales-31-march-2013#police-officers

information on foreign language skills.³⁴ The lack of diversity, cultural awareness and linguistic skills amongst a force that is responsible for policing a city where over 40% of its population are from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds can form barriers to building crucial relationships and trust with local communities.³⁵ The Assistant Commissioner for counter terrorism recently acknowledged that the MPS's effectiveness in relation to counter-terrorism would be improved if "we had more people with certain language skills and were more reflective of London's communities".³⁶

The Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA), which became part of the National Crime Agency this year, led on organised crime from 2007–2012. As crime has become more globalised and criminal organisations operating in the UK are often foreign based, about 4% of SOCA's staff is stationed abroad, with the main areas of focus being Afghanistan, Pakistan, Turkey, Africa, and Latin America. About half of the liaison officers undertake language training, and the ability to speak Spanish was deemed essential for SOCA's work in Latin America. However, for some regions the training is deemed to be too expensive and time-consuming to constitute a good return on investment. Staff were required to serve only two years (with the option of a third year) in a foreign posting and were unlikely to be returned to a previous posting for security reasons. While the aim was for liaison officers to reach a C2 level (operational), only 20% managed to achieved this, with the majority of staff getting to B2 (independent user). A representative from SOCA estimated that it cost the organisation £50,000 to train an officer full-time in Spanish for six months.

For SOCA's UK based-work, language skills are mainly required for interception work. As with the Metropolitan Police, external interpreters are used extensively and account for a large part of SOCA's language budget. It is expected that the language requirements and training provisions of NCA will remain similar to those of SOCA and the overseas

34 Home Office, *Police Workforce England and Wales*, 31 March 2013, published 18 July 2013

35 The Home Affairs Committee recently noted that it had been told that police "sometimes have a limited understanding of issues relating to ethnicity and sexual orientation, which has an impact on public trust in police services." Home Affairs Committee *Third Report: Leadership and Standards in the Police*, House of Commons, 26 June 2013, para 191 www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmhaff/67/6708.htm

36 Cressida Dick, "Uncorrected Evidence taken before the Home Affairs Committee: Counter Terrorism" Tuesday 4 June 2013, To be published as HC 231-i www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmhaff/uc231-i/uc23101.htm

network stays in place. A growing focus on cyber crime across government means that there is an increased interest and requirement for Russian and Mandarin.

Languages for defence

For the British military, cultural knowledge and the ability to communicate are now accepted as among the most important aspects in meeting the challenges of modern defence operations. As a recent Joint Doctrine Note stated: “The 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review, and most recently the International Defence Engagement Strategy, emphasise the importance of prevention, defence diplomacy (security cooperation) and the centrality of influence. Language is a critical enabler to each of these aspects.”³⁷ This is reflected in the MOD response to the consultation which states that: “Defence recognises that its objectives will be more quickly, effectively, efficiently and enduringly achieved if overseas activity is conducted in native languages”

Until recently the British Defence Doctrine was relatively silent on the importance of languages (as opposed to cultural knowledge) and language skills were regarded as the preserve of specialists with a preference for reliance on interpreters in the field.³⁸ However a recently published Joint Doctrine Note has acknowledged that language capability has not been sufficiently addressed in the past and that current approaches are not adequate for operational needs.³⁹ The mission of the new Defence School of Languages and Culture (DCLC) reflects the broadening focus on languages within the armed forces: “The Defence Centre for Languages and Culture (DCLC) is responsible for providing English and foreign language training in order to enhance the UK’s Defence and Security capability and to contribute to Defence Diplomacy.”⁴⁰

37 Ministry of Defence (Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre) *Joint Doctrine Note 1/13 Linguistic Support to Operations*, March 2013 www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/180778/20131315-JDN113_Linguistic_Support.pdf

38 Ministry of Defence (Joint Doctrine and Concepts Centre), *The Military Contribution to Peace Support Operations* Joint Warfare Publication 3–50 (JWP3-50) 2nd Edition, 31st December 2012 s513, pp5–9 www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/43479/JWP350Ed2.pdf

39 Ministry of Defence, Joint Doctrine Note 1/13: “Linguistic Support to Operations” March 2013

40 Statement on The Defence Centre for Languages and Culture’s website: www.da.mod.uk/colleges/cmt/defence-centre-for-languages-and-culture

This change in approach is a direct result of the lessons learnt from the Iraq and Afghanistan campaigns, particularly with efforts to combat counter-insurgencies in both countries. The nature of modern warfare means that hard military power is no longer sufficient to achieve outcomes and language capability is a key enabling part of a wider, more multifaceted approach to problem solving. In addition, language skills and cultural knowledge are also now deemed essential for the role of the military in carrying out follow-on peace-keeping work and conflict prevention.

Language expertise is not only important in strategic planning and intelligence monitoring. The ability of military officers and patrols to communicate with local communities during ground operations can help not only with local engagement but might also mean the difference between life and death. Over-reliance on native translators carries significant risks, both for patrols as well as, in some cases, for locals themselves.⁴¹ Language needs can be highly specific and exacting; getting the accent or dialect variation wrong can have significant consequences.

In the case of non-combat activities, the work of military attachés, capacity building exercises, and conflict prevention efforts are becoming increasingly important. The International Defence Engagement Strategy, a joint MOD and FCO document published in February 2013, highlights defence diplomacy, which is being proposed as a core MOD objective, as a key area of activity in meeting the Government's objectives, including 'influencing in support of UK national interests' and 'building international capacity and will'.⁴² Language and cultural skills remain central to this work. Ongoing defence diplomacy work in Libya, for example, includes a dedicated post-conflict task of 'developing and exploiting cultural understanding in order to exert influence in the extended battle space'.⁴³

In military operations, reliance on civilian local linguists has evident drawbacks and presents moral and security limitations that, as recent

41 A particularly good example of the dangers of dependence on translators is captured in the short film "Lost in Translation", John D McHugh www.guardian.co.uk/world/video/2008/jun/11/afghanistan.johndmchugh

42 Ministry of Defence: *International Defence Engagement Strategy*, 13 Feb, 2013 www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/73171/defence_engagement_strategy.pdf

43 Col Rupert Wieloch: *Defence diplomacy and defence assistance in post-conflict situations*, The British Army Journal, 2012 <http://army.newsdeskmedia.com/defence-diplomacy>

experience shows, incur huge risks for the locals themselves. Locally employed civilian linguists who have acted as interpreters for British Armed forces in Iraq have been objects of death threats directed at both themselves and their families, and in some instances have been tracked down and killed by Iraqi insurgents.⁴⁴ As a result several hundred Iraqi interpreters and their families have been resettled in the UK through the Locally Engaged Staff Assistance Scheme (LESAS) which has now been closed.⁴⁵ There is also some, though limited, provision for Afghan interpreters.

The MOD is now committed to ensuring a sufficient contingent capacity of linguists that can be force-generated when operations require linguistic support. It aims to establish the following:

“To meet high readiness requirements, a limited number of volunteer regular personnel (from all Services) with existing language skills should follow a conventional career path, but be at variable readiness to support operational planning and initial operational deployments.”

Defence Operational Languages Support Unit (DOLSU)

The Defence Operational Languages Support Unit (DOLSU) is the Training Requirements Authority (TRA) responsible for sustaining and managing operational language capability in support of Joint Operations. DOLSU works with all three services (army, navy and air force) to assess and determine what posts have essential language needs and to what level staff need to be trained. Key posts that require language competence are: defence diplomacy and engagement, defence intelligence, military linguists supporting current operations in theatre, capability development roles (e.g. industrial partnerships) and training and liaison roles.

DOLSU maintains a database of all MOD staff with language capabilities and carries out an annual review of requirements which serves as the

44 In 2006 the Independent newspaper reported that at least 21 interpreters working for the British Army in Basra had been kidnapped and killed. Phil Sands, “Interpreters used by British Army ‘hunted down’ by Iraqi death squads” Independent, 17 November 2006 www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/interpreters-used-by-british-army-hunted-down-by-iraqi-death-squads-424660.html

45 Aasmah Mir “Iraq to Glasgow: interpreters struggle with life in the UK” www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-15462194 Written Ministerial Statement, Thursday, 16 September 2010 www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100916/wmstext/100916m0001.htm, A similar scheme for around 600 Afghan interpreters was announced in June this year. “Afghan Interpreters can come to the UK, says Philip Hammond” www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-22771238

MOD's main planning and forecasting tool. Once DOLSU has produced a statement of training requirements it works with the training delivery authority, now the Defence School of Languages and Culture (DCLC) to assess how training needs can be best delivered.

Recent changes to language training

The MOD has been experiencing a period of budget cutbacks which first began with the deep reductions in permanent military staffing following the Strategic Defence and Security Review in 2010. As a consequence there has been downward pressure on the provision of language training within the MOD. In 2011, the responsibility for the Defence School of Languages (DSL) located at Beaconsfield was transferred to the Defence Academy.⁴⁶ Following a review of the DSL, responsibility for language training has been transferred to the Defence Academy, which has now established the Defence School of Languages and Culture (DCLC). This is located at the Defence Academy's main campus in Shrivenham. In order to preserve built up expertise and continuity, the majority of DSL teaching staff have been relocated to Shrivenham and continue to be employed on the same terms and conditions as Burnham lecturers. While training in certain main languages are delivered in-house, training in other languages are outsourced to a commercial provider.

There continues to be pressure to outsource language provision in order to meet demands for cost savings, and the Defence Academy will review the current delivery model after two years. At the moment DCLC is working with the teaching staff to collate, review and formalise course syllabus with the aim of creating an overall defence syllabus for languages.

DCLC currently provide in-house training in Arabic, French, Spanish and Russian. Dari and Pashto are also provided, although provision for these languages will reduce as the UK withdraws from Afghanistan. All language trainees acquire a degree of cultural knowledge as part of their language training, which will be greater for defence attachés and cultural specialists. A 4–6 week phase of immersion training is also offered, mainly to defence diplomats and intelligence staff.

⁴⁶ About 17,000 armed forces jobs are scheduled to be cut across the MOD, with the result that army numbers are forecast to fall from 101,000 to 82,000 by 2020. Ministry of Defense announcement, "Royal Navy and Army redundancy scheme details" 4 April 2011 www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/DefenceNews/DefencePolicyAndBusiness/RoyalNavyAndArmyReleaseRedundancySchemeDetails.htm

DCLC and DOLSU are currently considering if they can make use of the FCO language centre to meet some of their language training needs, although logistical issues of timetabling location, and costs associated with travel, accommodation and the need to conduct military training in parallel may limit the scope for this.

Languages in military operations

The role of the senior military linguist is now regarded as particularly key within the MOD's approach to ground operations. Military linguists are rank and file soldiers who voluntarily take on the key language role within each major unit, and receive training to that end. Their role is distinct from those of the interpreters and translators, who are largely contract staff, as they have to be both UK nationals and possess significant military skills – i.e. to understand and be able to operate in a military culture and to respond to high-stress situations. Military linguists act as agents for a principal (e.g. commander) and they need to be competent operators and apply their language skills in real-life situations.

Most military linguists are trained from scratch, with those having language skills prior to entering the Armed Forces still requiring further training. The MOD uses the NATO STANAG 6001 scale to assess proficiency and the aim for military linguists is to reach level 3, which is equivalent to professional level.⁴⁷ After the initial training, military linguists are also required to attend language training up to four weeks a year.

The MOD insists that all military linguists must be volunteers as intrinsic motivation is fundamental to learning languages. However, a key issue that emerged in conversation with the MOD was the existence of a social stigma attached to language learning. This remains an issue despite the existence of various financial incentives to boost language learning. To encourage the declaration of skills, a basic language award scheme exists in which lump sum payments of £140-£2,300 are made for passing an exam.

47 However, as speaking and listening are deemed the most important aspects of their operational work, MoD expects military linguists to reach level 3 for these skills, with level 2 for reading and level 1 for writing. This is referred to as a standardised language profile of 3321 Ministry of Defence (Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre) *Joint Doctrine Note 1/13 Linguistic Support to Operations*, March 2013 www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/180778/20131315-JDN113_Linguistic_Support.pdf

A separate scheme for operational languages with qualifications awards between £1,800 and £11,700; less is awarded for requalification. Linguists in operational languages can also claim daily active use allowance between £3.60 a day for a level 1 linguist on their first tour, to £70.50 for a level 4 linguist on his or her fourth tour.⁴⁸ These generous financial award schemes were put in place to overcome the perception that volunteering for language duties constitutes a career foul, and that language positions are of an inferior status. Due to the extensive nature of language training, a linguist can lose up to two years of operational experience that count towards promotions in the annual reporting cycle. Time spent in language training, which can take up to 18 months, tends not to be taken into consideration in the performance review system which assesses staff performance primarily on their operational experience and how they perform in that field.

Flexible deployment and surge capability

The ability to generate language capacity quickly and flexibility to appropriate standards is particularly important for defence forces and is a key objective for MOD. For short term contingency operations, DOLSU relies on its database to identify staff with relevant language skills who can then be deployed at short notice. The creation of a reserve defence linguist pool has been mooted as a way of helping with early deployment needs, that is, in the early stages of an operation that has been strategically committed to, where language training is in place but has not yielded fully-fledged linguists. The distributive training model that has been in use for Dari and Pashto, in which trainers are sent to units to train military personnel to teach others in the unit, is regarded as having worked well and could be replicated for future requirements.

The proposed reserve defence linguist pool may be facilitated by changes to recruitment policy within the Army that seek to boost representation from ethnic minorities. In a widely-reported speech last year, Major General Major Nick Carter said that 25% of forces recruited in 2020 are expected to be from minority ethnic groups as part of the Army 2020 reforms, with clear implications for a widened language pool.⁴⁹ Co-ordination amongst service units and Defence Civil Service resources is likely to play a bigger role. The MOD is also

48 Lt Col Justin Lewis RE "Languages at War: A UK Ministry of Defence Perspective" in H. Footit and M. Kelly, eds, *Languages and the Military: Alliances, Occupation and Peacebuilding*, Palgrave MacMillan, July 2012

49 Tom Coghlan, "Army fights on the homefront for Muslim recruits" *The Times*, July 2, 2012 www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/uk/defence/article3462501.ece

looking at expanding the recruitment base for the Territorial Army to migrant communities that would bring relevant language skills and cultural knowledge, but have not traditionally been open to the army as a formal career path. However, MOD representatives have in conversation acknowledged that certain barriers need to be tackled to overcome reluctance amongst some ethnic minorities to join the Armed Forces.

The MOD's recent pronouncements on the role of language skills within military operations is a welcome and much-needed signal of their importance. However, it is clear that continuing concerted efforts will be needed to sustain the momentum. Within the context of continuing budget cuts, resourcing will also require innovation, ingenuity, and a strong commitment to change.

Key issues

Language needs and the value of language skills

This inquiry has posed the question of how important languages are considered to be in meeting the UK's public policy objectives. All of the government departments and agencies consulted for this inquiry acknowledged that language skills have important benefits in enabling them to meet their objectives. The frequency of their use and scale of their perceived importance, however, varies in accordance with the respective objectives and priorities of the departments. For some agencies, such as those forming the SIA, language skills are deemed to be essential to the delivery of their objectives – while for most of the others, language skills range from being seen as important but not essential, to being useful in occasional circumstances.

It is clear that the current view on language skills does not send out a sufficiently strong message about their value. Many government departments and agencies believe they can currently 'do the job', though perhaps not as well without language skills. While language skills frequently complement other important skills, and need not be essential in their own right, the rather lukewarm message that emerges from this inquiry is that languages are important but optional. This may explain a sense of indifference to the prior study of languages at school and university, and a benign neglect of the wider language infrastructure that enables these "non-essential" skills to be developed.

The position of Government departments would seem to mirror that of the business world generally, where employers do not stipulate language needs for fear of reducing the pool of applicants, a policy which in turn sends out the signal to students that language learning is not important. So long as languages are perceived as non-essential, the necessary steps to reverse the current decline in language capacity seem unlikely to occur.

Nevertheless, there do seem to be signs of a growing acknowledgement of the need and importance of languages amongst the departments consulted. Many respondents both within and outside government felt that, overall, the language skills of British officials and armed forces were poor, and compared unfavourably with their counterparts abroad. There was a clear sense that this is both embarrassing and risks putting the UK at a competitive disadvantage as, for example officials miss out on the less tangible benefits that come with more effective communication and cultural understanding. It was also acknowledged that cultural and linguistic skills will become increasingly important in the future.

It is vital that leadership within each department finds ways to signal more strongly the importance of language skills if the UK is to be equipped in the future with the skills it needs to prosper. Some non-government respondents argued that, if the UK wishes to maintain global influence, a cultural shift is needed to improve language learning to levels that can meet the UK's requirements. The general expectation should be that language skills are essential if diplomats are to perform to the highest level of professionalism.

Early and long term investment strategies

The procurement of language skills differs across departments with some, such as the SIA, providing long-term investment in language training while others make extensive use of contractors and interpreters on an ad hoc basis. In some cases, such as the MOD, the drawbacks of over-reliance on contracting out to interpreters have become clear.

Apart from the SIA and some parts of the MOD, no agency offers a dedicated career path for linguists, nor is there a specific recruitment strand for graduate linguists in the Civil Service. Therefore, a great deal of language training is from scratch, and supplementary training is often required to ensure that the requisite and appropriate command of the language is reached. In addition, language training is also sometimes provided where it is specific to the operational requirements of the job.

Language learning is resource-intensive and it is understandable that some departments avoid institutional investment, as it runs the perceived risk of not being able to deploy staff more flexibly. It is clear that many departments would ideally want skills to be accessible on demand

and that it is difficult to justify investing a huge amount of resources on language training. Some departments have taken steps to conserve and build on their investment in language training, through maintaining databases of language skills, cross-agency skill sharing, retraining and refreshment opportunities, and investment in training and conservation of language-teaching expertise. However, more could be done, and in a more uniform way, to get better value from investment in language training without incurring excessive structural inflexibility. A concern that emerged from the consultations was that the pressure to outsource language teaching would jeopardise the teaching expertise specific to the needs of departments such as the FCO and the MOD that had been built up over many years.

As many have observed, it is not possible to turn language capacity off and on again quickly. Language scholarship is a long-term investment for the individual, for the university system, and for society at large. Investment should therefore not simply be regarded just as the responsibility of the immediate employer but needs to be tackled in the round. One compelling proposition is that on-the-job language training would be far more efficient and far less costly if the trainee were already skilled in another language, or had prior experience of language learning, as this tends to shorten the process. A government representative from a department with a limited language training budget, noted that some of the best candidates they have had were joint degree holders, stating: "They are often the ones whom I can spend money on to do some pretty quick getting up to speed in Mandarin or Japanese, or some other area language, and also tend to be the ones who are motivated to do it."⁵⁰

The Nuffield Inquiry argued that an integrated pathway to language learning from an early age was necessary to bring about a step change in the level of language skills within the UK. This has been supported by evidence that language learning is easier and more effective if undertaken at a young age. It is noteworthy that the US feels hamstrung by its comparative lack of language investment in the wider infrastructure within society, and that more ambitious measures are consequently being adopted across US federal agencies in terms of training provision and requirements. There is growing conviction that early language learning constitutes a form of investment that has not been sufficiently

50 Private seminar, British Academy forum held under the Chatham House rule, July 2011

appreciated, and that attention to this stage could help to address many of the difficult decisions that can arise later. There is a strong efficiency case to be made here that a more co-ordinated, long-term approach to language capacity – that reaches into schools and universities – should be put in place.

Growing use of native speakers at home and abroad

The UK has a diverse population that provides a valuable pool of language resources, particularly for languages that are not commonly taught in schools. While there are currently no explicit attempts to recruit native speakers or heritage language speakers to the Civil Service as a whole specifically for their language skills, the SIA is increasingly recruiting native speakers for their language analyst roles. GCHQ now targets universities with ethnically diverse student bodies for their recruitment drives in order to attract native speakers that are non-language graduates, as long as they have degree level competency. The MPS has recognised the need for the workforce to reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of the communities they work with, although it continues to be some way off meeting this objective.

Census data taken in 2011 reveals that 13% or 7.5 million people resident in Britain were born abroad, and that about 7.7% or 4.2 million people had a main language that was not English.⁵¹ The range of languages spoken included, among others, Arabic, Kurdish, Pashto, Serbo-Croat, Somali, and Tamil, reflecting to a degree the languages increasingly required both by the SIA as well as the FCO and the MOD.⁵²

It is clear that across departments, language resources could be better utilised. Although there is a general awareness of the dividends arising from this aspect of multiculturalism, with native speakers used by many departments, not enough is done to encourage or develop the skills of native or heritage speakers at the school level. However, recent Depart-

51 Office of National Statistics *Detailed country of birth and nationality analysis from the 2011 Census of England and Wales* 16 May 2013 www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census/detailed-characteristics-for-local-authorities-in-england-and-wales/country-of-birth---rpt.html#tab-conclusions, Main languages in England and Wales www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census-analysis/language-in-england-and-wales-2011/rpt--language-in-england-and-wales-2011.html#tab-Main-language-in-England-and-Wales

52 Office of National Statistics *Main Language by Local Authority*. 4 March 2013, www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census-analysis/language-in-england-and-wales-2011/rpt--language-in-england-and-wales-2011.html#tab-Main-language-by-local-authority

ment for Education (DfE) policy would appear to allow greater flexibility in the languages curriculum offered by schools. The Statutory Order laid before Parliament on 11 September 2013 coming into force on 1 September 2014 sets out quite clearly the meaning of a 'foreign language' and a 'modern foreign language' for the purposes of sections 84 (A4) and 84 (4) of the Education Act 2002. It stipulates that any foreign language can be offered as a foundation subject in the National Curriculum in Key Stage 2, and any modern foreign language can be offered in Key Stage 3.⁵³ Therefore, schools have the freedom to teach any modern foreign language that meets the needs of their pupils.

Greater efforts could be made to reach out to native speakers working elsewhere within the wider Civil Service workforce, encouraging them to feel valued for their skills and to volunteer information about their spoken languages. If done well, the objective of integrating migrants by encouraging them to speak English should not lead to the devaluation of their other language skills. An engagement strategy of this kind could enable greater integration and allow government departments, particularly Home Office (HO) agencies, to reach into closed communities, potentially producing positive effects for community engagement and the prevention of terrorism. In this regard, the Minister for Policing's recent remarks that language requirements might form part of the recruitment procedure for police officers is a welcome one.⁵⁴

One of the benefits highlighted with recruiting native speakers is that they are less likely to forget their language skills if they are not used for a few years, while language graduates may need regular refresher courses. However, it can be difficult to re-train native speakers in a different language, particularly if they have not learnt their mother tongue in a formal education setting. Moreover, the ad hoc and contractual nature of the way that many native speakers are employed means that they do not benefit from further investment in their development as translators or as potential language trainers. If native speakers undertake English language training, or acquire formal language education in their native language, they will be better equipped to carry out their jobs and more able to quickly learn and teach other languages.

53 The Education (National Curriculum) (Languages) (England) Order 2013 www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/2230/made

54 Owen Bowcott "Minister urges police to recruit officers with language skills to boost diversity" *Guardian*, 15 October 2013 www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2013/oct/15/police-officers-language-skills-diversity

Career progression and incentives

The difficulties in career progression faced by specialist linguists bear similarities to the general issues faced by all specialists within a Civil Service that is oriented towards generalist skills. Non-specialist linguists also find themselves potentially at a disadvantage in the promotion stakes due to the amount of time required for language training. In other cases such as the MOD, the orientation towards military skills leads to lower quality candidates presenting themselves for language training, and given rise to a perception that language positions are of an inferior status.

This situation is compounded by the fact that language skills and expertise are currently not an explicit part of the job appraisal process for key government departments, such as the FCO or the MOD. Specialist skills such as languages or area expertise can be a disadvantage, particularly in a time of restructuring, if it means that staff are not widely deployable to other roles.

This review has found that there are not only insufficient incentives to encourage language learning, but that there are also, in some cases, longstanding career disincentives to doing so. Language skills need to be incorporated into appraisals and job descriptions, as a way of giving recognition to their worth; and so it is clear that language skills should be afforded greater prominence in performance review systems. The changes initiated by the FCO in human resource management are very welcome – but it is increasingly evident that the Department should consider making the Diplomatic Curriculum and its accompanying diplomatic skills, which are currently under development, a requirement for future job descriptions and integrate them into the performance review system.

Through the course of this inquiry, conflicting views on the effectiveness of financial incentives to encourage language learning have emerged. It is important that more research is conducted across government to determine whether financial incentives could have a real impact on language take-up.

Cross-departmental collaboration and a strategic approach

The language priorities of the departments and agencies which were interviewed vary hugely by type and level, but there are also large

areas of overlap. In general, the approach to identifying language needs appears to be decentralised, not very strategically informed, and somewhat opaque across these parts of government. There appears to be little co-ordination across government to identify language needs and no overall strategic approach to enable future needs to be met.

For these reasons, a more co-ordinated approach to language planning by gathering information on language needs, skills and training provision across government would be extremely beneficial. A regular and consistent audit of language skills, particularly of minority languages, would be invaluable, and could help inform a more strategic approach to developing and sharing language capacity.

In addition, the current language skills deficit could be allayed by adopting a more flexible way of working across government departments, allowing staff with language skills to be seconded for specific projects, such as engaging with hard-to-reach groups and communities in preventive work on terrorism, or criminal behaviour such as child sexual exploitation and trafficking.

There appears to be no cross-governmental body that currently undertakes this kind of active co-ordination. The now defunct cross-departmental group UK Interdepartmental Standing Committee on Languages (UKIDSCOL) provided a useful forum for sharing and feedback, and initiated some work with the Government Skills Agency (GSA) in 2009 on minority languages, but ultimately did not have sufficiently senior enough level representation to make much of an impact. It is worth noting that the joint work with the Government Skills Agency (GSA) issued in a valuable overview of cross department language requirements for certain minority languages and proposed a strategic collaboration with HEIs to assure their provision. However, the GSA was disbanded in 2010 and the report's recommendations were not followed through.

The current locus of collaboration on languages is through a newly formed Cross-Whitehall Languages Focus Group which reports to the International Next Generation Human Resources group. The group brings together representatives from MOD, FCO, SIA, NCA, HMRC and the Metropolitan Police who are now collaborating on adopting a new modern language aptitude test developed by the Centre for Advanced Study of Language (CASL) at the University of Maryland across key government departments. While it is early days, it seems clear that

the existence of such a group is much needed and that it possesses huge potential for making a substantial difference to language capacity within government.

It is also encouraging to see that despite differing language needs, the pressure on budgets is leading to some forms of increased collaboration. The FCO's Language Centre provides a significant opportunity for pooling resources, which should be systematically available to enable other government departments and agencies to use the centre for their staff. Thus defence attachés from the MOD will be trained alongside their FCO colleagues; as would officials from, for example, NCA, the HO, DFID or BIS. However, there are accessibility issues for GCHQ and other parts of the MOD due to their geographical location outside of London, which means the extent of their participation may be limited.

A Comparative Perspective from the United States

Over the last two decades, especially post-9/11, there has been a significant rise in demand for foreign language skills within the US Government on the grounds of national security. The responses of successive US administrations to these emerging security challenges have required a high-level recognition of the need to develop a strategic approach to filling in language gaps at the federal and the state level for diplomacy, defence and national security.

The US Intelligence Community (IC), composed of sixteen intelligence agencies including the FBI, CIA and NSA,⁵⁵ and the US Department of Defense (DoD) have thus invested in a series of initiatives over the last two decade to improve foreign language capacity. In August 2011, the Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta reaffirmed this commitment in a memorandum to key DoD leaders on the importance of language skills, regional expertise and cultural capability for meeting current and future national security needs, stating "Language, regional, and cultural skills are enduring warfighting competencies that are critical to mission readiness in today's dynamic global environment."⁵⁶

The DoD-funded Defense Language and National Security Education Office (DLNSEO), an office created in 2012 after the merger of the longstanding National Security Education Program (NSEP) and the Defense Language Office,⁵⁷ oversees policy regarding foreign language, culture and regional expertise for DoD personnel.⁵⁸ The DLNSEO provides funding for nine educational initiatives to provide professionals with language and cultural skills for employment in the federal government service.⁵⁹ However, there has been slow

55 Secretary of Defense Memorandum on Language Skills, Regional Expertise, and Cultural Capabilities in the Department of Defense (DoD), August 10, 2011. <http://flenj.org/docs/2011-AUG-Leon-Panetta-Memo.pdf>

56 ILR Roundtable on NSEP, October 2012. www.govtilr.org/Publications/Eisen_NSEP%20ILR%20OVERVIEW%20FINAL.pdf

57 Defense Language and National Security Education Office. <http://prhome.defense.gov/rfm/READINESS/DLNSEO/mission.aspx>

58 The NSEP branding still remains in use. www.nsep.gov/initiatives/

59 Prepared statement of Dr. Laura J. Junor before the Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia for a panel discussion on "A National Security Crisis: Foreign Language Capabilities in the Federal Government," May 21, 2012. www.languagepolicy.org/documents/Laura%20Junor%20Testimony.pdf

progress in improving DoD's foreign language capacity: although more than 80% of the language-designated position (LDPs) in its workforce were filled by September 2011, "only 28% of these positions within language requirements were filled with personnel at the required foreign language proficiency level."⁶⁰

The IC Foreign Language Program office (FLPO) was established to promote a number of government-funded initiatives to improve language capability of the IC workforce.⁶¹ However, there has been little improvement in foreign language capacity across the different IC agencies: a Congressional inquiry held in 2012 showed that just 61% of the US State Department's 'language-designated positions' (LDPs) were held by fully qualified personnel in 2009, rising to 74% in 2012.⁶²

There is a clear lack of a language learning infrastructure as the US university system is not producing enough graduates with language skills to meet national security needs, despite the existence of the Title 6 programmes⁶³ This is also indicated by the US Government's continued investment in automated translation research, such as the Broad Operational Language Translation Program (BOLT).⁶⁴ Furthermore, relying on the language skills of native and heritage speakers to fill the short term gap is not a sustainable solution due to the overall demand for foreign language skills, the requirements for literacy and proficiency in English, as well as the high levels of security vetting required for federal employment.

60 Foreign Language, Chief Human Capital Office, Director for National Intelligence. www.dni.gov/index.php/about/organization/foreign-language

61 Testimony of Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield, Director-General of the Foreign Service and Director of the Human Resources Department of State before the Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia for a panel discussion on "A National Security Crisis: Foreign Language Capabilities in the Federal Government," May 21, 2012. www.hsgac.senate.gov/download/?id=8482e166-4aa4-4ff7-b23e-3239f25cc756

62 The IC formally includes the National Security Agency (NSA), Central Intelligence Agency, the National Security Branch of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), National Geospatial Intelligence Agency (NGA), National Reconnaissance Agency (NRO), as well as the intelligence commands of the four military services (AFISRA, INSACOM, MCIA and ONI); the US Coast Guard (CGI); and the Intelligence bureaus of the Departments of State (INR), Treasury (TFI), Homeland Security (I&A), and Energy (OICI); and the Intelligence Division of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA/ONSI). The IC is led by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI). www.intelligence.gov/mission/member-agencies.html

63 Forbes, *America's Foreign Language Deficit*, August 27, 2013. www.forbes.com/sites/collegeprose/2012/08/27/americas-foreign-language-deficit/

64 [www.darpa.mil/Our_Work/I2O/Programs/Broad_Operational_Language_Translation_\(BOLT\).aspx](http://www.darpa.mil/Our_Work/I2O/Programs/Broad_Operational_Language_Translation_(BOLT).aspx)

Addressing the lack of a prior learning infrastructure: noteworthy aspects of the US approach

Setting targets and increasing language requirements within careers

While foreign language proficiency is not a requirement of entry into the State Department, a number of measures have been introduced since November 2012 for specialist and generalist candidates to the Foreign Service Institute (FSI). Bonus points are now available for specialist⁶⁵ and generalist⁶⁶ candidates offering certain levels of language proficiency in a selection of languages,⁶⁷ with lower requirements set for more critical languages.⁶⁸

Within the DoD, language and culture training has become mandatory since 2010 for all soldiers, reservists and Army civilians before they are deployed overseas. According to the US Army, although a six-to-hour online course is mandatory for all prior to deployment, “each platoon or like-sized unit must have a language-enabled Soldier who has taken either the 100-hour online HeadStart program or a 16-week course.”⁶⁹

As outlined in its strategic plan for 2011–2016, the DoD has established three key goals to build future capacity in language skills, regional expertise and cultural capabilities:

- Identify, validate, and prioritize requirements for language skills, regional expertise, and cultural capabilities, and generate accurate demand signals in support of DoD missions.

65 <http://careers.state.gov/specialist/selection-process-printable>

66 <http://careers.state.gov/officer/selection-process-printable>

67 Candidates can receive .17 language bonus points for passing the FSI telephone test at speaking level 3 in the languages outlined in the following document: <http://careers.state.gov/uploads/23/86/2386f5de7f14369e5231db272ccfe423/Language-Points-2013.pdf>. The self assessment levels for speaking, reading and writing are determined by the Inter-Agency Language Roundtable www.govtilr.org/. Candidates who pass the FSI telephone test will then need to pass an in-person two-hour speaking and reading test conducted by the FSI to receive ‘bumped-up’ bonus points. Language bonus points are granted for one language only.

68 <http://careers.state.gov/uploads/23/86/2386f5de7f14369e5231db272ccfe423/Language-Points-2013.pdf>. Candidates testing in Arabic; Chinese (Mandarin); Hindi; Persian (Dari); Persian (Farsi); Pashto; Urdu and Korean only need to pass the FSI telephone test at speaking level 2.

69 US Army, Army Language Culture Training ‘Revolutionary’, Marisa Petrich, 28 March, 2011. www.army.mil/article/53928/

- Build, enhance, and sustain a Total Force with a mix of language skills, regional expertise, and cultural capabilities to meet existing and emerging needs in support of national security objectives.
- Strengthen language skills, regional expertise, and cultural capabilities to increase interoperability and to build partner capacity.⁷⁰

Addressing the lack of a language learning infrastructure

There is widespread acknowledgement that the lack of a learning infrastructure from K-12 through to postsecondary education is at the root of the problem. However, the Federal government has a limited role in education as it is seen as primarily a state and local responsibility.⁷¹ The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) indicated in their most recent enrolment study that only 18.5% of all K-12 students,⁷² or 8.6 million students, were enrolled in a foreign language course in the US.⁷³ At the time of the Modern Language Association enrollment survey in 2006, only 8.6% of college students were studying a foreign language course and less than 1% of college students were studying critical languages.⁷⁴ It is therefore clear that too few students are studying both traditional and critical foreign languages from an early age.

These meagre enrollment levels and the resulting low language competencies have provoked a major shift in federal language assistance. While strengthening the federal language education system within the defense, intelligence, and diplomacy agencies, a series of direct federal investment in K-12 and higher education language programming was undertaken.

70 Department of Defense Strategic Plan for Language Skills, Regional Expertise and Cultural Capabilities: 2011 – 2016

71 US Department of Education, The Federal Role In Education. www.ed.gov/about/overview/fed/role.html

72 K-12 encompasses all stages of primary and secondary education in the United States – from kindergarten (K) through to twelfth grade (12).

73 *Foreign Language Enrollments in K–12 Public Schools: Are Students Prepared for a Global Society?* American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/ReportSummary2011.pdf

74 Furman, N., Goldberg, D., Luisin, N. *Enrollment in languages other than English in United States institutions of higher education*, Fall 2006. New York: The Modern Language Association, 2008. www.mla.org/pdf/06enrollmentsurvey_final.pdf

In 2006, the National Security Language Initiative for Youth (NSLI-Y),⁷⁵ a public school programme coordinated by the State Department, the Department of Defense, the Department of Education, and the Director of National Intelligence, was launched to achieve several goals:

- To improve the ability of Americans to engage with the people of Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), Hindi, Korean, Persian (Tajiki), Russian, and Turkish-speaking countries through shared language;
- To develop a cadre of Americans with advanced linguistic skills and related cultural understanding who are able to use their linguistic and cultural skills to advance international dialogue and compete effectively in the global economy;
- To provide a tangible incentive for the learning and use of foreign language by creating overseas language study opportunities for U.S. high school students;
- To spark a lifetime interest in foreign languages and cultures among American youth.⁷⁶

To improve language learning at the K-12 level, the NSLI established STARTALK in 2006, an initiative that funds summer school programmes in critical languages such as Arabic, Chinese, Hindi, Persian, Turkish, Swahili and Urdu.⁷⁷

Despite acknowledging a pressing need for language skills for economic competitiveness as well as national security, the US Federal government finds itself to be disadvantaged vis-à-vis its European counterparts. It is facing a considerable challenge to turn the tide on the language gap, at a time when language needs are growing, despite the investment of substantial resources.

Cross-departmental collaboration

An Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) was formally established in 1973 to enable sharing and collaboration on language needs across US federal agencies. Although the roundtable has no

75 NSLI For Youth Initiative. www.nsliforyouth.org/nsli-y/about/

76 Ibid.

77 <https://startalk.umd.edu/>

formal status and relies on volunteer membership, more than forty different federal government agencies are usually represented at ILR meetings,⁷⁸ which are held to exchange information on language use, language testing and other language-related activities.

Since 9/11, a number of structural developments have occurred within the IC, as well as in the DoD, to help foster coordination on language policy. Each IC member and each major component of the DoD now has a designated Senior Language Authority (SLA) or equivalent, namely a senior Civil servant or General Officer with responsibility for language policy and readiness.⁷⁹

Within the IC, the Foreign Language Executive Committee (FLEX-COM) meets on a monthly basis to coordinate policy and acts as the senior advisory body to the Assistant Director of National Intelligence for Human Capital (ADNI/HC) on matters relating to the IC foreign language capabilities.⁸⁰ It has a range of standing expert working groups on areas such as assessment and training.

Within the DoD, the DoD SLA, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Readiness, chairs the Defense Language Steering Committee (DLSC), which acts as an internal governance body and coordinates language policy.⁸¹ It has SLA representation from each of the four armed services (at the general officer level), the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence, and the military intelligence agencies (NSA, DIA, NGA).⁸²

Heritage Speakers

In the last decade, a number of DoD-funded programmes have been established to support naturalised citizens and temporary citizens with critical language skills to improve their English

78 History, Government Interagency Language Roundtable. www.govtilr.org/IRL%20History.htm

79 Department of Defense Directive 5160.41E, October 21, 2005, Incorporating change 1 on May 27, 2010. www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/516041p.pdf

80 Intelligence Community Directive 630, Intelligence Community Foreign Language Capability, 14 May 2012 www.fas.org/irp/dni/icd/icd-630.pdf

81 Defense Language Transformation Roadmap, Department of Defense, January 2005. www.defense.gov/news/mar2005/d20050330roadmap.pdf

82 Department of Defense Directive 5160.41E, October 21, 2005, Incorporating change 1 on May 27, 2010. www.fas.org/irp/doddir/dod/d5160_41.pdf www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/516041p.pdf

language skills. Since 2006, the English for Heritage Language Speakers programme (EHLS) initiative, originally funded by NSEP, has been helping naturalised citizens with critical language skills to develop professional proficiency in English, offering full scholarships and providing advanced training for potential employment in federal services.⁸³ In 2012, the Secretary of State also authorised the Military Accessions Vital to the National Interest programme (MAVNI), a pilot programme designed to provide a pathway to citizenship for non-citizens serving in the military with critical language skills.⁸⁴ This pathway means that temporary residents with desired language skills that are recruited through MAVNI can be fast-tracked for US citizenship upon entry into the US Army.⁸⁵

In 2006, the US has instituted the National Language Service Corps (NLSC), an organisation of language volunteers who serve as a pool of supplemental linguistic resources to US federal agencies. In case of a national need, a regional emergency, or a national security requirement, NLSC's members can assist a U.S. federal agency to fill foreign language needs at short notice with readily available multilingual U.S. citizens.⁸⁶ In 2013, the President signed the National Defense Authorization Act, establishing the NLSC as a permanent programme due to the success of the pilot programme.⁸⁷ Although the corps currently consists of 4,000 citizens, it is expected that numbers will be boosted to 15,000 as the program is scaled up to serve the federal sector.⁸⁸

83 www.ehlsprogram.org/

84 www.defense.gov/news/mavni-fact-sheet.pdf

85 *Ibid.*

86 National Language Service Corps www.nlscorps.org/

87 American Forces Press Office, Language Corps Members Employ Skills for Nation, Jan 9, 2013. www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=118951

88 *Ibid.*

Part two: Sustaining language capacity

The wider context: sustaining language capacity and expertise in the UK

Although the specific language skills required by government are usually more specialised, they must be considered in the wider context of the UK's current approach to language learning in schools and universities, as this has a direct impact on language capacity and its sustainability. By language capacity, we mean communication involving the integration of linguistic with cultural skills. In this sense, there is a need both for specialist linguists as well as those graduates with language competences, however and wherever acquired.

This part of the report explores the policies and practices that underpin language learning in the UK, from schools through to higher education institutions (HEIs), and how the current approach has an ascertainable effect on how well, and how efficiently, the Government's language needs are met.

As noted in the introduction, the British do not have an impressive record when it comes to learning foreign languages, ranking near the bottom of the European league in the latest Eurobarometer survey of languages spoken and the level of foreign language competence.⁸⁹

While on-the-job training or using native speakers can meet the short-term language requirements of government, a strategic approach is necessary in order to produce an efficient and sustainable supply of

⁸⁹ In a Eurobarometer survey 39% of people surveyed in Britain responded that they could have a conversation in a second language (only Italy and Hungary were lower) European Commission Special Eurobarometer 386 *Europeans and their Languages* June 2012 http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_386_sum_en.pdf

adequately skilled professionals. We therefore need to ensure that key language skills are acquired as a fundamental part of an individual's education.

The benefits of language learning are far wider than diplomacy and national security. However, our aim here is to assess the role played by schools and HEIs in laying the foundations to preserve the national capacity for strategically important languages. This section draws upon submissions to our online consultation from over 35 HEIs across the UK, as well as interviews and desk research.

Language learning in schools

The foundations provided by effective early language learning in schools offer the beginning of a pathway for students to go on to language learning at tertiary level, and they sow the seeds for cultural inquisitiveness, awareness and interaction. Recent studies show that language learning in early life confers cognitive advantages and is more effective than language learning in later life.⁹⁰ Although the range of languages taught at schools is largely limited to modern European languages, the discipline of learning a language and its structures makes learning additional languages much easier and further improves the learners' grasp of their native language.⁹¹

Language learning policy in schools over the last two decades has been characterised by a lack of consistency and some major setbacks. Changes to the school curriculum in 2002 that came into force in 2004, making the study of a modern foreign language optional at Key Stage 4, had a profoundly negative effect on the take-up of language qualifications. In an increasingly dominant culture of league tables and school targets in which languages were viewed as difficult, the period post-2002 led to a significant decline in the numbers of students studying languages at GCSE and consequently at A-Level. The number of pupils

90 Rocio Domingues and Silvia Pessoa "Early Versus Late Start in Foreign Language Education: Documenting Achievements," *Foreign Language Annals*, VOI 38:4 pp473–483 www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=bilingual-brains

91 "Bilinguals find it easier to learn a third language" *Science Daily*, Feb 1 2911 www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/02/110201110915.htm

taking GCSE languages has fallen from 78% in 2001 to 40% in 2011.⁹² As Michael Worton noted in 2009, *“the absence of foreign languages post 14 sends out a powerful negative message...there remains no sense nationally or internationally that the UK is committed to multilingualism and thereby to informed intercultural interactions.”*

The removal of the statutory requirement to study a modern foreign language in 2002 has had a considerable but varied impact on many Higher Education (HE) language departments; in a response to our consultation, one university described it as ‘nothing short of disastrous for the country as a whole’. The Department of German at the University of Cambridge anticipated that the resulting decline in numbers of applicants and admissions in German would have very long-term effects, reducing the numbers of German research students, academic posts and teachers, as well as the areas of research covered in UK universities. Furthermore, the proportion of students from the state sector applying to study languages remains worryingly low, with nearly a third of linguists in higher education coming from independent schools.⁹³

There are some promising signs that this decline is being reversed at GCSE level.⁹⁴ The introduction of compulsory language learning at primary school from 2014 is a welcome move. And since the introduction of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc), a performance indicator measuring students’ achievements in five core subjects at GCSE level, (one of which is a language) there has been an increase in the number of students studying languages. However, there remain questions about how much language learning can be boosted in light of the current lack of a continued compulsory language pathway through to GCSE and A-Level. It remains to be seen as to whether the recent decision by the Department of Education (DfE) not to proceed with the proposal of replacing the GCSEs with the English Baccalaureate Certificate (E-BC) will reverse the increase in language take-up (if schools had been encouraging language study in anticipation of the E-BC). Moreover the proposals for changes in the accountability measures for schools coming into force from 2016⁹⁵ may prove problematic for uptake in languages.

92 Tinsley, Teresa and Han, Youping, *Language learning in secondary schools in England Findings from the 2011 Language Trends survey*, CFBT Education Trust, 2012, p.12 www.cfbt.com/evidenceforeducation/pdf/Language%20Trends%20Report.pdf

93 British Academy “Languages: State of the Nation” British Academy Report, February 2013 p.18.

94 *Ibid* p.17.

95 Reforming the accountability system for secondary schools, Oral statement to Parliament, 14 October 2013 www.gov.uk/government/speeches/reforming-the-accountability-system-for-secondary-schools

While the EBacc performance measure will remain in its present form as one of four accountability measures that will be reported in the public domain, the introduction of the new progress measure, which assesses pupil progress and attainment by measuring their average grade in the best of 8 subjects, does not require that one of those eight subjects is a language. Pupils must study English and Maths, 3 further EBacc subjects, and 3 other high-value qualifications. This final group offers them a choice of further traditional academic subjects, such as art, music and drama, and vocational subjects, such as engineering and business. It remains to be seen how this new measure will affect pupils' choices of curriculum options post 14. A possible benefit of this reform is that some pupils could choose to study two languages. However, there could also be a decrease in those opting to study languages, depending on the status of the EBacc and how the tool is viewed by head teachers, Ofsted and the general public as an effective measure of overall school performance. For individual pupils, the instrumental value of languages at GCSE as a desirable asset for entry into the Sixth Form, Further or Higher Education may be controversial but would be worthy of consideration, if we are to redress the long-term language deficit in our schools and universities and in employment.

Notwithstanding the recent increase in the 2013 GCSE session, which may only be a temporary improvement, there remains a worry about take-up at A-level. There is concern that students avoid taking modern foreign languages at A-level due to the documented fact that relatively fewer A*s are awarded compared to other subjects. This leads to bright students thinking twice about doing language A-levels for fear of jeopardising their results and losing out on university places, and university language departments have reported that they struggle to recruit due to candidates missing their offers.⁹⁶ In addition, there is a marked and growing discrepancy between language study in the state sector and the private sector (where language take-up is healthy and growing), reflecting a class divide that is also apparent at the HE level. This not only exacerbates differential access to employment opportunities in the workplace and reinforces disadvantage, but also deters government departments such as the FCO from imposing stronger language requirements at entry.

96 "Modern language exam grades translate into poor results" Letter signed by numerous HEI language tutors Guardian, 7 October 2013, www.theguardian.com/education/2013/oct/07/language-exams-grades-translate-results

Britain's culturally diverse population means that there are considerable linguistic resources amongst the school age population which could be tapped and developed.⁹⁷ The 2008 Annual School Census revealed that in London alone, over 40 languages were spoken by more than 1000 pupils, with Bengali, Urdu, and Somali being the top non-English languages spoken.⁹⁸ Whilst the languages studied within schools are predominantly modern European languages, the Asset language scheme has, until recently, allowed for the development and recognition of the other language skills of native or heritage speakers. The Asset language scheme provided national level accreditation for achievements in 25 different languages and helped motivate and reward language learning. However, OCR has now withdrawn all accreditation through the Asset Scheme. Following OCR's decision, Speak to the Future – the campaign for languages – has announced that it will be working with national organisations, community leaders, schools and universities to support the development of home language hubs. The objectives of these hubs will be to raise the profile of home languages and to strengthen provision of home language teaching and accreditation.

It appears from this inquiry that the DfE has no particular strategic policy for encouraging languages, or specific languages, at GCSE and A-Level. Rather, it believes that this is an area where HEIs have an influential role in shaping the A-Level choices of students. However, HEI representatives told this inquiry that the GCSEs were a more pivotal point on which language learning decisions hinged, and that students at this stage could not be expected to make key decisions relating to university choices.

A persistent state of crisis: an overview of HEI language provision, capacity and trends

That universities have a valuable role to play in contributing to and sustaining the linguistic and cultural expertise required to meet the country's needs in the fields of diplomacy, trade, and defence has been consistently argued in various high level reports and commissions in the

97 Regional Language Network "The World in One City: The language skills of London's residents and why we need to make the most of their talent" April 2008 In 2007, some 40% of school children in London had a first language that was not English. www.rln-london.com/pdf/world_one_city_report.pdf

98 Michelle Von Ahn, Ruth Lupton, Charley Greenwood Dick Wiggins Languages, ethnicity, and education in London," DoQSS Working Papers 10–12, Department of Quantitative Social Science – Institute of Education, University of London.

post-war era.⁹⁹ A common theme to these reports is the conclusion that the UK Government is uniquely placed to take a strategic approach to language provision in the light of Britain's continuing and evolving needs by supporting the development of language capacity and area expertise in HEIs.

The Parker Report, which foresaw the need for strategic development of linguistic capacity, was a landmark report when it was published in 1986 and resulted in the creation of 45 new HE language posts in African and Asian studies.¹⁰⁰ It highlighted the need for Britain to maintain and nurture high quality centres of language teaching in order to equip employees of British government services, non-governmental organisations, media outlets, and businesses with the cultural and linguistic expertise to facilitate successful interaction with foreign partners. The current situation however, is one in which Britain's language deficit continues to be of concern, as the British Academy's recent *State of the Nation* report detailed.¹⁰¹ The consultation for this report revealed widespread concerns about the further diminution of language capacity at HEI level.

Over the last 15 years, the numbers enrolled in specialist HE language programmes have declined, a phenomenon that began before the 2002 school reforms. While the total number of undergraduates increased by 18% in the years 2001–2011, and those in the arts, humanities and social sciences by 26%, the numbers enrolled in modern foreign languages showed only a 1% increase over the same period.¹⁰² UCAS acceptance data for the period 2002–2013 showed a decline in acceptances for modern foreign languages of -9% and of -14% from 2011–12 to 2012–13.¹⁰³ A third of language departments in the UK closed in the period 2002–2009, with the majority of language departments now

99 Sir William Hayter, *Report of the Sub-Committee on Oriental, Slavonic, East European and African Studies*, London: University Grants Committee, 1961, The Nuffield Foundation *Languages: the Next Generation*, 2000, Michael Worton, Review of modern foreign language provision in higher education in England *HEFCE*, October 2009.

100 Many of these, however, have not been replaced.

101 British Academy, *Languages: State of the Nation*.

102 UCAS "Data reported for applications considered on time for 15 January deadline" www.ucas.com/about_us/media_enquiries/media_releases/2012/20120130

103 UCAS, Briefing on Data on demand and supply for Higher Education subjects, Undergraduates in HE disciplines, table 2.2.2 www.hefce.ac.uk/whatwedo/crosscutting/sivs/data/domicile/

confined to the Russell Group universities. Since 2009, language departments have continued to close and this decline looks set to continue.¹⁰⁴

However, student demand for languages is still present; even if it may not be increasing to meet the levels that various reports have argued are needed to satisfy the nation's requirements for trade, business, security, and diplomacy. There has been a consistent increase over time in the numbers enrolled in joint degrees.¹⁰⁵ Consultation respondents reported that while enrollment in single honours degrees in languages on offer is expected to decrease, the trend towards combined degrees looks set to continue. A recent HE report on languages studied alongside a student's main area of study for credit through University language centres, known as "Languages for All" or Institution-wide Language Provision (IWLP), showed that the demand for language learning remains buoyant.¹⁰⁶

HE language provision also shows a mixed picture in relation to which languages are studied. On the positive side, Chinese, Japanese, and Arabic – the languages that the Parker Report was particularly concerned to promote – have seen an increased uptake, driven largely by student demand and the existence of generous outside funding. On the other hand, there is a serious decline in lesser-taught and minority languages, amongst which are a number of "critical" languages that are important for strategic diplomatic and military objectives, as reflected in the current efforts of the SIA to recruit speakers of, among others, Farsi and Korean.

The most recent UCAS data shows a decline in acceptances to Eastern, Asiatic and African languages of -41% over the period 2002–3 to 2012–13.¹⁰⁷ In the category of other non-European languages, a category which includes other Eastern Asiatic, African, American, and Australasian languages and excludes Mandarin, Modern Arabic, Japanese and South Asian studies, the decline over the same period is particularly dramatic at -70%. As the British Academy's recent statements show,

104 Daniel Boffey "Language teaching crisis as 40% of university departments face closure," *The Observer*, 17 August 2013 www.theguardian.com/education/2013/aug/17/language-teaching-crisis-universities-closure

105 The University of St Andrews anticipate that they will be able to offer a partial degree in Persian language within three years, which will have to be taken in conjunction with another course, for example History or International Relations.

106 UCML:AJULC Survey of Institution-wide Language Provision in Universities in the UK, February 2013.

107 UCAS, Briefing on Data on demand and supply for Higher Education subjects, Undergraduates in HE disciplines, table 2.2.3 www.hefce.ac.uk/whatwedo/crosscutting/sivs/data/domicile/

the challenges currently facing the advanced study of languages in HE give rise to concern for the future of specialist language provision.¹⁰⁸

HEI contribution to language capacity and expertise needs for diplomacy, security, and international engagement

Government departments and HEIs were consulted in order to understand the direct and indirect ways in which HEIs currently contribute to the Government's language needs in the fields of diplomacy and national security, as well as the challenges facing language provision in HEIs. As Parker wrote, universities are the 'guardians' of the nation's linguistic assets and it is important to understand how they currently fulfil this role.

Graduate linguists

HEIs have traditionally provided language graduates for posts within central government, the majority of which are situated within the SIA. Although the number of posts for which graduate linguists are specifically required may form a small proportion of the total pool, the SIA states that only the very top-level linguists are recruited each year.¹⁰⁹ The need to ensure a sustainable cadre of top quality linguists capable of passing security vetting means that the SIA, and GCHQ in particular, have a strong vested interest in the health of language study at HE level. Any reduction in the numbers of language graduates is likely to affect the quality of applicants. They therefore maintain a proactive presence at university recruitment fairs and have noted an increased competition from private sector employers for linguists at these events.

Specialist expertise

HEIs are deep repositories of expertise on languages, histories and cultures, and produce research outputs and experts that can be useful for governments seeking to understand more about regions of particular interests. This knowledge base on languages, cultures, and societies that resides in HEIs is called on from time to time – though perhaps not often enough – by government departments. Both the FCO and the MOD maintain networks with academic experts, who are invited

¹⁰⁸ The British Academy is providing additional support to the British Institute for Persian Studies as part of its BASIS programme to train teachers of Farsi and broaden access to learning Farsi to researchers and professionals.

¹⁰⁹ The average annual recruitment is around 60 entrants a year.

to advise and speak at seminars, although in the case of the FCO these are very much devolved and personal networks. Many HEIs have traditionally hosted visiting positions for government officials. Specialist institutes such as Chatham House also facilitate interaction between academics and government officials.

Because such interactions tend to be of an ad hoc and varied nature, it has been difficult to get an accurate sense of their scale and effectiveness. It is worth noting that several academics consulted for this report indicated that they did not feel that their linguistic and cultural expertise was called upon when relevant by the Government, and speculated that this may be due to lack of knowledge on the part of officials as to what expertise resides within HEIs.

Language-Based Area Studies Centres have been one effective way of facilitating knowledge transfer from HEIs to the wider policy community, including government departments. The funding scheme was initially set up in 2006 with the purpose of “creating a world-class cadre of researchers with the necessary language skills to undertake contextually informed research in the Arabic speaking world; China; Japan; and Eastern Europe, including areas of the former Soviet Union”¹¹⁰ For example, the Centre for Advanced Study of the Arab World’s (CASAW) teacher training programme has attracted teachers from, among others, the FCO and the MOD.

Whilst the perception amongst some Government representatives consulted for this inquiry was that HEIs possessed a unique and valuable depth of expertise, many were not experienced in working with Government and found themselves disadvantaged vis-à-vis other private contractors on cost and other grounds when it came to bidding for contracts relating to language training and course design. There was also a sense that many academics were reluctant to work with certain departments such as the MOD on personal, moral or ideological grounds.

Lesser-taught critical languages

The study of certain critical languages is increasingly concentrated in fewer and fewer universities. Institutions such as the School of Orien-

¹¹⁰ The initiative was initially funded by the AHRC (Arts and Humanities Research Council) together with ESRC (Economic and Social Research Council), HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England) and SFC (Scottish Funding Council). Since 2011 the funding has been provided by the AHRC and the British Academy.

tal and African Studies (SOAS) have traditionally been the provider of the next generation of scholars or linguistic resources for the UK for African and Asian languages. The British Academy Sponsored Institutes and Societies (BASIS) also make a modest contribution through short courses and workshops, in particular the Council for British Research in the Levant in Arabic and the British Institute of Persian Studies in Farsi. However, capacity in these languages has declined over the last 15 years. At SOAS for example, academic posts in language and culture dropped from 65 to 55 between 1998 and 2010.¹¹¹ The loss of provision is a concern to those agencies such as the SIA who value high calibre linguists particularly in harder-to-learn languages.

Many of these languages – Farsi or Turkish to name but two – can lay claim to being strategically important. In the same way that Pashto in the context of Afghanistan became a national priority in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, a region such as West Africa, especially for example Nigeria, could emerge as one of geo-political significance for which knowledge of Hausa suddenly becomes invaluable – and the UK could find itself without the relevant linguistic and cultural experts to draw on.

The Nuffield inquiry in 2001 warned that national capability in many African, Asian, and East European languages was “extremely fragile”. Since then there has been further serious decline within HEIs in the provision of languages such as Indonesian, Mongolian, Swahili, and Urdu. The range of language expertise in UK HEIs is shrinking, and in some departments, area studies are taught without languages. Consequently, some academics have told us that there is now no longer any “slack in the system”.

Teaching/training provision and infrastructure

Over the last twenty years, there has been a decline in HEI involvement in providing language training for government departments. Following the closure of the FCO language school in 2007, the language training available to staff in government departments was largely delivered by private contractors.

Although many universities reported that they currently provide bespoke training for government departments, there were few details about the scale of this training or how much of this was language training as

111 Private Seminar, British Academy July 2011.

opposed to cultural, historical, and political awareness training. SOAS told us that, while the FCO training remained a high priority for them in terms of their mission, their Language Centre found it very difficult to compete with private contractors on cost grounds, owing to different employment contract arrangements.¹¹²

HEIs nevertheless continue to make important and unique contributions to the infrastructure of language teaching. They train a huge proportion of the language teachers and researchers of tomorrow and also produce training and assessment materials for language teaching based on the research they do on language learning and pedagogical methods. The University of Westminster, for example, provides military language examinations for all UK military forces personnel who undergo defence language training, and assesses potential civilian interpreters who may work alongside military counterparts in various theatres of operation.¹¹³ HEIs therefore perform a continuing and important quality assurance role within the language learning industry.

112 Interview, also see Executive Board, SOAS “The SOAS Language Centre: Review Report” June 2010 www.soas.ac.uk/hr/file59403.pdf

113 For more information about how the University of Westminster is working with MOD on language training see www.westminster.ac.uk/business/short-courses-and-training/specialised-language-examinations/modleb

Key issues

It is evident that UK HEIs offer highly relevant training in languages, culture and history to support government objectives within the fields of diplomacy and defence, but there is clearly room for a more significant and enhanced contribution to be made. At the same time, HEIs are facing a number of challenges in maintaining and enhancing their traditional reserves of language expertise in order to contribute to the UK's policy objectives in these fields.

Funding reforms and tuition fees

The new funding regime for higher education, introduced in 2012 provides a very different landscape that universities will have to navigate if language studies are to flourish. As part of the 2012 funding reforms, student fees are becoming universities' main source of income as publicly funded direct teaching grants are reduced. While the HEFCE teaching grants accounted for 64.1% of teaching funding to HEIs in England in 2011–12, this is set to be reduced to 24.1% by 2014–15 according to a report from Universities UK.¹¹⁴ The expectation is that income from higher tuition fees (backed by publically funded student loans) should more than make up for this loss of teaching grants, with student demand now playing a far bigger role in determining available finances. Nonetheless the majority of universities are currently breaking even or operating with surpluses and HEFCE forecasts that the total income of institutions will rise by 2.8% in 2012–13 with continued growth until 2014–15.¹¹⁵

114 Universities UK, 2013: *The Funding Environment for Universities – an assessment*, p. 55–58 www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Documents/2013/FundingEnvironmentForUniversities.pdf

115 *Ibid.*

This anticipated rise in income is dependent on universities meeting their targets for student recruitment. Any fall in recruitment numbers will have a direct impact on institutions' income. While in theory, an increase in income could potentially lead to HEI freedom to make strategic investments – including in language provision – financial uncertainty has led HEIs to cut costs and make efficiency savings in certain subject areas. Language departments have already been hit by a cut in courses on offer, reductions in staff numbers, and even closures of entire departments.¹¹⁶

Concerns about funding for language study will remain so long as applications to modern foreign languages continue to fall. According to data from UCAS, 4842 applicants were accepted onto MFL courses in 2012, down -14% from 2011. The trend continued in 2013, with a further 6% fall in applications from the previous year.¹¹⁷ While it is too early to say how far these numbers are a consequence of higher tuition fees, they also reflect the downward trend in MFL A-level entries.¹¹⁸ Findings from the consultation process reflect the on-going concerns about funding and the impact of higher tuition fees.

The fragility of provision for language learning within HEIs cannot be overestimated. Recently, the University of the West of England reported that language provision at undergraduate and master's degree level, as well as its university-wide Language Programme for non-specialists, had been axed. In June 2013 the University of Salford decided to discontinue all of its current modern foreign languages programmes, with a view to eventually closing its School of Humanities, Languages & Social Sciences.¹¹⁹ In his email to Salford University students, the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Martin Hall was clear that falling demand in applications for MFL degrees was a direct cause of the proposed cuts.¹²⁰ However, over the past few months, the University has agreed to establish a joint task force to explore the feasibility of a new joint honours curriculum model for languages, and the consequent continuing viability of post graduate translating and interpreting.

116 A review of current HE language provision will be undertaken as part of the Academy's policy research project, *Born Global*. www.britac.ac.uk/policy/Born_Global.cfm.

117 HEFCE *Higher Education in England – impact of the 2012 funding reforms*, p.30 www.hefce.ac.uk/media/hefce/content/about/introduction/abouttheinengland/impactreport/Impact-report.pdf

118 *Ibid.*

119 A message from the Vice Chancellor, Salford University 5 June 2013 <http://students.salford.ac.uk/news/?id=2210>

120 *Ibid.*

There are also concerns that the year abroad, which is usually required as part of a four year conventional language will deter students and further contribute to a fall in applicants. To alleviate the impact of the additional costs associated with such exchange programmes, the Government has announced a tuition fee supplement of approximately £2,250 per student.¹²¹

Some universities are now exploring different ways to expand their language provision, in some cases by targeting such courses towards vocational ends and expanding joint degree offerings.¹²² The University of St Andrews reported that it anticipates offering a partial degree in Persian, to be taken in conjunction with another course such as International Relations or History, within three years. Responses to the consultation also suggest that some universities are expanding their Languages for All provisions. Languages for All is an initiative to support language learning at university level which is not a compulsory part of a degree programme.¹²³ This includes language courses taken for academic credit as well as extra-curricular language classes. Languages for All courses are often delivered through University Language Centres.

One of the motivations for such an expansion is the increased competition for students as the new funding regime sets in.¹²⁴ In its submission to our consultation, the Association of University Language Centres (AULC) noted that the language training offered by its members responds to the employability demands of students, of the HEIs and of employers. However, it is worth noting that it does not provide the same degree of depth of cultural knowledge which comes with more in-depth academic specialist study.

121 Baroness Garden of Frognal: Keynote Speech, launch of Born Global policy research project, 23rd Sept 2013.

122 In response to a consultation, the University of Essex reported that it is now offering 19 undergraduate language degrees and four MAs – including a new Master degree in translation and interpreting, initially in Chinese, French, German and Italian in the light of the persistently unmet need for qualified language professionals in the fields of translation and interpreting. The University of St Andrews reported that it anticipates offering a partial degree in Persian language to be taken in conjunction with another course such as International Relations or History within three years.

123 UCML:AULC Survey of Institution-Wide Language Provision in universities in the UK (2012–13).

124 From autumn 2012, all students at the University of Essex are offered the opportunity to learn a language for free in addition to their full-time studies, whatever their discipline. At Aston University all fee-paying undergraduate students are now entitled to two 10-credit language modules for free during their first year of study.

Funding lesser-taught and minority language provision

In the area of lesser-taught or minority languages, it is the case that student demand is unlikely ever to reach levels that make such provision economically self-sustaining. The gradual withdrawal of special factor funding over time has left some universities with no choice but to cross-subsidise these areas from block teaching grants, which also will end in 2013.

Declining provision for the study of lesser-taught and minority languages poses a threat to the pool of UK expertise in these areas. Capacity, once gone, is very difficult to rebuild, although it is not so costly to maintain at a basic level. In light of current budget pressures, the lack of student demand for studying languages such as Turkish and Farsi means that some universities offering courses in Farsi do not feel they can justify employing a full-time Persian language instructor, or offer these instructors extended or permanent contracts.

It also emerged during the consultation that universities are increasingly reliant on philanthropy. In particular, the contribution made by overseas donors, such as the Iran Heritage Foundation, wealthy Middle Eastern governments, and the Chinese government-sponsored Confucius institutes, has become invaluable. One respondent made the point that the Chinese government now funds more Chinese language learning in the UK than the UK Government, and that this imbalance may give rise to potential strains on the neutrality/impartiality of the recipients.

Strategically Important and Vulnerable Subject funding

That languages fall into the category of areas and disciplines that are vulnerable and therefore need additional support has been recognised for some time. Following the publication of the Nuffield Report (2001), HEFCE set up the SIVS programme to support subjects deemed strategically important and vulnerable.¹²⁵ As part of the SIVS programme of support,¹²⁶ languages received £21 million of support between 2005 and 2012.

¹²⁵ STEM: Chemistry, engineering, mathematics, and physics; modern foreign languages and related area studies, quantitative social science and land-based studies – subsequently removed in 2008.

¹²⁶ A £350 million programme of work to support subjects considered strategically important and vulnerable was undertaken between 2005 and 2012.

Several respondents emphasised the inclusion of languages in the SIVS programme as vital for continued provision. In 2012 the HEFCE Board agreed a new policy approach to SIVS, through which it would continue to provide support for modern foreign languages. Support to date has included: exemption from the adjustments to student number controls for 2012–13; a tuition fee supplement of around £2,250 for students engaging in a year of study or work abroad, from 2014–15 onwards, through the Erasmus exchange programme or study abroad through another route; further investment into demand-rising activity in modern foreign languages (Routes into Languages programme) and ongoing engagement with the sector on innovation to sustain the supply of language provision whilst steps are taken to address concerns about demand.

Decentralisation and the lack of strategic co-ordination and planning

The Nuffield Inquiry warned in 2001 that higher education was a diverse and fragmented sector, which lacks both the will and the means to address UK-wide strategic issues in languages in a sustained way and called for a comprehensive language strategy to address that.¹²⁷ This looks unlikely to occur organically in the current climate where university Vice-Chancellors are increasingly taking decisions with an eye on student demand and financial viability, and therefore decisions about where residual government funding goes is further devolved.

However, certain Vice-Chancellors have shown that some UK universities, if they are in a position to do so, can make decisions according to scholarly importance and size of language community as to level of staffing provision and nature of provision. On the other hand, there is no reason to think that these decisions would necessarily reflect the strategic interests of government. The idea that a co-ordinated strategic approach which ties together the needs of government and ensures capacity across the HEI network to maintain a national language capacity in certain languages and geographical areas is a compelling one. It could also lead to a more effective distribution of resources across different language families through encouraging consortia of universities and concentrations of focused expertise.

¹²⁷ It noted that “There is an urgent need for a national strategy to plan the range of languages taught in higher education, to manage the integration of languages into all subject areas and to maintain a sufficient supply of language specialists.” Nuffield Foundation, *Languages: the Next Generation*.”

Recommendations

The recommendations below draw upon the findings of this inquiry as well as recommendations from existing British Academy reports, and parliamentary committees in this area. Some of these are more general than others, reflecting the statement in the introduction that this report is, in many senses, a prelude to further investigation.

Long-term strategic planning

- To deliver consistent, sustainable, and efficient language skills within government, there needs to be a clear and concerted approach that is supported and implemented across government, including:
 - a regular, consistent cross-departmental audit of language needs and skills;
 - policies to develop and maintain existing language skills; and
 - recognition of language skills within development objectives.

Leadership and incentives for language learning within government

- Ministers, senior civil servants, and human resources departments need to support and deliver these objectives. A robust structure is vital to demonstrate leadership, monitor progress, and maintain accountability. A cross-Whitehall group should accurately assess needs, allocate resources, and engage with suppliers.
- Incentives should be used both to encourage up-take of language learning and to dispel the perceived stigma that seems to surround time spent on language skills.

Investment in future capacity

- The Government should work closely with HEIs to ensure that there is a sustainable and consistent pathway for language learners from primary to tertiary levels. Support needs to be provided for language learning at every stage to maximise the opportunities from initial language learning opportunities to the taking up advanced language qualifications and the fostering of expertise.

Recognising developing language capacity in lesser-taught and minority languages

- HEIs should ensure that they have the best structures in place to co-ordinate the allocation of resources to preserve at least a basic or minimum capacity in particularly threatened languages.
- The links between HEI provision and the needs of government departments should be identified and strengthened.
- To ensure that surge language capacity for national security, diplomacy and defence is maintained a strong commitment should be made to resourcing the study and maintenance of lesser-taught and minority languages.
- The recognition, development, and certification of heritage language skills should be encouraged by developing a replacement for the Asset Language Scheme in community languages. This could be provided at FE and HE levels rather than at school level.
- Government departments could also encourage and incentivise voluntary disclosure of heritage language skills amongst employees.

Conclusion

The aim of this inquiry was to establish an initial understanding of the UK Government's language capacity, how well it serves the UK's diplomatic, security, and defence objectives and how to provide a pathway that can be followed to secure and improve this capacity for the future.

It is clear that the language skills are recognised and utilised within the fields of defence and national security. The newly established FCO Language Centre and the Defence School of Languages and Culture are potential beacons of commitment to language learning across government. However, there needs to be an assurance that teaching quality will not be compromised by cost and the use of contract providers and that valuable teaching expertise which is built up over time will be preserved.

Further, the report raises concerns about the source and supply of these skills in the future. Both funding pressures – within government and HEIs – and the diminishing number of graduates obtaining language qualifications have drained the linguistic resource pool. If this is not addressed it will have a detrimental impact upon recruitment for defence and national security.

The decline in diplomats with functional proficiency in the language of the country in which they work is also deeply concerning. While the re-opening of the FCO Language Centre, as well as the commitment made by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, is welcome, significant work is required to embed these changes and reverse this decline.

The current apathy towards language skills across government and the perception that they may in fact be detrimental to an individual's career development and advancement are particularly worrying. These need to be addressed by establishing clear policies, strong leadership and significant incentives which recognise and support language learning.

It is clear from this inquiry that the government will not be able to sustain or increase its language capacity without addressing the issue of diminishing supply. The number of language graduates continues to decline and therefore the Government needs to work closely with all parts of the education system to develop policies that provide a consistent pathway for language learners from primary to tertiary levels. HEIs also need to be engaged to ensure that where language capacity and expertise in strategically important, lesser-taught minority languages exists, it is supported and maintained.

Ultimately, if no action is taken, language skills within government will continue to erode until there are neither the skills within government nor enough new linguists coming through the education system, to rebuild its capacity and meet the security, defence, and diplomacy requirements of the UK. It is clear that these needs can no longer be sustained by individual initiatives within specific sectors. A strategic and consistent policy for languages needs to be developed across government, which addresses the supply, recruitment and development of individuals with language skills.

List of abbreviations

AULC	Association of University Language Centres
BIS	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
BME	Black and minority ethnic
CASAW	Centre for Advanced Study of the Arab World
CASL	Centre for Advanced Study of Language
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
DCLC	Defence School of Languages and Culture
DfE	Department for Education
DFID	Department for International Development
DoD	(US) Department of Defense
DOLSU	Defence Operational Languages Support Unit
DSL	Defence School of Languages
E-BACC	English Baccalaureate
E-BC	English Baccalaureate Certificate
EU	European Union
FAC	Foreign Affairs Select Committee
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FE	Further Education
GCHQ	Government Communication Headquarters
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GSA	Government Skills Agency
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HMRC	HM Revenue & Customs
HO	Home Office
HR	Human Resources
IWLP	Institution-wide Language Provision
LESAS	Locally Engaged Staff Assistance Scheme
MFL	Modern Foreign Languages

MI5	The Security Service
MOD	Ministry of Defence
MPS	Metropolitan Police Service
NCA	National Crime Agency
NLSC	National Language Service Corps
NSLI	National Security Language Initiative
OCR	Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations Board
SIA	Security and Intelligence Agencies
SIVS	Strategically Important and Vulnerable Subjects
SO15	Metropolitan Police Service's Counter Terrorism Command
SOAS	School of Oriental and African Studies
SOCA	Serious Organised Crime Agency
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
UCL	University College London
UK	United Kingdom
UKIDSCOL	UK Interdepartmental Standing Committee on Languages
UKTI	UK Trade & Investment
US	United States

List of contributors to inquiry

Organisations and individuals interviewed for the report

- BP
- British Council
- Charles Crawford, former HM ambassador to Poland
- Defence Academy of the UK
- Department for Education
- Department for International Development (DFID)
- Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)
- GCHQ
- Government Equalities Office
- International Institute for Strategic Studies
- Metropolitan Police
- School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS)
- SOCA
- The Security Service (MI5)

Organisations which responded to the online consultation

Business, NGOs and other relevant stakeholders

- African Studies Association of the UK
- Alcantara Communications LLP
- BBC World Service
- Centre for Turkey Studies and Development (CTSD)
- Chartered Institute of Linguists and IoL Educational Trust
- EMAS UK Ltd
- International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS)
- Languages Sheffield
- Oxfam
- Primary Language awards
- Society for Latin American Studies
- Speak to the Future – the campaign for languages

Government and public bodies

- Association for Chief Police Officers (International Affairs)
- Bòrd na Gàidhlig
- Department for Business Innovation and Skills (HR Directorate)
- Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (Europe, Trade and International sub-directorate)
- Foreign and Commonwealth Office
- Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)
- Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW)
- International Labour Organization (ILO)
- Scottish Funding Council
- The National Register of Public Service Interpreters (NRPSI)

HEI and language providers

- African Studies Centre (Oxford)
- Association of School and College leaders
- Association of South-East Asian Studies in the United Kingdom (ASEASUK)
- British Association for Chinese Studies (BACS)
- Council of University Classical Departments
- Durham University
- Imperial College (Department of Humanities)
- La Academia
- London Languages
- Rosetta Stone
- School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS)
- Society for Italian Studies
- Southampton University (Geography and Environment)
- The Association of University Language Centres (AULC)
- The Mary Glasgow Language Trust
- UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies (UCL SSEES)
- UK Council for Area Studies Associations
- University Council of Modern Languages
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- Dr Russell Jones

About the Steering Group

Dr Robin Niblett

Robin Niblett became the Director of Chatham House (the Royal Institute of International Affairs) in January 2007. Before joining Chatham House, from 2001 to 2006, Dr Niblett was the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Washington based Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS). During his last two years at CSIS, he also served as Director of the CSIS Europe Program and its Initiative for a Renewed Transatlantic Partnership.

Most recently Dr Niblett is the author of the Chatham House Report *Playing to its Strengths: Rethinking the UK's Role in a Changing World* (Chatham House, 2010) and *Ready to Lead? Rethinking America's Role in a Changed World* (Chatham House, 2009), and editor and contributing author to *America and a Changed World: A Question of Leadership* (Chatham House/Wiley-Blackwell, 2010). He is also the author or contributor to a number of CSIS reports on transatlantic relations and is contributing author and co-editor with William Wallace of the book *Rethinking European Order* (Palgrave, 2001). Dr Niblett is a frequent panellist at conferences on transatlantic relations. He has testified on a number of occasions to the House of Commons Defence Select Committee and Foreign Affairs Committee as well as US Senate and House Committees on European Affairs.

Dr Niblett is a Non-Executive Director of Fidelity European Values Investment Trust. He is a Council member of the Overseas Development Institute and a member of the World Economic Forum's Global Agenda Council on Europe. He received his BA in Modern Languages and MPhil and DPhil from New College, Oxford.

Professor Graham Furniss OBE, FBA

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He is currently a Commissioner of the Commonwealth Scholarships Commission and a Trustee of the Britain-Nigeria Educational Trust. He chairs the British Academy Africa Panel, and is a former President of the African Studies Association of the UK. He chaired the steering committees that produced *The Nairobi Report: Frameworks for Africa-UK Research Collaboration in the Social Sciences and Humanities* in 2009, and *Foundations for the Future: Supporting the Early Careers of African Researchers* in 2011, both published by the British Academy and the Association of Commonwealth Universities.

Professor Clive Holes FBA

Professor Clive Holes FBA has been Khalid bin Abdullah Al Saud Professor for the Study of the Contemporary Arab World at the University of Oxford since 1997, having previously been Lecturer and then Reader in Arabic at the University of Cambridge.

He served for many years in the Middle East and North Africa as a cultural diplomat and speaks, reads and writes Arabic and French fluently. His research and writing range widely over the Arabic language, in particular its spoken regional forms, and he has also published extensively on modern Arabic political poetry, composed in dialect, from Arabia, the Gulf, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt.

Rear Admiral Simon Lister CB, OBE

Rear Admiral Simon Lister is a Royal Navy Engineer Officer and will become Chief of Materiel (Fleet) and Chief of Fleet Support and promoted to the rank of Vice Admiral on 27 November 2013. Educated at the Royal Naval Engineering College at Manadon and the Royal Naval College Greenwich, Lister joined the Royal Navy in 1978. He was a marine engineer officer on the submarines HMS Valiant, HMS *Odin* in 1986 and then HMS Torbay, HMS *Trenchant* in 1993. He studied Russian and Polish at the Defence School of Languages in 1989, finishing as a First Class Interpreter in Russian. Based in Moscow, in the early 90's he worked throughout the Soviet Union during the last days of that state and in Poland. He became Naval Assistant to the Chief Executive of the Ship Support Agency in 1994 and, after attending the Sloan Business

School in 1996, he worked in the Ministry of Defence until returning as Naval Attaché in Moscow in 2001. During his second tour in Russia, he was responsible for co-operation for submarine rescue, arctic environmental clean up, and military resettlement cooperation. On return from Moscow, Lister returned to engineering leadership, in the Ministry of Defence, going on to be Commander, HM Naval Base Plymouth in 2005, Senior Naval Member on the Directing Staff at the Royal College of Defence Studies in April 2008 and Director, Submarines in 2009. He is the Senior Military Linguist and the Chief Naval Engineer Officer. He was awarded the OBE in 2001 and made CB in 2013.

Sir Ivor Roberts KCMG, FCIL

Sir Ivor Roberts is a former British diplomat and the President of Trinity College, Oxford since 2006. He joined the Foreign and Commonwealth Office as Third Secretary in 1968, serving in a number of postings in the Middle East, the Balkans, Western Europe, and the Pacific State of Vanuatu. He was appointed the first British Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia from 1996 to 1997, British Ambassador to Ireland from 1999 to 2003, prior to his final appointment as Ambassador to Rome from 2003 to 2006. In 2009 Sir Ivor was the major contributor to the first new edition for thirty years of *Satow's Diplomatic Practice*, widely regarded as the definitive handbook to international diplomatic practice.

Sir Ivor received his MA in Modern Languages from Keble College, Oxford, where he is an Honorary Fellow. He speaks fluent Italian, French and Spanish and passable Serbo-Croat, is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Linguists and Chairman of the Council of the British School in Rome.

Professor Dame Helen Wallace DBE, CMG, FBA

Helen Wallace is an Honorary Professor at the University of Sussex and was until summer 2013 a Professor in the European Institute at the London School of Economics and Political Science. She holds various advisory appointments. From 2001 to 2006 she was Director of the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute, Florence. Previously she was Director of the ESRC "One Europe or Several?" Programme, and held posts at the Sussex European Institute, the Royal Institute of International Affairs, and the College of Europe.

She was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 2000, was Chair of the Political Studies Section from 2008 to 2011 and became Foreign

Secretary and an *ex officio* Vice President in July 2011. She became a Dame in January 2011.

Helen Wallace is a political scientist whose research has focused on the politics of European integration. Recent books include: *Policy-Making in the European Union*, 6th edn., coeditor with Mark Pollack and Alasdair Young, OUP, 2010. *Visions, Votes and Vetoes: Reassessing the Luxembourg Compromise 40 Years On*, co-editor with Jean-Marie Palayret and Pascaline Winand, P.I.E. Peter Lang, Brussels, 2006. *The Council of Ministers of the European Union*, co-author with Fiona Hayes-Renshaw, 2nd edition, Palgrave, 2006.

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