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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
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HOUSE OF LORDS
OFFICIAL REPORT

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The first time a Member speaks to a new piece of parliamentary business, the following abbreviations are used to show their party affiliation:

Abbreviation	Party/Group
CB	Cross Bench
Con	Conservative
Con Ind	Conservative Independent
DUP	Democratic Unionist Party
GP	Green Party
Ind Lab	Independent Labour
Ind LD	Independent Liberal Democrat
Ind SD	Independent Social Democrat
Lab	Labour
Lab Ind	Labour Independent
LD	Liberal Democrat
LD Ind	Liberal Democrat Independent
Non-afl	Non-affiliated
PC	Plaid Cymru
UKIP	UK Independence Party
UUP	Ulster Unionist Party

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House of Lords

Thursday, 28 May 2015.

11 am

Prayers—read by the Lord Bishop of Southwark.

Introduction: Lord Dunlop

11.08 am

Andrew James Dunlop, Esquire, having been created Baron Dunlop, of Helensburgh in the County of Dunbarton, was introduced and took the oath, supported by Lord Strathclyde and Lord Lang of Monkton, and signed an undertaking to abide by the Code of Conduct.

Introduction: Lord Maude of Horsham

11.15 am

The Rt. Hon. Francis Anthony Aylmer Maude, having been created Baron Maude of Horsham, of Shipley in the County of West Sussex, was introduced and took the oath, supported by Lord Hurd of Westwell and Lord Forsyth of Drumlean, and signed an undertaking to abide by the Code of Conduct.

Oaths and Affirmations

11.20 am

Several nobles Lords took the oath or made the solemn affirmation, and signed an undertaking to abide by the Code of Conduct.

Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill [HL] First Reading

11.24 am

A Bill to make provision for the election of mayors for the areas of, and for conferring additional functions on, combined authorities established under Part 6 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009; to make other provision in relation to bodies established under that Part; to make provision about local authority governance; and for connected purposes.

The Bill was introduced by Baroness Williams of Trafford, read a first time and ordered to be printed.

Psychoactive Substances Bill [HL] First Reading

11.25 am

A Bill to make provision about psychoactive substances; and for connected purposes.

The Bill was introduced by Lord Bates, read a first time and ordered to be printed.

Charities (Protection and Social Investment) Bill [HL] First Reading

11.25 am

A Bill to amend the Charities Act 2011.

The Bill was introduced by Lord Taylor of Holbeach, read a first time and ordered to be printed.

Airports Act 1986 (Amendment) Bill [HL] First Reading

11.26 am

A Bill to amend the Airports Act 1986.

The Bill was introduced by Lord Empey, read a first time and ordered to be printed.

Easter Trading Bill [HL] First Reading

11.26 am

A Bill to reform the law of England relating to Easter trading; and for connected purposes.

The Bill was introduced by Baroness Turner of Camden, read a first time and ordered to be printed.

Regulation of Political Opinion Polling Bill [HL] First Reading

11.26 am

A Bill to make provision for the regulation of political opinion polling in the United Kingdom; and for connected purposes.

The Bill was introduced by Lord Foulkes of Cumnock, read a first time and ordered to be printed.

Accessible Sports Grounds Bill [HL] First Reading

11.27 am

A Bill to make provision about greater accessibility of sports grounds; and for connected purposes.

The Bill was introduced by Lord Faulkner of Worcester, read a first time and ordered to be printed.

Online Safety Bill [HL] First Reading

11.27 am

A Bill to make provision about the promotion of online safety; to require internet service providers and mobile phone operators to provide an internet service that excludes adult content; to require electronic device manufacturers to provide a means of filtering internet content; to make provision for parents to be educated about online safety and for the regulation of harmful material through on-demand programme services.

The Bill was introduced by Lord McColl of Dulwich (on behalf of Baroness Howe of Idlicote), read a first time and ordered to be printed.

Committee of Selection Membership Motion

11.28 am

Moved by The Chairman of Committees

That in accordance with Standing Order 63 a Committee of Selection be appointed to select and propose to the House the names of the members to form each select committee of the House (except the Committee of Selection itself and any committee otherwise provided for by statute or by order of the House) or any other body not being a select committee referred to it by the Chairman of Committees, and the panel of Deputy Chairmen of Committees; and that the following members together with the Chairman of Committees be appointed to the Committee:

L Bassam of Brighton, L Faulkner of Worcester, L Laming, L Moser, L Newby, B Smith of Basildon, B Stowell of Beeston, L Taylor of Holbeach, V Ullswater, L Wallace of Tankerness.

Motion agreed.

Queen's Speech Debate (2nd Day)

11.28 am

Moved on Wednesday 27 May by Baroness Bottomley of Nettlestone

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty as follows:

“Most Gracious Sovereign—We, Your Majesty’s most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Lords Spiritual and Temporal in Parliament assembled, beg leave to thank Your Majesty for the most gracious Speech which Your Majesty has addressed to both Houses of Parliament”.

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Earl Howe) (Con): My Lords, it is a privilege for me to open this debate on Her Majesty’s gracious Speech, in which we will consider the Government’s priorities for foreign

affairs, European affairs, international development and defence in the year ahead. We have a long and distinguished list of speakers in front of us, but we look forward with particular anticipation to the maiden speech of my noble friend Lady Helic.

It is also a pleasure for me to represent defence again after an interval of almost 20 years, but first I pay tribute to my predecessor, my noble friend Lord Astor of Hever, who did such a fantastic job over the course of the last Parliament. He brought harmony where there might have been discord and ensured that the debate, while lively and sometimes vociferous, was always conducted in a productive and positive spirit.

When I was last in the MoD, I was responsible for taking through an Armed Forces Bill. That will be one of my responsibilities once more this time around. However, that is one of the few similarities between then and now because the world we contemplate today is a very different place. An arc of instability is spreading from the fringes of Europe and the heart of the Middle East to the horn of Africa. We have seen the resurgence of old threats, with an aggressive Russia annexing Crimea and continuing to destabilise Ukraine. We have seen the rise of new threats with non-state actors such as ISIL and Boko Haram, motivated by an evil religious fanaticism, attempting to set up their own state entities while laying waste to some of the most precious treasures in human history. At the same time, our adversaries are proving ever more ingenious in their methods of attack, using hybrid warfare and cybertechnologies.

In such a world, we must prove ourselves equally innovative and agile in response. That is why, in the gracious Speech, the Government have pledged to do whatever is necessary in an age of persistent competition to keep Britain safe. We will do our utmost to reduce the threat from nuclear weapons, cyberattacks and terrorism and will continue to remain at the forefront of the NATO and international effort to degrade and ultimately defeat the adversaries that affect and threaten us all. We in government will work in parallel across development, defence and diplomacy to enhance the standing and security of Britain in this unstable world. Together we will pursue a coherent policy that protects our security, promotes our prosperity and projects our values.

I turn to some of the specific priorities for this Government in the coming year. I start with defence. First and foremost, we will be focused on the strategic defence and security review. This will be a Cabinet Office-led cross-Whitehall piece of work covering the full spectrum of national security and defence. Work on it has begun and it will report in due course. It will be aligned with the comprehensive spending review and the national security strategy and will be driven by a hard-headed appraisal of our foreign policy and security objectives and the role we wish our country to play. It will recognise that we face an increasingly complex and challenging international and domestic security environment and that our security at home and overseas is intrinsically interlinked. It will also recognise that we must act to prevent, contain and tackle threats that put at risk our way of life and that economic security and national security are two sides of the same coin.

Once the NSS and the national security risk assessment have been established and define where and when the threats may come from, we will be able to identify the resources needed to respond. We should not forget that the UK is a global player with the largest defence budget in the EU and second largest in NATO. We have a huge diplomatic presence, world-leading Armed Forces and intelligence agencies, a strong police force and an impressive National Crime Agency. Noble Lords will appreciate that I am not at liberty to say too much about the review at this juncture. Suffice to say that in 2010, and largely as a result of the reforms that we have made over the last five years, we are in a much better place. The MoD is now a far more efficient, more effective and more innovative organisation. Whatever the outcome, we will be ready to deliver, not least because the UK is proud to call upon some of the best, most dedicated personnel in the world.

In this Parliament we will continue to recruit both the regulars and the reserves we need for our future force, and will work to retain the very best regulars, reserves and civilians in both specialist and non-specialist posts. We will make sure that this agile, flexible force has the right equipment to do the job. That means meeting our manifesto pledge to fund our £160 billion equipment plan at 1% above inflation for this coming Parliament. That investment will allow us to bring in the carriers as well as the ships, helicopters and planes our services need to project power across the globe. In an increasingly dangerous and uncertain world, we will also retain our continuous at-sea nuclear deterrent—it has been there for 45 years and counting—with a fleet of four deterrent submarines, the minimum number necessary.

When our forces are deployed, we need to make sure that they are able to operate without fear of inappropriate and onerous litigation, particularly as a result of spurious allegations. We have debated the issue of legal action on freedom to conduct operations a number of times before in this House. Respect for human rights and the protection of civilians is an essential element of training for our Armed Forces and is reinforced by the service justice system. As we set out in our manifesto, we intend to ensure that our Armed Forces conducting essential military operations overseas are not assailed by human rights claims that lack merit and undermine their ability to do their job. Our plans for effecting this commitment will be set out in due course.

Finally on defence, we will ensure that those who have laid their lives on the line for this country continue to receive the support and assistance they need by strengthening our Armed Forces covenant.

Turning to international development, the Government believe that we must do more than simply mitigate the threats that we face. We believe in being a country that shapes the world. Tackling poverty overseas means tackling the root causes of global problems such as disease, drugs, migration and terrorism. This is not only the right thing to do but is firmly in Britain's own national interest. The UK is already a global leader in this area. In fact, we are the only G7 nation to meet the UN/OECD target to spend 0.7% of gross national income on international development, and we are proud of that commitment.

The UK delivers aid to where it is most needed and where the best results can be gained for taxpayers' money. In Afghanistan, British support has helped get girls into school, improved healthcare and created jobs, and we will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with the Afghan people in the years ahead. In Sierra Leone, the UK can be immensely proud of its lifesaving work leading the international humanitarian response to Ebola. Retaining our spending commitment will allow us to continue promoting stability and economic growth overseas over the coming years. This means saving 1.4 million children's lives by immunising 76 million children against killer diseases, improving nutrition for millions in the poorest countries, opening up access to a proper education and leading efforts to tackle violence against women and girls.

In everything that we do we will look to boost growth, jobs, business and trade—the only way in which people and countries can sustainably exit poverty and aid dependency. We will support the foundation stones of development—what our Prime Minister calls the “golden thread of development”: good governance, the rule of law, property rights, democracy and the absence of conflict.

That brings me to my last point, on European affairs. When it comes to democracy in the EU, the British public are clear that the EU needs to change. That means reforming welfare and immigration rules, increasing economic competitiveness to create jobs and growth for the working population and protecting Britain's interests outside the euro. It also means halting the constant flow of powers to Brussels, including by ensuring a stronger role for national Parliaments and dealing with the concept of ever-closer union, which may appeal to some countries but does not work for Britain. My right honourable friend the Prime Minister will lead the renegotiation, working closely with my right honourable friends the Chancellor and the Foreign Secretary, while of course consulting his Cabinet and Conservative Party colleagues.

The Prime Minister has already started to discuss his plans for reform and renegotiation with his EU colleagues. We expect him to set out some further detail at the European Council meeting at the end of June. Following a renegotiation, the Prime Minister has also been clear that he will hold an in/out referendum on the UK's membership of the EU by the end of 2017. We have today delivered on our promise with the introduction of the European Union Referendum Bill into the House of Commons.

As the Chancellor set out, we go into the negotiations aiming to be constructive and engaged but also firm and resolute. However, we are not starting from scratch. From cutting the EU budget for the first time in history through to protecting British taxpayers from the cost of eurozone bailouts, my right honourable friend the Prime Minister has already secured important changes to how Europe works.

The gracious Speech shows a Government determined to keep this country safe and advance our interests around the world; a Government re-energised and reinvigorated with the right priorities, a clear mandate and a driving purpose to make a real difference for the British people; a Government who are now going to get on and deliver.

11.41 am

Lord Collins of Highbury (Lab): My Lords, all the topics in today's debate on Her Majesty's gracious Speech are clearly linked. They all relate to Britain's part in creating a just, safe, secure and sustainable planet that is free from the fear of hunger and poverty. The new Government must act strategically on these issues and, over the coming months, will need to clearly evidence their commitment to ensuring that Britain is a major player on the world stage. As the noble Earl stated, the challenges are great: securing peace and stability in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and Ukraine; defeating ISIL and addressing Iran and North Korea's nuclear programmes. On Israel and Palestine we need to continue to press for a two-state solution.

Your Lordships' Select Committee report on soft power focused on Britain's diminishing influence on the world stage and concluded:

"In this hugely changed international context, the UK cannot simply proceed as before. If the UK is still effectively to protect and promote its interests, how it interacts with other nations and communities will need fundamentally to alter. We conclude that this demands a radical change in the mindset of those who direct the UK's foreign policy and shape its international role".

A multilateral approach to global engagement, working with our allies, is essential to counter and confront terrorism. The recent tragic events in Palmyra, Syria, highlight the formidable challenge ahead in the region. Our opposition to ISIL, with its medieval horror strategy, must be absolute, and the new Iraqi Government must be given the support that they deserve. I hope that the Minister, the noble Baroness, Lady Anelay, will update the House on the actions that the Government are taking in this context, and of course I congratulate the noble Baroness on her reappointment to the Foreign Office.

On 2 April this year, the world powers negotiated with Iran over its nuclear programme, and a joint comprehensive plan of action to move towards a final agreement was announced, which has a final deadline of 30 June. I hope that the Government will be able to assure the House of the actions that they are taking to ensure that this agreement is reached by its deadline.

As the noble Earl mentioned, one of the first Bills to be presented to this Parliament by the Government was the European Union Referendum Bill. In the referendum in 1975, I was secretary of my local "Get Britain Out" campaign. Time has moved on since then, and so have I. I recognise that the removal of barriers to trade has helped create jobs. Our membership has helped to improve labour standards across Europe, and British workers now have the right to paid holiday and equal treatment for part-time and temporary workers. Like many businesses and people, we want to see reform in Europe: on benefits, on transitional controls in future for citizens from any new EU country who want to work in Britain, and in the way the EU works—and we will hold the Prime Minister to account for the progress on these.

However, the EU itself needs to recognise the growing demand from countries across Europe that want more devolution of power and recognise that the EU must work for those countries that are, and will remain, outside the euro. As my noble friend Lady Royall said,

we will vote for the Bill, but we believe that younger people need a stronger voice in society, and the referendum should provide one opportunity for that. We saw last year how young people in Scotland engaged in the run-up to the independence referendum and how it was such a motivator for renewed politics. I hope that the Government will learn from that experience and offer 16 and 17 year-olds a say over whether their country should remain within the EU.

We also need to be clear that this debate should not be conducted purely through the prism of economic spectacles. Britain has a proud tradition of leadership, not just in Europe but in the world, and that is the theme of today's debate. This Government must ensure that the UK has responsive, high-tech Armed Forces capable of responding to changing threats in an unpredictable security landscape. I congratulate the noble Earl, Lord Howe, on his return to the department. I sincerely hope his tenure of office will not be as long as his absence from the department, but that is another story.

The forthcoming strategic defence and security review must be an inclusive, national debate on all the global challenges facing our country. In 2010, the party opposite presided over an SDSR that was not strategic in any form. It focused purely on cuts to spending and, dangerously, did not properly consider the ever-expanding threats to our country. This failure resulted in gaps in our military capability. A 2015 SDSR akin to the last will exacerbate this and further erode Britain's role in the world.

The morale of the Armed Forces is, as the noble Earl mentioned, of utmost importance. The Government need urgently to address the issues that are making so many want to leave. The recently published annual MoD attitude survey highlighted that nearly one-third are dissatisfied with military life, and one in four wants to quit. The situation has deteriorated significantly over the past five years, and it is vital that the covenant between our nation and our Armed Forces, and veterans and their families, is strengthened.

For international development and climate change, the year ahead is incredibly significant, with intergovernmental negotiations before the September summit to determine global goals for the next 15 years and the UNFCCC conference in Paris in December to agree new emissions targets. In considering the Government's response to these events, I want to focus on three vital areas: access to healthcare, climate change and the protection of human rights.

Ensuring that everyone in the world has access to affordable healthcare is essential to end poverty. Last year the Ebola virus killed thousands across west Africa, and the UK's response to the humanitarian health crisis was strong. However, the main issue here was that health systems were not sufficiently resourced or strong enough to deal with the issue. Universal health coverage with access for all, without people suffering financial hardship, will make countries more resilient to health concerns such as Ebola before they become widespread emergencies. I ask the Minister to support universal health coverage in the language of the health goal in the SDGs in New York.

Climate change hits the world's poorest people the hardest as they lack the resilience to cope with drought, flood and food insecurity. Given the clear links between climate change, inequality, poverty and economic development, does the Minister agree that not having a stand-alone goal on climate change will undermine the potential of the entire post-2015 agenda? In advance of the UN conference in Paris, it would be good to hear from the Minister how the Government are co-ordinating their engagement on these two opportunities, the outcomes of which are so clearly dependent on one another.

On human rights, I pay tribute to the work of the last Government in helping change global opinion on the issue of gender-based violence. Gender-based violence is not limited to the evil of wartime rape. It is all too evident in recent examples of oppression, including in Nigeria, Pakistan, Sudan, Somalia and India. Human rights are universal and mature democracies should support the development of free societies everywhere while upholding their own legal and moral obligations. Women and girls must be free from the fear of violence, coercion or intimidation, and must have the freedom to choose how many children they want. Members of LGBT communities must be free to love and marry who they wish. Here, I, too, acknowledge the efforts of the noble Baroness, Lady Anelay. I know that at the UN she stood up strongly for the rights of lesbian and gay people, who face not only discrimination and anti-gay laws but the daily risk of increased violence, as we witnessed in Russia and Uganda.

To reduce aid dependency and foster good government, we need to support countries to collect their own taxes. We need global agreement on tax transparency and to ensure that companies pay their tax in-country. However, development is not just about new powers for more Governments; it should result in changes for working people, too. Decent jobs under decent conditions for decent pay is a vital part of development, providing a permanent route out of poverty. We need to stop clothing made by people working in horrendous conditions from reaching our markets and to demand action from major companies to stamp out child labour from their supply chains. Will the Minister undertake to work more closely with the International Labour Organisation so that, for once, we can stamp out this horrendous blot on our markets and ensure not only that such abuses are stopped in individual countries but that we take action globally to ensure success?

11.53 am

Lord Wallace of Saltaire (LD): My Lords, I welcome the noble Baroness, Lady Anelay, back to her seat. I am deeply grateful to have had a very professional and constructive relationship with her in the last Government. She is a very good Minister; it was a very good coalition in that respect. I compliment her in particular for maintaining the important work on interfaith relations, both domestically and internationally, which her predecessor—the noble Baroness, Lady Warsi—undertook. I hope that that will also continue under this new Conservative Government.

I want to talk about the area of the Queen's Speech on international affairs and the insistence that,

“my Government will continue to play a leading role in global affairs”,

with specific references to remaining,

“at the forefront of the NATO Alliance”,

to maintaining pressure on Russia over Ukraine, to an active role in international efforts on combat terrorism in the Middle East, and to pursuing,

“an enhanced partnership with India and China”.

It goes on to say, as the noble Earl remarked, that they, “will undertake a full strategic defence ... review”,

within the next year. In a separate section of the Speech, the Government promise to,

“renegotiate the United Kingdom's relationship with the European Union and pursue reform of the European Union for the benefit of all member states”.

I leave to one side the underlying contradiction in this sentence, between “renegotiation”, in which the UK faces the other 27 member states and asks for a series of special concessions and opt-outs for ourselves alone, on the Danish model, and,

“reform ... for the benefit of all”,

in which the UK works with like-minded Governments to achieve common objectives. You cannot do both at the same time, and the Prime Minister remains deliberately ambiguous as to which he intends to pursue.

I want to focus on the assumption that there is little connection between our relations with the EU and its other member states, our foreign policy, and our role in the world. Many members of the Government are in denial of the reality—that Britain does not have a foreign policy, or a role in the world, unless it has a European policy. One of the established myths of the Euro-sceptic media and political right is that we were never told when we joined the European Community that it had implications for foreign policy, and that it was just a common market, a trade arrangement without political implications. That is a convenient myth, but it disregards what Harold Macmillan as Prime Minister made clear to his colleagues when the question of membership was first raised; he recognised that it was a major shift in our international role, a commitment to European security and closer co-operation, which the United States was pushing the British to accept, and which in particular necessitated closer co-operation with France and Germany. Edward Heath spelt out the same message clearly, most explicitly in his Harvard lectures in 1969, well reported in the United Kingdom, and so did Sir Alec Douglas-Home, as he took the accession Bill through the Commons as Foreign Secretary. Jim Callaghan as Foreign Secretary was one of the first enthusiasts for European foreign policy co-operation; in 1980, the noble Lord, Lord Carrington, drafted the London report on strengthening foreign policy co-operation. The EU was always about security as well as trade, about containing Germany and Russia, and about resolving competing nationalisms among European states.

British foreign policy for centuries has been about competition and co-operation with France, Germany, the Netherlands and Spain; that has shaped our national identity and history, and it is the continuing reality today. William Hague has negotiated with Iran and on other Middle East issues in the forum of the E3+3:

[LORD WALLACE OF SALTIRE]

Britain, France and Germany, together with the United States, Russia and China. Britain, France and Germany are clearly more closely aligned with each other than with any of the three others. In containing Russia over Ukraine, the European members of NATO have worked closely together, imposing EU sanctions to parallel NATO measures. I took part earlier this week in a NATO conference in which the constant message from Americans and Europeans is that, if we are going to cope with the Russian pressure on Ukraine, the EU and NATO have to work closely in harmony, using all the measures at their disposal. They are not in entirely different worlds. The UK appears to have opted out in many ways from relations with Ukraine, so that it is Germany above all, with France, that is leading the negotiations with Russia and is the United States' leading partner in Europe.

One recent academic study of 25 years of voting in the UN since the end of the Cold War shows that the French have voted in the same way as the British in 95% of UN votes and the United States has voted together with the British in 65%, which suggests perhaps that French and British interests are more closely aligned than those that we have with the United States. In containing disorder across north Africa and the Sahel, we already work very closely with the French in Mali and elsewhere. In containing disorder and piracy off the Horn of Africa, the European headquarters for the operation is in Northwood, in spite of the fact that very often the British have not contributed a frigate to that joint operation. The Franco-British defence co-operation arrangements launched in 1998 under the Blair Government and renewed in 2010-11 under this Government have become the core of where we are going, but the Government have always been deeply resistant to Liberal Democrat pressure to tell anyone in Britain about it for fear of the *Daily Mail*. We also work closely with the Dutch and the Nordic countries in pursuing closer defence co-operation.

We hear a lot of noise from leading Conservatives about what sort of future relationship they would like us to have with the European Union and its leading member states. For example, last weekend, Owen Paterson suggested that Switzerland or Norway are the models we should follow and that we should focus instead on reviving the Anglosphere. That brought back memories of my first visit to the United States when Eisenhower was president and white Anglo-Saxon Protestants still ran the United States from the east coast. That has gone. When we first negotiated to join the European Economic Community, we spent a lot of time defending New Zealand butter exports and Australian pineapples. That has also gone. We are in a different world. The United States has Korean and Hispanic congressmen and the Republicans will not win unless they have Spanish-speaking voters. The world is no longer the Anglosphere.

The Foreign Secretary appears to prefer the Danish model with a formal opt-out but following most EU legislation. The Danish Foreign Minister made a speech yesterday warning the United Kingdom against it, saying: "It has given us nothing but problems". Daniel Hannan and UKIP would really like the UK to leave the EU completely to pursue closer and separate

relationships with China, Russia and other Asian powers and to have an enhanced partnership with China and India separate from European relations with China and India. I suggest that that is not the way to get the attention of senior Chinese or even, these days, Indian leaders. There are, of course, issues of national identity behind all this. I note that the campaign for Britain now has a subgroup entitled "Historians for Britain", some of whom will be familiar to noble Lords. They want to promote the Michael Gove version of national history. I once saw a Conservative memo that said "We must at all costs avoid any indication that World War 1 or World War 2 has any relevance in terms of pursuing European co-operation". That is the part of the argument about national identity and national history.

None of these alternatives offers us a coherent foreign policy let alone a credible or hard-headed approach to what our role in the world should be, to quote the noble Earl. It is a foreign policy with a hole at its centre where we have left out those countries with which we most closely share democratic values: our neighbours in the rest of Europe. If we have no European policy, we have no foreign policy, so how can we set out a strategic review of defence and security before we have concluded what future relationship we wish to have with our nearest neighbours? The SDSR will list the major threats facing the UK over the next 10 years and more. None of them is a threat to Britain alone. They are all, to one extent or another, shared with our neighbours: migration, cross-border crime, Russian subversion, pandemics and international terrorism. Our natural partners in facing them are our neighbours. If we do not recognise that, we end up sending HMS "Bulwark" into the Mediterranean when it is unclear what it is there to do, what rules it is operating under or what it does with the migrants it rescues. We have a determination to renew our continuous-at-sea nuclear deterrent, but we are not entirely clear why. If we aspire to a Danish role in the world, Denmark does not need a nuclear deterrent, and neither does Switzerland. Our nuclear deterrent was a contribution to the defence of western Europe against the Soviet threat. We have to put it in its European context for it to make sense.

When she winds up, will the noble Baroness say whether in making the SDSR proposal we will follow the example of the last French White Paper and invite French participation as they invited British participation—Sir Peter Ricketts—in the process of developing their defence review or whether we think that is not something we should reciprocate? Do we intend to deepen European defence co-operation, in particular with France, or do we think now is the time to step back? If we intend to deepen it, do the Government intend to inform Parliament and the British public about how far that has got?

I am told that over the past five years the National Security Council spent more time discussing Gulf strategy than European strategy. Some of us have some doubts about the preferred Gulf strategy of the current Government and their predecessor. We have a close relationship with Sunni monarchies, looking for investment in Britain, pursuing arms sales—above all, aircraft sales—and have set in train an investigation into the Muslim Brotherhood because the Saudis and

Emiratis pressed us to do so, without thinking through the implications for British foreign policy or British domestic politics. Thus we are in danger of ending up on the Sunni/Salafist side of a Sunni-Shia divide.

I note a number of comments about “increasing our footprint in the Gulf” as we withdraw from Afghanistan, in particular about expanding our base in Bahrain, which is close to the American Fifth Fleet. Will the Minister tell us who is paying for the expansion of the Bahrain base? I have heard some suggestions that the Bahrainis are paying for it, not the British Government. If that is the case, what conditions have the Bahrainis put on paying for that expansion, and what conditions in return have we put on the Bahrainis for the future development of that rather authoritarian monarchy?

Over the next year we will have to discuss Britain's role in the world and what that requires as regards responding to future threats. The noble Earl promised a “hard-headed appraisal” of the role we want to play. In a discussion a few months ago on the context of the SDSR I heard a rather senior Conservative MP say, bluntly, “Well, we don't know who we are as a nation, and we don't know where we are in the world”. That is close to the bone as regards the confusion within the Conservative Party. Liberal Democrats understand that the British identity is compatible with the European identity, that Britain shares values and interests with our European neighbours, and that any coherent British foreign and security strategy has to be founded on a European strategy.

12.07 pm

Lord Craig of Radley (CB): My Lords, I add my welcome to the noble Earl for his return to the Ministry of Defence, and congratulate him on his new responsibilities as Deputy Leader of your Lordships' House. I will touch on two key defence issues: the nuclear deterrent and what has been characterised as combat lawfare.

During the election campaign, the importance of continuing to have a nuclear deterrent was briefly raised. Both major political parties, at the most senior level, stressed their commitment to Trident and to replacing the Vanguard boats at the end of their operational lives. The intention to maintain a continuous at-sea capability appears in the Tory manifesto:

“We will retain the Trident continuous at sea nuclear deterrent to provide the ultimate guarantee of our safety and build the new fleet of four Successor Ballistic Missile Submarines”.

However, possession is only a part of that ultimate guarantee. Deterrence is not just about capability—with a very high threshold of invulnerability—but also about political will. Does all a potential adversary can see or surmise indicate strong political determination about the nation's deterrent posture?

Critical to this, when faced with the most serious of threats, is the ability of government first to engage the enemy with all other non-nuclear means available to it, both military and non-military, and to be seen to act stoutly and with determination to defend an absolutely vital national interest. I do not consider that political will about intention regarding or use of nuclear weapons is believable if the choice that the Government of the

day must make when faced with a critical national emergency is either virtually immediate use of their nuclear weapons, because they so lack conventional fire-power, or surrender.

Without further elaboration, my point is that national deterrence—the death sentence of a nuclear deterrent—lacks credibility unless there are available to the Government other military means of demonstrating determination and resolve in a worsening crisis. Robust kinetic action, short of a nuclear response, is required. But surely we need more—much more—non-nuclear capability than we could field today. Platform numbers are so low that even modest loss rates in the early stages might all too soon leave the Government conventionally impotent.

In years gone by, with troops and aircraft forward-based, with 30 or more combat air squadrons deployed on land or at sea and with the service fleet number treble that of today, different levels or degrees of conventional military response were available to the Government. Such serried steps are vital, visible indicators of a Government's determination and that they will, if all else is failing, be strong-willed enough to threaten actual use of a nuclear weapon.

Therefore, I urge the Government to consider what more must be done as the economy improves to bolster and give credibility to their manifesto commitment to sustain continuous at-sea deterrents. I doubt that the pledged 1% increase in the equipment budget will suffice. This year's SDSR should recommend what strengthening of our conventional offensive capabilities, both platforms and missiles, is essential to the nuclear deterrent posture, what additional protection for those more vulnerable platforms such as aircraft carriers, with dedicated surface and other units for them, must be acquired, and of course what protection is needed for our actual nuclear capability at its most vulnerable when entering or leaving UK coastal waters. If the Government's manifesto commitment to mount continuous at-sea nuclear deterrence is to be credible, it must be partnered with greater non-nuclear conventional capability than is at present available. Surely it would be folly to spend billions on four successor ballistic missile submarines without providing the conventional contribution essential to sustain a credible nuclear deterrent.

I turn briefly to combat lawfare. There are growing and welcome signs that the uncertainties about the application of domestic or international law in complex scenarios are to be addressed. As the noble Earl mentioned, it is in the Tory manifesto, which states:

“We will ensure our Armed Forces overseas are not subject to persistent human rights claims that undermine their ability to do their job”.

I do not underrate the difficulties in honouring that pledge. I go back to the debates on the Human Rights Bill in 1998, when I foresaw difficulties—which were dismissed by the then Lord Chancellor, who was leading on the Bill—of incompatibilities between that Bill and Armed Forces legislation. Legislation about the International Criminal Court in 2001 and, more recently, concerning the handling of service complaints have all served to lessen the essential ethos of trust, both

[LORD CRAIG OF RADLEY]

political and military, up and down the chain of command—a fundamental requirement of the Armed Forces. I wish the Government well in tackling those combat lawfare issues.

Now that there is likely to be a delay in bringing forward a British Bill of Rights, which might have been one vehicle for that legislation, I hope that the Government will consider dealing with the issue in the quinquennial Armed Forces Bill, which the noble Earl mentioned and which is due next year.

12.14 pm

The Lord Bishop of Southwark: My Lords, it was encouraging to hear the commitment of Her Majesty's Government in the gracious Speech to various foreign policy objectives in the Middle East. The chaos in the Middle East is all too familiar and arises not from isolated pockets of trouble but from multiple interconnected challenges. Syria's misery shows no sign of ending; Libya appears torn in half; ISIS continues to make gains in Iraq; and Yemen appears to be sliding into a humanitarian crisis. We are confronted by a Middle East that is coming apart at the seams. These are problems that will not just evaporate. They need careful attention and strategic patience, and I encourage Her Majesty's Government to remain vigilant to broader aims throughout the region, as well as giving appropriate attention to the constituent parts. ISIS, with its violent and murderous ideology and murderous approach to those in its way, is causing fear and instability well beyond its current reach. This must continue to be an urgent priority. If this form of highly organised, ruthless terrorism is to be defeated, we will need to work closely with allies in the United States as well as more broadly in Europe.

Although media and political attention is understandably fixed on addressing the instability in Libya, Syria, Iraq and Yemen, it is important that we do not lose sight of efforts to secure a two-state solution that provides for the security of Israel, justice for the Palestinians and peace for all. This is a vital strand of the interconnectedness of the region, and bold moves in seeking to unlock this situation are needed if Israel's security is to be guaranteed and the Palestinians enabled to flourish. This continues to be a vital building block for wider peace throughout the region and for the defeat of terrorism. Despite the expansion of Israel's settlement programme and the unpromising signs emerging from the new Israeli Government, I trust that Her Majesty's Government will remain committed to encouraging Israel to fulfil its international obligations as well as to the concept of a two-state solution. There remains no better alternative to the probability of the establishment of either a non-Jewish democracy or a Jewish non-democracy. At a time when the situation on the ground grows ever more dangerous, the Government need to look imaginatively at ways to move beyond the current stalemate.

The status of Palestine is likely to be an issue that reappears once again before the UN Security Council. I sincerely hope that the Government will be supportive of any draft resolution that creates greater equivalence between Israel and Palestine as political entities in the

framework of any negotiations. The absence of progress will only allow for extremism to ferment. Indeed, I hope that the Government will draw encouragement from the growing support for the recognition of Palestine, in your Lordships' House as well as in the wider international community. The Holy See's recent intervention is but the latest example of this. The recognition of Palestine and upholding Israel's security will be important stepping stones in securing a long-term peace in the Middle East.

I turn to international development, which did not feature in the gracious Speech, although it was good to hear the noble Earl, Lord Howe, speak on the subject at the start of the debate. It is evident that, even though a fragile cross-party consensus now exists in support of the 0.7% development budget, the public at large remain—if polls are to be believed—suspicious and doubtful of its benefits. Given this scepticism, the transition later this year to an agenda based on sustainable development goals provides a window of opportunity for the Government to publish a new White Paper on international development. It is now eight years since the Department for International Development published its last White Paper and we need a new narrative on international development that reflects the changed reality we now face and has traction with the wider public.

As part of this exercise, we might look again at the role that faith communities play in delivering aid on the ground and in building resilient communities, and the scope for closer partnership. The last Government made some good progress in this area, not least with their faith partnership principles of 2012, but the potential benefits of strategic collaboration between the Department for International Development and the church remain sadly largely untapped. I know only too well from my own links and those of my diocese with Zimbabwe the role that the church can play in challenging circumstances. As that beautiful country once again faces challenges over feeding its population, and given the growing nervousness of what will happen when the Mugabe regime draws to a close, I sincerely hope that the Government will stand ready to meet relief and development needs in that place as well as more widely across the globe.

12.20 pm

Lord Howell of Guildford (Con): My Lords, I would like to add a brief—and inadequate—tribute to those made yesterday in this House to my old colleague and friend Lord Howe of Aberavon, who has decided to retire from the House. It is inadequate because of shortage of time but is none the less heartfelt. Lord Howe served this country, government and party in all the highest offices—or in most of them anyway. More than that, he was the prime promoter of Conservative social reform in showing how market-driven forces could be harnessed to strong social advance. I for one, and I think many of us, shall miss him here and wish him well. The country owes that man a lot. Indeed, he was one of the reasons why I joined the Conservative Party in the first place.

I also add my congratulations to those expressed to the other Howe, the noble Earl, Lord Howe, who is sitting here. He has done a marvellous job over many

years in social policy areas. It is excellent that he is now at defence and our Deputy Leader. I also greatly look forward to the maiden speech of the noble Baroness, Lady Helic.

On Europe, I wish the best of luck to my right honourable friend the Prime Minister in his renegotiations and his search for allies in European reform. He is quite right that the issues are not just bilateral British concerns—this is not just a question of British demands and special requirements. As Günter Verheugen, the former Commissioner, remarked the other day:

“What [Cameron] is saying is what a strong majority of Europeans feel”.

I would have liked to have seen this search for allies begin even earlier than now. In particular, we should have been much friendlier much earlier to Poland instead of siding against her on a whole range of issues, including energy issues, and backing the EU Commission's now outdated, costly and ineffective energy package—which is long overdue for a complete overhaul, as is our own dismal, inept and indeed dangerous energy and climate policy here in the United Kingdom. That is a less happy legacy from the coalition. It needs total makeover, and let us hope that the promise in the Queen's Speech of,

“Measures ... to increase energy security”,

mean just that. I will believe it when I see it.

My other concern is whether EU negotiations are a strong enough vehicle to achieve the needed EU reform. The reality, which people are reluctant to face, is that the EU model comes from the 20th century, where it had great effect, but we are now in a totally different, 21st-century digital age.

A second track to our European reform policy is needed. Hand in hand with negotiations on specific concessions should go a much deeper drive to reinterpret the principles on which the European project is, or now ought to be, based. The 20th century demanded solidarity and centralisation in Europe—that was understandable—but the 21st century demands flexibility and decentralisation. This is the more profound lead on EU reform which I would like to see the best policy minds here in Britain giving and for which many of our friends across Europe are waiting. I hope that the so-called high priests said to be in charge of our EU policy see this and have enough experience of the whole history of European integration to be really creative. It is not a question of shopping lists, red-line demands and all the talk of wresting concessions. That is not nearly enough. I hope our negotiators will not be swayed by highly misleading advice that nothing too fundamental must be raised in these matters for fear of offending our European neighbours.

In the end, there will have to be treaty changes, however much the old political class across Europe may fear that. Of course, treaty changes cannot be delivered by 2017—no one is suggesting that—but what can be delivered is a clear indication that the old overcentralised, overregulated EU is set in new directions at last, appropriate to the age we now live in and suitable for the totally transformed trade patterns that now exist, which are completely different from anything 20 years ago.

I hope, anyway, that none of this will distract policymakers from the much bigger task of repositioning Britain in a completely transformed world order. The bald fact is that our future living standards and our security will depend as much on the great new powers and exploding consumer markets of Asia, Africa and Latin America as on Europe. That is where most of the growth over the next 30 years will be. In getting alongside these new powers and new markets we will need every conceivable instrument we can find and every advantage we can seize against our competitors. This is where the Commonwealth network, with its own colossal reach, rich markets and capital sources is—or ought to be—immensely valuable to us. I fear that the people who drafted my own party's manifesto did not quite understand that emerging markets and the Commonwealth network are all woven together and all part of the same thing. If we want what the gracious Speech refers to as,

“an enhanced partnership with India”,

for example, this is where it should begin.

The Commonwealth network is the gateway to China and Japan, the second and third largest economies in the world. China's opening up of the whole of east Asia to development, with its new silk road linking Chinese, central Asian and eventually western markets, is all part of the same picture. One decision that gave me great pleasure was the British decision to go right in as a founding supporter of China's new Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. That was an excellent move which recognises the real future, where our interest lies.

In a highly dangerous world, with the arc of instability that my noble friend Lord Howe referred to, we should certainly settle promptly and constructively with our EU neighbours and clinch that settlement with a referendum approval, which I believe we will get. We should certainly work closely with our American allies around the world—although as partners and not as slavish subordinates. But above all, we should be confident enough to develop our own agenda to work with the emerging powers of Asia and the new Africa. That is where our real future beckons. It is where we have unique advantages of language, experience, shared values and cultural links—real soft power and smart-power levers. It is where our overriding priorities should lie.

12.28 pm

Lord Triesman (Lab): My Lords, the summons that we each received to attend this Parliament, however traditional or quaint some of its language, contained some forbidding words about the weighty and perilous issues that we would be asked to consider. In our international relations, as the noble Earl, Lord Howe, said in his introductory speech, those words seem accurate and probably prescient.

I start with Europe, which I recognise is both a domestic and an international policy issue. I also recognise, of course, the electorate's clear decision and I welcome the decision taken by the leadership of the Labour Opposition to support an in/out referendum. Nothing else would be legitimate. The need for reform in the work up to that referendum on Europe is

[LORD TRIESMAN]

absolutely clear. I should say today that it is of course not the only international organisation in need of deep reform, and we may well return to that later.

However, several vital subsidiary issues flow from the position that we are now in. In my view, it would be hard to choose a worse or more problematic year than 2017 in which to conduct the referendum. The burden of my argument last year in your Lordships House, when the noble Lord, Lord Dobbs, was moving his Bill, remains something that we need to focus on. First, conducting negotiations over a period that could be almost two years, without the certainty of knowing whether other countries will also need to hold referenda on the outcome of negotiations, runs some very plain risks. Those hostile to EU membership will argue for certainty about the outcome on the part of everybody else who has taken part in the negotiations before we come to decide. Will other nations abide by the decisions flowing from the negotiations? Will we be asked to decide before certainty is achieved elsewhere? Will the propositions flowing from other countries—the Prime Minister is quite right to say that they will also have their views—be encompassed in the detail upon which we will be asked to vote?

Secondly, if 2017 turns out to be the referendum year, these discussions will culminate in a moment of decision at the same as the French presidential election campaign is under way or the election is taking place. Francois Hollande and his opponents in mainstream France will be dealing with the emergence not only of their own economic crises but of a large fascist party in their own country. In its way, that is an existential issue for France. The question of whether, even given its history, that kind of politics will become mainstream in France is certain to be one of the obsessions of 2017 in France. Victory in Europe, so recently remembered, is remembered not just because of its military significance and the heroism of those who achieved the outcome, but because it was the defeat in Europe of a barbaric dictatorship that robbed many of us of large parts of our own families.

Also in 2017, there will be major elections in Germany—fortunately, of course, now a very mainstream European democracy. On balance, do we expect Chancellor Merkel to focus on the United Kingdom, whatever is happening in her own country or in the eurozone itself? Maybe she will—she seems to have that breadth of vision—but on balance it is not the ideal moment to ask any politician to be concerned with the internal affairs of another country.

Thirdly, in my view it is hard to overstate the risks of prolonged uncertainty in the markets. I refer noble Lords to my interests recorded in the register. Those involved in investment finance and structuring, who are used to lengthy and increasingly rigorous due diligence processes, will know that it is now true that a key due diligence set of questions appears in almost every transaction in which potential inward investors seek knowledge of the likely consequences of leaving the European Union for the business they are proposing to transact. The EU, in this setting, provides us with new and powerful questions to ask.

I must say that I have given up listening to those who say that we will be perfectly all right and that nobody will change their investment patterns. That is just a view—it is a guess about the future. These days, I just observe what businesses considering inward investment to the United Kingdom in growth areas of the economy are actually doing, rather than focus on speculation.

These points bring me to a view that I wish to put to your Lordships. The Foreign Secretary said this morning that it is better to take a thorough view than a fast decision, and I really do take the point, but what we surely really need now is both rigour and speed: a thorough and fast decision. If we are looking at the referendum date, it makes sense to avoid 2017, and I suspect that means that the only sensible option, in view of the pressures on us, is to look for a decision in 2016.

If that requires flexibility on the issue of whether there needs to be a treaty or some other durable arrangement, we in this country have the imagination and diplomatic skills to craft that outcome. Vital in all this are two factors: first, the economy and its future success; but also, of course, as several noble Lords have said in the debate, the structure of peace. Europe is not a place where competition and co-operation have existed together very successfully over very long periods. We need an historic balance between competition and co-operation. It is not optional for us in Europe; it is fundamental. Our broad security stance is more significant than any lurid account the media may produce about regulations demanding that we straighten our sausages. My late father used to remind me that in his youth the only times when he saw other young European men was looking down the barrel of a gun. The peace that has been achieved in Europe is one of the fundamentals of what we need.

The gracious Speech set out the prospect for fundamental changes in the economic decision-making powers of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. If these powers are to be broadly based and those envisaged in the statements of the leaders of most of the major parties, before and after the Scottish referendum, it cannot be realistically stated that Scotland, for example, can gain those significant economic powers and potentially lose the most significant macroeconomic framework of all: the ability to operate within the European Union.

If the home nations are to have the powers outlined and are taken out of the EU—should that happen—because of a decision taken across the United Kingdom, it is hard to think of a worse blow to the prospects of the union of the United Kingdom as a whole. Everybody will draw their lessons very rapidly. That means, I suspect, either that the home nations will have a veto or that the union will be in deep trouble. I am not predicting that we will end up leaving the EU or that Mr Cameron's negotiations will fail—not at all; this is an attempt to work out the consequences of all the serious potential outcomes, and to be prepared politically for them, whatever they may be. In this light, I welcome the starting of the negotiations and wish the Prime

Minister well in them. A truly successful Union will have to meet the aspirations not just of us but of other countries.

In the gracious Speech, Her Majesty said, as the noble Lord, Lord Wallace pointed out earlier, that the Government will continue to play a leading role in global affairs. I share his view that that role will best be undertaken in Europe, including in its relationships with the trading blocs and rising powers which the noble Lord, Lord Howell, described earlier. Of course, we are no longer a great imperial power, and no amount of posturing will remake that history, but if we are to be at least a second-order power of some significance, let us be the very best one we can be. Let us be a power that is properly provided with Armed Forces capable of executing what is needed; a power that, fortunately, enjoys an exceptional Foreign Office and remarkable intelligence services. Let us make sure that we exercise that authority in the parts of the world that do constitute an arc of uncertainty. Let us make sure that we are influential and have an impact.

If we are to have that kind of international role, if we believe it right that we should be a permanent member of the Security Council, that we are a nuclear force, and that that brings us into the global security picture in a very distinctive way, let us accept the responsibility that goes with all that. Let us not be afraid of taking the steps that, among other things, will help to resolve conflict in other parts of the world and to stop some regimes butchering their people—for whatever religious, cultural, economic, ethnic or other reason. Let us accept that that is part of what we are and part of our values. For the first time in a long time, let us get closer to deciding to have a committee that deals with international affairs and security, because these issues need fine, granular discussion and will not be dealt with in just a few minutes, whenever we have this kind of opportunity.

12.39 pm

Lord Ashdown of Norton-sub-Hamdon (LD): My Lords, it is a privilege to follow such an excellent speech. I have to confess that I find myself feeling rather content to be back on this side of the Chamber. The view from here is somehow more congenial for a Liberal—although I am sorry not to be sharing a Bench, if that is the right way to put it, with my old friend and partner in so much in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the noble Baroness, Lady Helic. I look forward very much to hearing her maiden speech.

And so ISIL sweeps on: unstoppable and seemingly unstoppable; launching a wave of barbarism, ignorance and medievalism across the Middle East; destroying lives and threatening our common heritage; altering the borders of the Middle East; and humiliating the international community that set its hands to stop it more than a year ago. It gives me no pleasure to say that this is what has happened and that it is what many of us warned would happen if we sought a course of action that depended solely on the use of military force unanchored to any kind of sensible diplomatic strategy. I remember saying—I think in this House—that we will not win this battle by bombing because we cannot bomb ideas, and nor will we win it by using

western high explosives to destroy more Muslim lives unless we can put that within a much broader diplomatic strategy. We have failed, and we are now facing the consequences of that failure.

Something else has happened. We have now moved closer to a much more dangerous state of risk: a risk far more dangerous than determined jihadists. It is a risk which is about moving towards a regional religious war between the Sunnis and the Shias. This is the real danger that now confronts us. It is the danger of a regional war which draws in the other great powers, with us on the side of the Sunnis—they are our friends and they provide us with oil and money and all sorts of help—and the Russians on the side of the Shias because that is the only counterbalance to the Sunni jihadism that now threatens the Muslim republics of Dagestan and Chechnya, and which indeed now threatens to divide the Russian Federation.

That is what we are moving to, and we will continue to move in that direction for as long as we believe, in our arrogance, that the underlying cause of all this is an attack on the West. It is not; we are simply one battle in a much wider war. The enemy is not the Satan in the West; it is the great heretic in Tehran. That is what all this is a precursor to, and we plunge ahead, seemingly completely unaware that this is the direction in which we are going. We are failing to stop the scourge of ISIL and we are failing to move away from that consequence. Indeed, we may even be moving closer to it.

What is to be done? Some, including some in this House, say that we should put troops on the ground. To me, this would be to add folly to historical ignorance. The problem is not the wrong military strategy; it is that we have made the fatal mistake of having a military strategy that is not anchored to a diplomatic strategy. It seems that we have wilfully and deliberately forgotten the wisdom of Clausewitz, who said that war is an extension of politics by other means. By the way, Clausewitz uses the German word “Politik”, spelled with a “k” at the end, which is far more about diplomacy than real politics. We have decided that war is the only instrument and that diplomacy can be put to one side. We see a problem in the world and our first instinct is to bomb it. That is exactly what we have done for the past 20 years, and perhaps more.

The last war to be fought within a diplomatic context was the first Gulf War, when George Bush Sr took the trouble to put together a genuine diplomatic coalition of which the instrument of military force was a part. Then we had shock and awe, and our dedication to—our obsession with, even—kinetic force as the only instrument to change things. George Bush Jr deliberately did not put together any diplomatic strategy, and we paid for the consequences of that: we lost.

Then it happened again in Afghanistan, where we deliberately did not put together any kind of diplomatic strategy and ignored the fundamental principle of creating peace after conflict, which is, “Bring in the neighbours”. We learnt that in Northern Ireland when finally we got the chance to do so and we understood that Dublin had a role to play. But we ignored that. We thought that it could all be done by kinetic force, but it

[LORD ASHDOWN OF NORTON-SUB-HAMDON] could not and we lost. We used all sorts of euphemisms—the same ones that are being used now—to say that actually it was all a success, but it was a humiliating failure.

On the third occasion, in Libya, we did exactly the same thing again—bombs and bombs alone—and we lost. One would imagine that, thrice bitten, we might be a little more shy the fourth time of taking the same action, but such is our appetite for folly that we have done exactly the same again. It is not because there is no diplomatic strategy before us, because there is. We could begin to put together a genuine coalition. Our coalition at present is not for diplomacy but for military action: far too small, far too western-led and far, far too Sunni.

Actually, we could put together a genuine diplomatic coalition which would include Turkey, Iran and Tehran, and which could include—why not?—Russia. If Russia has shown the kind of aggression we deplore in Ukraine, is it not wise of us to reach out by saying to the Russians, “You have a role to play in this”, rather than pushing them into a corner? After all, they suffer just as much as we do, and arguably more, from the threat of Sunni jihadism. For us this is about returning people from the battlefield; their states are the battlefield. If we were to put together such a diplomatic coalition, military force would have a context in which it could be used.

I am not squeamish about military force. How could I be, coming from my background? However, I know that it will not succeed if it is the only instrument. It has to be locked within a broader diplomatic strategy, and this we have utterly failed to do. I accept that there would be difficulties with Turkey that we would have to overcome, including some concerns about human rights. I accept that there are difficulties with Tehran, although the deal on the nuclear thing is now nearly done, with Tehran occupying a sub-nuclear threshold. I accept that there would be difficulties with Russia, but that is the sort of coalition we are going to have to get used to. We no longer live in a monopolar world, so we have to build short-term coalitions with a particular aim with people who do not share our values.

Castlereagh would have understood it; Canning would have understood it; Palmerston, for all his enthusiasm for gunboats, would have understood it. Why do we ignore it? ISIL is the fourth occasion on which we have learnt graphically and at great cost that we think we live in the kinetic age where the only instrument to change things is western high explosives. We do not. We live in the diplomatic age where building broader coalitions as a context for the use of force is the only way to create peace and win conflicts such as this. As long as we go on persisting with the folly that this is the age of western high explosives rather than the age of sensible, intelligent and subtle diplomacy, we will continue to fail, and the cost will be paid in the lives of young men and women.

12.48 pm

Lord Hannay of Chiswick (CB): My Lords, perhaps I may begin by echoing something said by the noble Lord, Lord Ashdown. He asked how, given his background, he could possibly be averse in all respects

to the use of force. How could I, given my background, possibly be averse to the message he gave us that we need an effective diplomacy?

Our new Government have been born into a more turbulent, unpredictable and unstable world than any we have experienced in recent times. They have been born into a world where Britain, acting simply on its own, is less able to defend and further its interests than has been the case in the past. We can see that the three rules-based international organisations into which we have put such trust—the UN, NATO and the European Union—are struggling to face effectively and respond to the challenges posed by that turbulent world. Add to that the unfortunate fact that up to now our own response to these challenges has, I have to say, been barely adequate. Look at our marginal involvement in the coalition against the so-called Islamic State and our self-exclusion from the inner circle of those concerting a response to Russia's aggression against and continuing destabilisation of Ukraine. It surely is evident that this is no time to turn away from the outside world, or to be distracted to the exclusion of everything else by the debate over our place in Europe, important though the outcome of that debate will be for all Britain's future roles in the world.

What are the principal challenges that we and our European partners and western allies face worldwide in the Middle East and on Europe's eastern borders? Two major UN decision-making summit conferences are due to take place in the second half of this year—the first in September to set the sustainable development goals for the period ahead, and the second at the end of year in Paris to address climate change. At the first, we should indeed be well placed to play an influential role, thanks to our continuing and in my view, very welcome commitment to the UN target of 0.7% of gross national income for development aid. Perhaps the Minister could say something about the Government's objectives at these two conferences, and also about how this House is to have a fuller opportunity to debate the prospects for both of them.

Then in 2016, a new Secretary-General of the United Nations is to be elected for five, and perhaps, if recent precedents are followed, effectively for 10 years. What is Britain, whose influence as a permanent member of the Security Council is considerable, doing to ensure that that process is more open, more transparent and less dominated by regional pre-emption than has been the case in the past? What thoughts, too, do the Government have on how to prevent the current no-go areas for the Security Council over Syria, Ukraine, and the south and east China seas from spreading, and indeed, how to reduce those no-go areas?

It is easy to throw up one's hands in despair at the turn of events in the Middle East—easy but, I suggest, self-defeating. We surely do need to help to marshal a better response to the threats from IS. Is it not time to examine the sense of taking military action against IS in Iraq but to leave its expanding outreach in Syria completely unscathed? Secondly, we are only a month away from the deadline for completing a comprehensive agreement over Iran's nuclear programme. Can we be assured that, despite the open criticism from Israel and the more muffled doubts expressed by Saudi

Arabia and the Gulf states, we remain committed to a successful outcome to that negotiation as long as the purely civilian nature of Iran's future nuclear programme can be guaranteed and, most important—more than being guaranteed—can be verified on a continuing basis?

Thirdly, even if prospects for a two-state solution in Palestine look at best discouraging, will we nevertheless persevere with what remains, I believe, the only possible long-term way of avoiding further outbreaks of hostilities? Would it not make sense, as a recent vote in the other place suggested, to buttress our support for a two-state solution by recognising Palestine? Should we not be encouraging a return to the Security Council to set out the basic parameters of a settlement in that forum and thus encourage a resumption of negotiations?

It would require a degree of optimism a bit beyond my reach to assert that the problems in Ukraine have been resolved by the Minsk II agreement in February. Nor have the wider implications of Russia's aggressively assertive foreign policy towards its western and southern neighbours yet been met by a fully adequate response. Any such response must surely involve being ready to tighten economic sanctions if fighting intensifies in the east of Ukraine; and also to maintaining existing sanctions until every provision of Minsk II has been implemented to the full—in particular, re-establishing Ukrainian control of its eastern frontier. It requires, too, that the European Union should take effective action to stabilise and help to reform the Ukrainian economy. I do not see how we can hope to give a lead in strengthening NATO's deterrent capability, as we should be doing, and as the Government say they wish to do, if we do not stick to the NATO 2% target for military spending which we did so much to promote. Does that mean that we cannot talk to, or even co-operate with Russia? Of course, it does not. After all, we did that throughout the Cold War period. President Putin will respect and pay heed to us only if we are ready to stand by our friends and our interests.

I have so far avoided the ever fascinating topic of the European Union. No doubt we will have ample opportunity to debate it in the weeks and months ahead when the Government bring forward legislation for a referendum that they have tabled in another place today. Suffice it to say now that every other respect of Britain's foreign policy will be affected, for better or for worse, by the outcome on that referendum. The Prime Minister's aim to achieve reforms in the European Union is a laudable one that I have no difficulty at all in supporting. However, if those reforms are to have any chance of success, they must be reforms that benefit the whole of the European Union; they must not just be monuments to British exceptionalism.

12.56 pm

Viscount Bridgeman (Con): My Lords, I add my congratulations to my noble friend Lord Howe on his new appointment, and record my thanks personally for all the help and leadership he gave to this House in his previous role at the Department of Health.

I am privileged to be a member of the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly, consisting of Back-Benchers from all the devolved Administrations, plus Westminster

and Dublin, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. We meet at six-monthly intervals alternately in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. In the meetings in Dublin in the course of the last three years, I have come to know the Ministers and senior officials of the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Your Lordships will be aware of the successive milestones along the way to the most welcome state of British-Irish relations today which the two nations have achieved, starting with the British-Irish agreement in 1985 under Margaret Thatcher, followed by the Downing Street declaration by John Major and the then Taoiseach, Albert Reynolds. Tony Blair made no secret of the debt he owed to John Major, whose work enabled him to bring to fruition the Good Friday and St Andrews agreements. Crucial to the momentum which had been started was the sterling contributions of two successive Presidents of Ireland—Mary Robinson and Mary McAleese—which led to the historic visit in 2012 by Her Majesty the Queen. The impact that it had on the people of Ireland has in my opinion never been fully appreciated on this side of the Irish Sea.

This was followed last year by the very successful state visit to the United Kingdom of the current President, Michael Higgins. The visit by HRH the Prince of Wales to the west of Ireland last week was marked by a welcome by the people of that part of Ireland, the warmth of which I am told took even the organisers of the visit by surprise. The Prince made a moving and heartfelt speech, in which he reached out for a spirit of reconciliation regardless of creed, nationality or politics.

The background to all this has been the work done by officials in Dublin and London, the outcome of which is that, as one Irish official put it to me, "The high water-mark of Anglo-Irish friendship gets higher and higher". He added, with an Irishman's gift of phrase, "I continue to be surprised at my ability to be continually surprised at the transformation of relations between the two countries".

The United Kingdom is the biggest trading partner of the Republic of Ireland and the UK's exports to Ireland exceed this country's exports to all the BRIC countries combined. In its closeness, the Anglo-Irish relationship is unique among any two countries of the European Union. Let me give just one example. Each year there is an informal meeting, alternately in the United Kingdom and in the Republic, of the principal UK permanent under-secretaries with their Irish counterparts. I am advised that these meetings are remarkably comprehensive and constructive, allowing the participants to identify opportunities for working ever more closely together.

It will therefore come as no surprise to your Lordships that the progress of the United Kingdom's negotiations with the European Community, ahead of the coming referendum on our continuing membership, is being very closely watched by our friends in Dublin. In Dublin—the I hope—unlikely prospect of a British exit is being viewed with no little apprehension.

The implications for Ireland could be huge. Let me give just two examples. It would likely mean a re-hardening of the border between the Republic and Northern Ireland, since it would become part of the borders of

[VISCOUNT BRIDGEMAN]

the European Union itself. Whatever the reasons for it, it would be perceived by the people of Ireland, both north and south, as a disastrous psychological set-back in relations between the two countries.

There could also be considerable complications over the status of Irish citizens in the United Kingdom. The visa-free movement between the two countries predates the foundation of the Common Market itself. In the event of the UK leaving the Union, would Ireland be permitted under the treaties to continue to have a free movement arrangement with one non-member country, a facility that would be denied to citizens of, for instance, France and the Netherlands? These are but two considerations of many complications, which I hope will not arise.

I urge members of Her Majesty's Government, in their negotiations over the reform of the Union and the United Kingdom's membership of it, to have in mind the very special relationship that exists between the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland.

Arrangement of Business

Announcement

1.01 pm

Viscount Younger of Leckie (Con): My Lords, this may be a convenient point to take a repeat of the Answer to an Urgent Question given in the other place earlier today. As this is the first time in this new Parliament that a Minister will repeat an Answer to an Urgent Question posed in the House of Commons, it may be helpful if I remind the House of the procedure that applies.

The Answer given in the Commons will be repeated in full as a Statement. It will then be followed by 10 minutes of questions and answers, as for a Private Notice Question, starting with a question from the Opposition Front Bench. Proceedings follow the rules for Oral Questions—that is to say, supplementary questions should be short and confined to no more than two points. These rules apply to those on the Front Benches, as well as to Back-Benchers, and, indeed, to the Minister's replies. If noble Lords are able to adhere to these rules, it will help to ensure that we can hear from as many Members as possible within the 10 minutes allotted, and that the bulk of those 10 minutes is available to Back-Bench Members.

FIFA

Statement

1.02 pm

The Earl of Courtown (Con): My Lords, with the leave of the House, I will repeat in the form of a Statement the Answer to an Urgent Question given earlier today in the other place by my right honourable friend the Secretary of State. The Statement is as follows.

“Mr Speaker, the arrests that took place in Zurich yesterday, along with the statements released by both the US Department of Justice and the Swiss Attorney-General were shocking in both scale and scope. Unfortunately, they were far from surprising. Anyone

who has spent any time looking at FIFA will know that this is merely the latest sorry episode, which has revealed FIFA to be a deeply flawed and corrupt organisation.

These revelations have shown how important it is for sports bodies to uphold the highest standards of governance, transparency and accountability. That is what we ask and expect of all our domestic sports bodies in the United Kingdom. International bodies should be no different. This is particularly true for an organisation like FIFA: an organisation that should be the guardian of the world's most popular sport, not one whose members seek to profit personally from the passion of the game's fans.

I welcome the investigations that are now under way into the allegations of bribery and corruption and I fully support the Football Association's position that significant and wide-ranging reforms are urgently needed at the very top of FIFA, including a change of leadership. I also welcome the statement from UEFA, which has called for a postponement of the election, and the statement from Visa this morning. It is important that other sponsors reflect on their links to FIFA and consider following Visa's lead. My honourable friend the Minister for Sport will be writing to her European counterparts later today, setting out our concerns and seeking their support for change.

Finally, I pay tribute to the insight team of the *Sunday Times*, without whose investigative journalism many of these allegations may never have come to light. Football is the world's game, and it is our national game. It is a fundamental part of British life and culture. Yet these revelations have dragged the game's reputation into the mud. The time has clearly come for a change, and we will offer whatever support is necessary to the Football Association to see that change realised”.

My Lords, that concludes the Statement.

1.05 pm

Lord Collins of Highbury (Lab): My Lords, I thank the Minister for repeating that Question and congratulate him on his appointment. There are two points that I would like to press him on. The first is whether investigations have been undertaken in this country into whether British nationals and British banks have been involved. Is he confident that no licence fee money has found its way into corrupt hands?

My other concern relates to Qatar and the World Cup. I have raised the issue of human rights today; clearly, hundreds of workers have already died building the stadia there. Their human rights are being systematically abused. Will the Minister tell us what steps the Government are taking to press Qatar on those conditions and on its current kafala visa system? Also, what representations have the Government made to Qatar on the detention of BBC journalists investigating human rights abuses in Qatar?

The Earl of Courtown: My Lords, I thank the noble Lord for his very kind welcome once again to the Dispatch Box. It has been some long years since I last did it. He mentioned three points. On Qatar and the workers' charter, we have very close relationships with

Qatar, which we are continually keeping under review. In response to a request by FIFA on 12 February 2015, the supreme committee announced this workers' charter, developed with the International Labour Organization, which seeks to protect the rights of migrant employees. The charter includes measures on health and safety, living and working conditions, wages and grievances. It also highlights plans to ensure that all workers are treated equally and fairly. We will keep a careful watch on what is happening.

The noble Lord also mentioned organisations and banks, and asked whether any investigations were ongoing in this country. It is currently too early to say, but no doubt the SFO will keep a very close watch on what is happening in both America and Switzerland, and will be taking great care to keep an eye on these events.

On the noble Lord's third point, the BBC journalists have now been released. Great concerns were raised between ourselves and the Qatari Government, who claimed that the BBC crew trespassed on private property. The BBC has demanded a full explanation from the Qatari authorities, while FIFA issued a statement saying that it is to investigate this. Any instance relating to an apparent restriction of press freedom is a concern to FIFA.

Lord Moynihan (Con): Will my noble friend take this opportunity to recognise and congratulate the Swiss authorities on their co-operation with the US judicial authorities, particularly given the presence in Switzerland of many of the international sports federations? Will my noble friend also reinforce the point that the key to resolving crises in sports administrations, whether international or national, from Salt Lake City to FIFA, is the need for state-of-the-art good governance, transparency, accountability and professional management equivalent to that of a FTSE 100 company, and a move away from their own *lex sportiva*, under which, as with FIFA, they too often hide behind in order to operate?

The Earl of Courtown: My noble friend is quite right. As the House knows, he is very experienced in matters of international sport. As the Secretary of State said in his Urgent Question, "These revelations have shown how important it is for sports bodies to uphold the highest standards of governance, transparency and accountability".

Lord Triesman (Lab): My Lords, I congratulate the Secretary of State on all aspects of what he said. More or less five years ago, I suggested that FIFA operated as a Mafia family and was thought to be either excessive or mad. That turned out to be a very modest statement compared with the reality. Would the Government welcome the opportunity to have joint detailed discussions with the FA, possibly involving people with long experience of the FA and football administration, to make sure that the discussions with the FA finally rest in reality? I am not offering to do this but think of noble Lords such as the noble Lord, Lord Burns, who produced an extremely important report on the FA. Secondly, will the Government urge that all investigations are now undertaken by the police and formal authorities rather

than through FIFA's internal processes, which are at best obscure and the outcomes of which are always secret?

The Earl of Courtown: My Lords, I thank the noble Lord who is well known in this field and is a man of honour and integrity. He raised important points. I am sure that my right honourable friend the Secretary of State will take careful note of what he said. The SFO will carefully monitor what is happening in both America and Switzerland with regard to the investigations.

Baroness Doocey (LD): My Lords, allegations about FIFA are nothing new. There have been repeated suggestions that all has not been well for a very long time. Sepp Blatter should hang his head in shame and resign immediately rather than wait to be forced out for the appalling state of FIFA's affairs. The UK Bribery Act requires firms to guard against the risks of corruption so that staff and management are simply not put in a position where inappropriate influences are brought to bear. These principles are urgently needed in sport where the fans rely on good governance to secure the best for their competitions. Therefore, I ask the Minister to look at the principles set out in the Bribery Act to see how these might be applied to sporting governing bodies to ensure that those involved in sports governance are subject to the same rules on propriety, ethics and transparency as we would expect from public officials and business leaders.

The Earl of Courtown: I cannot add much more to what the noble Baroness has said, which links in with what my noble friend Lord Moynihan said. As regards her points on the Bribery Act, this is not something I am aware of but I will ensure that she gets a reply.

Lord Faulkner of Worcester (Lab): My Lords, the noble Earl's welcome return to the Dispatch Box is marked by unanimity across the Chamber. That is very welcome indeed. Does he agree that UEFA holds the key to whether FIFA can be reformed? If it is willing to boycott the assembly which is due to start tomorrow and effectively pull out of it, that would make a great impact on FIFA and could assist with the reforms which I think everyone in the Chamber wishes to see. I wish to press the noble Earl on what he said about sponsors. Are the Government willing to talk to some of these not just household names but very great worldwide brands and their representatives in the UK to make clear our displeasure at what is going on and the fact that their names are being tainted by the association with FIFA?

The Earl of Courtown: My Lords, the point the noble Lord made concerning sponsors is very valid. The fact is that the disgust of the paying footballing public will not go unnoticed by the sponsors. I feel that more and more pressure is being put on FIFA. As the noble Lord said, UEFA and Michel Platini will no doubt play a very important role in this regard.

Lord Lyell (Con): Given my noble friend's close connection with Switzerland and, indeed, my own, will he take on board the fact that there is enormous good will within Switzerland and UEFA for everything

[LORD LYELL]

that is done in this country—I call it the home nations: Scotland, England, Northern Ireland and Wales—with regard to FIFA? The noble Lord, Lord Triesman, has put down a marker not just in your Lordships' House and with the Football Association—on at least three occasions he has laid the ground for what I hope could be fruitful diplomatic solutions to start to sort out this major problem. Will my noble friend take that on board and recommend to the Minister that the noble Lord, Lord Triesman, be put towards the front in this regard?

The Earl of Courtown: I thank my noble friend for his very important point. He referred to another point made by the noble Lord, Lord Triesman, that I failed to answer—namely, that my right honourable friend the Secretary of State is having a telephone conversation with Greg Dyke this afternoon and will have a meeting with him next week to take this matter further.

Viscount Younger of Leckie: My Lords, the 10 minutes are up and it is time to resume the debate on the Address.

Queen's Speech

Debate (2nd Day) (Continued)

1.16 pm

Lord Temple-Morris (Lab): My Lords, it is a pleasure to follow the noble Viscount, Lord Bridgeman, who spoke of Ireland. I speak as the co-founder some 25 years ago of the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly, of which he is a member. I am very much aware of the importance of what he had to say about the relations between our two countries and, indeed, the concerns of Ireland. What he said was important, we listened to it and I am very pleased that it was mentioned in this debate.

I wish to make one fundamental, underlying point and I am not alone in making it. Having listened to the wise words of the noble Lord, Lord Wallace of Saltaire, and other comments made in this debate, the simple underlying point is that we have no foreign policy. Certainly, we have no policy that can act as a guide to national conduct and national decision-making. Until we decide where we are in the world, we cannot effectively relate to it. That is a very simple fact. We are too dependent on others with no secure international base. What we do have is firmly rooted in past greatness, supported by our language, history and still respected judgment. However, the key to all this, as far as the future is concerned, and the answer to it, has to be Europe.

More than 20 years ago, I was in the State Department when I was summonsed back to the other place for a wretched vote in the eternal Maastricht debates that were taking place at the time. Other noble Lords may have shared that fate at that time. I grumbled to an American ambassador whom I knew, who happened to be in the State Department at that time, who simply said, "Peter, as much as we love you, if you come out of Europe, we will have no special relationship". That hit home and said it all. Relations with the United States are not a

substitute for a policy; rather, she is our most important ally, who needs us in Europe in an eventual partnership of equals.

The consequences of all this are serious. Our lack of a policy can lead us to act in the wrong cause and for the wrong reasons. To please the Americans we go to war in Iraq. Rather than counselling them from a position of power in Europe, we plunge into an adventure from which we continue to have to pick up the pieces. Then, to please the French—and to show form with Europe—we go and bomb Libya. For once, under a more sensible President, America is reluctant, but away we go. The consequences of no overall policy and a knee-jerk reaction are there today for all to see.

The consequences of a lack of a settled European role in world affairs for the quality and experience of our national leadership are also serious. I will not be alone in thinking or remarking upon the fact that during our recent election there was no real discussion at all of international affairs. During the whole painstaking six weeks, there was hardly any mention of it, certainly none that went home to the people. What is more, the lifestyle and demands of current national politics are not an inducement for many talented people to choose to participate. They go to the United States, the City, the professions or the multinationals. But the youth and inexperience, particularly in foreign affairs, of too many of those who remain and who aspire to lead us in government—let alone with the power to involve us in wars—is plain for all to see. It is just a little frightening.

I will say a final word on defence. Both we and NATO are all too dependent on our American friends. Many of the current problems of the world are far nearer Europe than the United States of America. America dominates NATO and without her little can be done. The American mindset is used to being in charge, which is quite right when she is paying for most of it. But the mood is growing over there that this situation cannot last. Europe as a whole has to contribute more towards its own defence, and Britain has to set an example by fulfilling its 2% commitment.

Once again, it comes down to Europe. Our Armed Forces are great and even more so when they are engaged in full formation alongside the Americans. But the Americans will expect a European defence policy that leads to a more equal distribution of our common responsibilities, and for us to play a leading role in getting it. Europe should be a partner of the United States and not a dependant.

1.22 pm

Lord Kakkar (CB): My Lords, I congratulate the Minister on the very thoughtful way in which he introduced this debate following the gracious Speech. I intend to focus principally on the impact of our relationship with the European Union on the delivery of healthcare in our country. In so doing, I declare an interest as professor of surgery at University College London and a member of the General Medical Council.

Before turning to that important issue, I will just touch on the interesting issue of the forthcoming referendum on our membership of the European Union and what the basis of the franchise for that referendum

might be. Her Majesty's Government have announced in the last few days that the franchise should be the same as that for elections to the Westminster Parliament, which seems an intuitive place to be. Since we are a parliamentary democracy, it is for the representatives of citizens—constituents—to come to the other place, represent the views of those constituents and exercise their judgment in determining how to vote on the vast majority of issues. Seldom in our parliamentary system do those representatives of their constituents feel the need not to exercise their own judgment but to return to those who have sent them to the other place to seek the views of those electors. Under the circumstances, therefore, it seems appropriate that those who voted for Members of the other place should be those providing their views about how the House of Commons should respond to the question of our future relationship with Europe. Therefore, seeking the opinion of constituents able to vote in national elections seems an appropriate course.

That appears to be the approach taken by the 27 other European member states. Each of them restricts participation in national referendums to those citizens who are entitled to vote in national elections. The only other European nation that addresses the issue of participation in national referendums on a case-by-case basis, as is the habit in our own country, is the Netherlands. It is not identical but in a similar situation in 2005, when the Netherlands put to its own people the question of whether the European Union constitution should be adopted, it chose to proceed with a franchise restricting participation in that referendum to the citizens of its own country eligible to vote in national parliamentary elections.

Indeed, when we have had national referendums in our own country—such as in 1975 when the question of our ongoing membership of the European Economic Community was put to the people of our country—the franchise chosen was the national electoral franchise for Westminster constituencies. Indeed, when we had the referendum on whether we should change the voting system in our country—the AV referendum in 2011—once again the Westminster franchise was chosen, with the addition, of course, that Members of your Lordships' House were able to participate in that vote.

Although there are to be vital major treaty negotiations in the coming two years with regard to our future relationship with the European Union, very important issues remain to be addressed, with regard not to major treaty change but important potential regulations that could have a profound impact on the delivery of healthcare in our country. It is vital that those important discussions about more minor areas rather than major treaty changes continue to be addressed in the most robust fashion.

There is no doubt that there have been and continue to be very important advantages through the opportunity for our country to participate actively in the European Union, both in the delivery of healthcare and in biomedical research. Only last week my noble friend Lord Rees of Ludlow, with a number of other very distinguished scientists, pointed out in a letter published in the *Times* the important opportunities afforded for research generally and biomedical research in particular

by our relationship with the European Union. At this stage, I reiterate my interest as professor of surgery at University College London. My institution is eligible to apply for European Union research funding and, indeed, is very successful at doing so. I also served in the previous Parliament on your Lordships' European Union Sub-Committee B, which undertook an investigation into research and innovation funding—the Horizon 2020 programme—from Europe.

In the previous funding round—2007 to 2014—our country was second only to Germany in the funding it received for research from Europe, with some €7 billion, and was the largest recipient nation in funding to academic institutions, with some €5 billion. In the area of healthcare, some €560 million came to our medical research programmes, making us the largest recipient among European Union member states. But in parallel with that, we have seen proposals around the European data protection regulations. The former proposal put by the Commission seemed reasonably sensible but, as modified by the European Parliament, is now a matter of further negotiation. Those regulations, if imposed as a result of qualified majority voting, would have a detrimental impact on medical research in our country. They would make it practically impossible to undertake cancer registries or to fully exploit the UK Biobank—a massive programme involving some 500,000 of our citizens donating biological materials and their personal data to allow us to have long-term longitudinal research studies—and of course the 100,000 Genomes Project would also be severely undermined. I wonder what progress Her Majesty's Government have made in ensuring that the application of the data protection regulations does not undermine the future of biomedical research in our country.

There is also the very serious concern about the decision taken by the President of the European Commission to dismiss the independent scientific adviser. This is a very serious matter that was raised in your Lordships' House in the previous Session of Parliament. There was an independent scientific adviser available to ensure the appropriate assessment—or the mechanism for the appropriate assessment—of applications for European Union funding. That was vital. What progress have Her Majesty's Government made with ensuring that independent scientific advice continues to inform decisions taken by the European Union in science, technology and medical research?

There is no doubt that we have become increasingly dependent in our National Health Service on the large numbers of doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals who have come to work in our country. However, we have also seen detrimental impacts with regard to the European working time regulation on the delivery of healthcare in our hospitals and, increasingly now, beyond them in community care as well. It is now well recognised that the working time regulation, originally a measure on health and safety at work, has had a detrimental impact when applied to those working in the health service. It is now seen to have had a detrimental role in ensuring continuity of care in our hospitals, and therefore a detrimental impact on patient safety. Where it was thought that it might not impact on the training of junior doctors, increasingly it is seen to have been detrimental—particularly in the training of

[LORD KAKKAR]

those in craft specialties, such as my own as a surgeon. There is also the cost element associated with the need to pay more and more locum agency doctors to help our hospitals ensure that rotas for 24-hour cover are European working time regulation-compliant. Have Her Majesty's Government made an assessment of what proportion of the £3.2 billion spent last year on agency staff in the National Health Service can be attributed to the fact that the working time regulation continues to be applied, and therefore that we need to employ many more locum and agency staff to ensure that hospitals have compliant rotas?

Finally, there is the question of how those from Europe wishing to practice medicine or undertake their professional obligations as healthcare professionals in our country should join the various regulatory registers. I again remind noble Lords of my declaration of interest as a member of the General Medical Council but I do not speak for the council on this occasion. In the last Parliament it finally became possible, where there were concerns about doctors coming from the European Union, for the General Medical Council to test their language skills. That was not previously the case, although the council was able to test the language skills of those doctors coming from outside the European Union. Last September, the council announced its aspiration to introduce a single national licensing exam, which every person wishing to join the general medical register would have to sit. It would apply to our own UK medical graduates as well as those coming from around the world—from the United States, Australia, Canada and many other countries. However, there is some doubt whether the national licensing exam could be placed before those coming from European member states and wishing to join the general medical register. If that turned out to be the case and if the council were to come forward with a proposal for the introduction of a national licensing exam, are Her Majesty's Government able to confirm that their position would be to ensure that all doctors joining a register, including those from the European Union, were subject to that examination?

1.33 pm

The Lord Bishop of Coventry: My Lords, indebtedness is debilitating, and living beyond our means is irresponsible. We know that our Government have committed themselves afresh to a long-term strategic economic plan to deal with that on a financial level, but another sort of indebtedness is liberating and is fundamental to our proceedings today. It is a recognition of our moral debt to others and the fulfilment of our responsibilities to serve the common good, not only of our one nation but of the one world. Her Majesty's Government's determination to play,

"a leading role in global affairs",

will be served by honouring the moral obligations that belong to us as a P5 country with a long history of world influence, a network of relationships in Europe and with the Commonwealth and the United States, and still an impressive reach of soft power.

Financial debt prompts caution and stifles confidence. Our moral debt to our global neighbours demands a bold engagement with the world. It calls for confidence

not only in our capacity to bring good to others but in the return which that investment in the needs of the world, especially where suffering abounds, brings to our own security and prosperity—a point well made by the noble Earl, Lord Howe, in his opening speech. It is the sort of role that the noble Baroness, Lady Anelay, noted in her impressive foreword to the Foreign Office's most recent *Human Rights and Democracy* report, which said that,

"the wellbeing of others is an integral part of our national interest".

I offer the congratulations of this Bench to the noble Earl and the noble Baroness on their appointments.

Tackling the international challenges identified in the gracious Speech demands determined campaigns to build peace and stability on many levels. I will mention only two. First, there is freedom of religion and belief—one of the most basic of rights, yet one of the least respected. Violence in the name of religion is at a six-year high, with three-quarters of the world's population living with restrictions on the faith or belief that they can choose or practise openly. The previous Government's commitment to religious freedom and human rights is worthy of respect, but the leading role in global affairs to which they aspired will require even greater efforts by the new Government. Is the Minister able to confirm whether matters of freedom of religion and belief will be included as a specific priority in the FCO business plan and the criteria used by DfID?

It will be vital in the coming months to ensure that domestic debates about the role of human rights in this country do not impinge in any way on our advocacy of religious freedom worldwide, so I would be glad of the Minister's assurance that Her Majesty's Government will continue to speak out promptly, clearly and loudly against any acts of violence committed in the name of religion, as well as related incitement to violence and discrimination in law and in practice.

My second theme is reconciliation after conflict. Attending the anniversary of the bombing of Dresden and Würzburg earlier this year and reflecting in your Lordships' House on the destruction of German cities gave me opportunity to consider how far we have come with reconciliation in Europe. This point was made by the noble Lord, Lord Triesman, and others. More recently, the visit of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales to the Republic of Ireland, as noted by the noble Viscount, Lord Bridgeman, was a profound and very moving sign of the progress made towards a sound peace built on lasting reconciliation. Nevertheless, even as we remember the work of reconciliation in Europe over the last 70 years, the conflict in Ukraine reminds us that—as we know—we cannot take peace in our continent for granted.

As we move towards a period of national debate on our place in Europe itself, we have an important opportunity to recognise and celebrate the progress that we have made with our European partners to heal the wounds of history and to reflect on what we might achieve together for peace in those places where the road to reconciliation is much less travelled. Those of course are places where the legacy left by

European powers has not been wholly positive and our moral debt is the larger for it, and where peace will require a bold vision and confident action.

We need to invest in long-term solutions to conflict and to motivate other countries to do so. The noble Lord, Lord Ashdown, set out a panoramic vision with much greater learning than I possibly could, but perhaps I might focus by way of example on Iraq, and on one matter in particular. When, as we hope, the forces of ISIS are pushed back and collapse, a bold and confident international community will be needed to hold the Iraqi Government to their pledges of inclusivity.

This Government's stated support for long-term political reform in Iraq is timely, but can the Minister set out what practical steps Her Majesty's Government intend to take to assist the Government of Iraq in their efforts towards reconciliation in that country? Would the Minister agree with me that unless there is a strategic plan for reconciliation, the country's future looks bleak?

I am always moved by Her Majesty's prayer for God's blessing to rest on our counsels. When I reflect on what sort of,

"leading role in global affairs",

might meet with the blessing of God, the words of Christ, "Blessed are the peacemakers", come to mind. Commitment to human rights, including the right to religious freedom, builds stable societies. Working for reconciliation following violence ensures that violence is not repeated. Meeting our moral debt to suffering peoples and struggling nations is investment in peace—and peacebuilding is the highest form of global leadership.

1.40 pm

Lord Trefgarne (Con): My Lords, I will not detain your Lordships for more than a few moments. I start by saying how much I look forward to the maiden speech of my noble friend Lady Helic in a few moments.

Trident was of course referred to in the Conservative manifesto, as my noble and gallant friend Lord Craig reminded us a few moments ago. Prior to the general election, back in March I think, my right honourable friend Mr Fallon, then as now the Defence Secretary, was able to give some very valuable reassurances as to the future of Trident. I hope that my noble friend Lady Anelay will be able to repeat those this evening. We need to hear clear and unequivocal answers to the following questions.

First, is it the policy of this Government, as I believe it is, that we should remain a truly independent nuclear power? By that, I mean that we have a nuclear deterrent which, while in the first instance assigned to NATO, is available for our own national purposes should our supreme national interest ever so require it, with that to be decided by the Prime Minister of the day, when and if the time should sadly come. I hope to receive assurance that that will be the case.

What more do we need from an independent deterrent? It should be free and exempt from the risk of pre-emptive attack, so that it cannot be put out of order before some other attack is made upon us. That means, I believe, a submarine-based deterrent, not one based on some other form of platform, which has sometimes

been suggested. Finally, it needs to be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week and 52 weeks in the year, without exception. That, I am afraid, means four submarines, not three as has sometimes been suggested. I hope that my noble friend can confirm that when the time comes. These matters will no doubt all be addressed by the SDSR which is now proposed, but I hope that the essential criteria to which I have referred will not be violated.

My next, and quite different, point relates to the European referendum, which it is now proposed will take place no later than 2017. There has been some doubt as to who might be entitled to vote in that referendum. At the early announcement, last week I think, that some immigrant persons would not be entitled to vote, there was reference to voting for the House of Commons. Of course, your Lordships are not entitled to vote for the House of Commons, so I very much hope that my noble friend, when she replies later this evening, can confirm unequivocally that Members of your Lordships' House will be entitled to vote in the referendum when the time comes. The noble Lord, Lord Kakkar, referred to that obliquely when he made his remarks a few moments ago.

I end with, again, a different assertion. Are we not the luckiest nation on earth with our Head of State? She came here the day before yesterday—oh, it was yesterday, not the day before; she would not have made that error—and presented her Speech from the Throne in a quite exemplary fashion, as she has done on previous occasions no fewer than 64 times I think now. A number of years ago—it was around the time of her 21st birthday—she pledged her entire life to the service of the nation, the Commonwealth and the Empire. Has she not delivered that undertaking many times in full?

1.45 pm

The Earl of Sandwich (CB): My Lords, I hasten to agree with that very worthy sentiment from the noble Lord. I welcome the noble Earl to the Front Bench and hope that we can recruit him to the very important cause of the new committee on international affairs, which was mentioned by the noble Lord, Lord Triesman, earlier. It is a cause which all noble Lords who are speaking today should subscribe to.

As a committed European, I have generally been opposed to the in/out referendum because, like the Scottish one, it seems to polarise our society, especially if it is to be decided by a simple majority. It always seemed obvious to me that we should stay in the EU and make the best of it, as I think almost all previous Prime Ministers have sought to do. Our present Prime Minister is faced with a rebellion in the ranks and is therefore, as the noble Lord, Lord Wallace, described it, being pushed into a compromise more akin to the Danish solution. But on reflection I now feel that it is time to clear the air and for the people to express their opinion—preferably in favour, perhaps even by a two-thirds majority since it is a constitutional issue. We should do it as soon as possible, early in 2016. It is unnecessary to drag the European question all the way through this Parliament when there are so many major issues to settle at home and abroad.

[THE EARL OF SANDWICH]

The Government's policy already carries a lot of risk. We must expect a range of amendments in the Bill, including opt-outs we have never heard of. Having served on first Sub-Committee E and then Sub-Committee C of the EU Select Committee, I can describe the reaction of most colleagues, some of whom are here, only as "exasperated" when we were going through the scale of 130 JHA opt-outs. The arrest warrant issue alone made one's hair stand on end: how were the police ever going to catch up with criminals without full co-operation in Europe? In other words, I am expecting the Government to show more responsibility in dealing with the referendum issue than with the original opt-outs. It is called leadership: setting a pattern for the kind of Europe we need rather than anticipating every complaint an MP can put forward.

Let us consider other member states' views. Some say that other states are longing for us to take the lead in renegotiating opt-outs, and perhaps the treaty itself. I am very doubtful about this, having been in Prague this week and spoken to a number of people. Although I recognise the general lean to the right, it is much more likely that other countries are waiting, like the Commission, for Europe to get on with the business of the economy, the eurozone—the noble Lord, Lord Triesman, referred to the importance of economic stability—migration and other desperately urgent matters.

On migration, I do not think all the proposals on EU migrants' benefits are workable. How can you retrieve benefits? However, I strongly support the EU's attempt to curb human trafficking, especially in the Mediterranean. The noble Lord, Lord West, may have sounded a little gung-ho on the radio last week but he is right that we have to make a more vigorous EU attempt, with of course UN backing, to persuade the Libyans—whichever Government are responsible there—to make much more effort to prevent or destroy traffickers. I was impressed by the determination of Signora Mogherini, the new high representative, when she was over here earlier this year. As she said yesterday, the first aim is to,

"quickly save lives and provide protection in the EU for people in need, be they at sea, in the EU or in third countries".

But she also knows that there is a much bigger long-term task, to deter large numbers of migrants from coming to Europe or taking to the boats in the first place. The solution to this can only be more poverty reduction and development in areas of most need and where conflict permits intervention. This is where I was very encouraged by the noble Earl's statement of support for international development, earlier in his introduction. Of course, let us not forget that it was a coalition achievement that we have pretty well all signed up to the 0.7% target.

The focus for Europe must be the littoral of north Africa and the Middle East. Has there been any progress in the EU and French consultations with the north African states affected? What has the outcome of these consultations been? How does that compare with our level of co-operation with Turkey and other Middle Eastern countries affected by similar migration? This is the cause of diplomacy that the noble Lord, Lord Ashdown, talked about.

There is another area of policy where Europe is committed to development and human rights. We in the UK have been strong supporters of enlargement of Europe and the continuing Ostpolitik of the EU. Europe has been strengthened by the addition of most of the Balkan states, although there are still grave risks of conflict. I look forward to the speech of the noble Baroness, Lady Helic, who I know will enlighten us now and in future. I would like to see Kosovo and Serbia brought closer to membership. Has this process moved forward in the last few months or come to a halt? We should remember that President Juncker rather jumped the gun when he called for a period of reflection on taking office. Is enlargement high enough on the agenda or does the UK have to push it forward?

We still see examples of Russia's bullying tactics in not only Ukraine but also countries such as Georgia and Moldova, where the promise of eventual EU membership contrasts sharply with the aims of President Putin's guided kleptocracy—to give it a kind epithet. We must maintain the dialogue with Russia on Iran at all costs, and on ISIS, but at the same time strengthen our ties with those front-line countries.

These are the kind of issues with which we should be engaged, rather than continually fighting our own doubting Thomases in the Commons. I recognise that this may be a simple view, but I know it is shared by many others in all parties who feel less able to express it. This House is unlikely to block the legislation on Europe—I hope it will not—but it would be well advised to help knock some common sense into some of the MPs who would like to.

1.52 pm

Lord Moynihan (Con): My Lords, in the brief time available to speak on the gracious Speech, I shall focus my remarks on the UK's relationship with the European Union. This will be one of the seminal questions facing us in this Parliament and the source of much newsprint and many hours of debate, not least in your Lordships' House.

Today sees the publication of the European Union Referendum Bill, as promised in the gracious Speech. The result of the referendum that it provides for will chart the course of the UK's history for the next generation. The Prime Minister's dialogue with EU leaders in Riga last week marked the beginning of a two-part process: the negotiation of the package of reforms, followed by the referendum campaign itself. These are very early days and the Prime Minister is absolutely right to start with a broad-brush approach that lays the groundwork for a deal, sounding out the views of others in Europe and putting the desire for reform in the UK in context before revealing his full negotiating hand in the detailed discussions that lie ahead.

Prior to the election, there were some discordant murmurings about the dearth of concrete proposals on the table and objections to their vague, unquantifiable nature. However, nothing would have been more guaranteed to backfire spectacularly than a hectoring list of British demands laid before our European partners. For this process to succeed it must be about

the interests of Britain—those are plainly paramount—but also about a determination to improve the EU as a whole.

Britain does not stand alone in wanting the EU to work better—far from it. Many in Europe share the same vision of a reformed, recalibrated EU with a vibrant single market freed from the stranglehold of red tape. To succeed, we need to work with the grain of that opinion, not against it. This cannot be seen across the channel as a zero-sum process in which the recalcitrant is pitted stubbornly against the reluctant, and where the best deal for Britain by definition will result in a diminished EU. Indeed, the opposite is true. Our interests are aligned with a great many in Europe. In securing real reform, Britain will work better within the EU and the EU will work better for all its citizens.

Paradoxically, it sometimes seems that those with the pragmatic perspective that location on the geographical periphery often bestows are best able to provide the impetus, energy and momentum for positive change at the centre. While we must allay concerns that ours will be a pick-and-mix approach that will undermine EU cohesion, fears that a British deal could open the floodgates for other countries to seek concessions and create a free-for-all of competing demands should be squarely countered on the basis that institutions that are not prepared to adapt and to flex in accordance with the needs and wishes of their members become over time at best irrelevant and at worst extinct. Straitjacketing 28 member states to achieve unity is no long-term solution.

Monday's meeting at Chequers with EU Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker set a constructive tone and it is to be hoped that the Prime Minister's meeting with Mrs Merkel tomorrow will do likewise. Her support for a deal will be essential, and while we should not suppose that Germany will support the unpicking of the treaties governing the EU to accommodate a British wish list, there is reason to suppose that our liberal-market advocacy earns us a certain amount of good will in Berlin. Indeed, the mood music from our European partners since the Prime Minister's decisive election victory has become far more emollient. The hypothetical is now real: Britain will decide the European question through a referendum. This is surely concentrating minds in Europe on how a fair deal for the UK might be agreed.

I do not believe there is any appetite in Europe to see Britain leave the EU. The UK is no longer considered an affordable loss, as former EU Commissioner Günter Verheugen put it. The UK is crucial to both the economic future of Europe and its political future, but that still does not mean a blank cheque to write whatever changes we want. Just as we will have red lines, so too will our European partners, and we cannot demand other countries change any more than they can demand that we must. While stating our position clearly and firmly, we must address concerns that there will be a *reductio ad absurdum* of the fundamental essence of the EU, even if we do not share those concerns.

I have spoken about the need for EU reform and the prospects for a deal from the perspective of an unapologetic and instinctive Eurorealist, with the roots

of my conviction firmly based in the history of the 20th century. I want to see the best outcome for the renegotiation effort, followed by a government campaign in favour of membership of a reformed EU. I echo the Foreign Secretary's words:

“That is how I want this process to end up: a good package of reforms; a ‘yes’ vote; and a step change in the way the relationship works, with Britain being really engaged and a loud voice in the union”.

The Prime Minister has made it clear that he wants the UK to stay in a reformed EU that is,

“more competitive, more flexible and more accountable to the people”.

The start of his efforts to achieve that is not the time to ask the Government what they will do in the referendum if that necessary reform is not forthcoming.

Of course, there will be those who seek to defeat a deal before it is even struck, and those who say that any promise of reform is no more than a chimera or fig-leaf, unable to cover the deep fractures and fissures that the European question always opens. But the deal is a prelude and the referendum is the denouement. I agree with the noble Earl, Lord Sandwich, that unlike with the last referendum in 1974 the result needs to settle the European question for a generation, with no room left for disgruntled malcontents to express their resentment at the outcome or to suggest that the British public have been hoodwinked into a deal that is not really a deal. For this reason, voters are right to be asked only the simple in/out question.

2 pm

Lord Anderson of Swansea (Lab): My Lords, I warmly congratulate the noble Earl, Lord Howe. If he shows the same mastery in defence as he did over the health brief, we shall be fortunate. I also look forward very much to the coming maiden speech. Today we have the opportunity of a debate on themes broader than our normal foreign affairs debates, which normally cover a specific region or particular theme. I shall briefly reflect on who we believe we are and the global role that we can realistically play, and touch a little on how others see us—the Burns side. Such reflections are now particularly relevant over the next five years, when we will face key decisions that will have profound implications for our future world role.

First, at home, we have the Scottish question, with renewed talk of the case for a federal UK. Possibly we have moved beyond federalism and are now inexorably on the path to independence. If so, it would be a very truncated UK seeking to play a new role in the world. Secondly, and most of all, the decision will be made by 2017 or even earlier on our future relationship with the European Union. Who can doubt that if we were no longer a member of the European Union we would lose very much clout in the world? We would be independent and proud, but very much more limited.

Yet foreign affairs and defence appeared to figure very little in the general election campaign and our national priorities. Our press hardly covers those issues, only doing so briefly and spasmodically, and continues to cut the number of foreign correspondents. The TV debates hardly touched at all on foreign affairs. I recall one speech by Ed Miliband at Chatham House which

[LORD ANDERSON OF SWANSEA]

included a controversial section linking the British-French bombing intervention in Libya with the boatloads of refugees crossing the Mediterranean. This was partially true but probably very ill-timed. The EU debate proper hardly surfaced during the election campaign, save perhaps on immigration. The chosen Conservative themes of credibility on the economy and a possible future Labour-SNP coalition dominated.

Times have changed; some of your Lordships may recall the general elections in the 1950s when foreign affairs were a major theme. I recall the groundnut scheme and the Hola camp massacre in 1959. Foreign affairs issues are now fairly marginal. Is that because of our perceived relative powerlessness in the face of the complexity of world problems, particularly as power shifts to the east, or perhaps memories of our recent military performance in Iraq and Afghanistan, which leads to a rejection of intervention generally?

This national parochialism is reflected in Parliament. How many of our recently elected members of Parliament have seen service abroad? When I was first elected there in 1966, almost all the men had done national military service, and many had served in the Second World War. Many had also worked abroad in business or in government service. I recall in the debates over EU entry in the 1960s, when I was a member of our Diplomatic Service, George Thomson's "ter-ums", as he would call them, which included safeguarding the sterling area, New Zealand and the Commonwealth generally. That appears an echo of a very long distant past. I exempt your Lordships' House from this criticism, but we are of course part of a different generation. The pathway to this House does not almost exclusively pass through service in the parliamentary office of a Member of Parliament.

We should know ourselves and reflect on how others see us. Clearly, the special relationship with the United States has withered, save in intelligence co-operation, and took a heavy blow in 2013 with the Commons vote on bombing Syria. The *Daily Telegraph* wrote in January that the reputation of Great Britain has been in free fall for several years. The warm and close Atlantic co-operation between Mrs Thatcher and President Reagan and between Mr Blair and President Clinton is no more. Sir Christopher Meyer, the former ambassador to Washington, wrote that the Americans have a growing concern about the effectiveness of the UK as a major ally. For example, we recently joined the Chinese-sponsored Asian Development Bank without consulting the United States. A recent article in *Le Monde* was headed:

"The diplomatic eclipse of Great Britain worries France and Europe".

For example, France is the key ally of the United States in west Africa and has intervened massively in Mali and the Central African Republic. Where has the United Kingdom been in the fight against Boko Haram in Commonwealth Nigeria? Will the cuts to our military budget imperil the Franco-British corps due to be operational next year? Is there any prospect of our reaching the defence expenditure target of 2% of GDP? Our defence budget has slipped from fourth in the world in 2010 to sixth in the world now. An article in the *Economist* on 4 April entitled "Little Britain" refers to an unmistakable decline. Our contribution to

fighting ISIS in Iraq is one air strike a day. I recall that 10 years ago, when I was in Tehran and saw the troika of Jack Straw, Joschka Fischer for Germany and de Villepin for France negotiating on behalf of the West with Iran over the nuclear issue. This year, only France and Germany of the three are at the Minsk negotiations over Ukraine. Since 2010, the FCO budget has been cut by 16% in real terms—30% if the World Service is included. We vainly strive to make up the shortfalls in military manpower with additional reservists. Our world role has surely diminished.

The EU debate will, of course, dominate for the next two years, yet the Prime Minister has hardly shown himself to be sure-footed in this area. I cite the withdrawal from the EPP, the ineffective veto of the fiscal treaty in 2011 and the ill-fated campaign to block the candidacy of Mr Juncker, who was almost certain to become the President because he was the candidate of the major bloc within the European Parliament—all of which does not bode well for the success of the renegotiations, in spite of the good will of many friends, such as that shown by Mr Timmermans. Yet probably a deal can be done if it is handled skilfully, by avoiding unrealistic demands and not constantly emphasising British exceptionalism. Are the Government attracted by the Danish precedent of 1992, recognising that there is no prospect of treaty change and negotiating a series of opt-outs to be consolidated later into a treaty, as was the case with Amsterdam? We can perhaps show good will and smooth the path by following the example of Tony Blair. I recall that, after the difficulties caused by those in John Major's party whose paternity John Major doubted, Tony Blair sought to repair that damage by enhancing co-operation with Europe in security and defence, with the Saint Malo treaty, and by diplomatic co-operation in west Africa. Alas, recent appointments of Eurosceptics to the personal staff of the Prime Minister and the Chancellor do not bode well for a balanced EU policy.

Finally, in the Queen's Speech, another area of potential difficulty that could lead to the loss of allies in the European Union is human rights. The European Convention on Human Rights, which was drafted by UK jurists, is the core of the Council of Europe. Are we to continue automatically to accept the court's judgments? If we make those judgments advisory only, we will face the danger of leaving the Council of Europe and give a bad example to serial defaulters, such as Russia and Turkey. A compromise has long been available—for example, on prisoners' voting rights—the so-called margin of appreciation. Dominic Grieve MP was sacked as Attorney-General because he realised the dangers of failing to reach a deal. I invite your Lordships to read his very carefully drafted article in today's *Times* relating to the effect of the Human Rights Act on Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales and the effect on our relationship with the Council of Europe.

However, all is not lost. The Prime Minister has a new mandate. The new intake of Members of Parliament may be Eurosceptic, but they owe their election to him. Our European allies hope that in his second term the Prime Minister will end what *Le Monde* calls "l'effacement britannique", which is perhaps best

translated as “the British obliteration”. If the Prime Minister pursues realistic goals in a flexible way, seeks allies in a spirit of co-operation and avoids populist *cul de sacs*, he may well succeed in securing his place in history and will certainly deserve the support of this side of the House and the country generally. Alternatively, failure to obtain a positive vote on the European Union will lead to the loss of Scotland, which wishes to remain part of the European Union, and to the United Kingdom being weakened in both our reach and our clout overseas.

2.12 pm

Lord Alderdice (LD): My Lords, it is a genuine pleasure to see the noble Baroness, Lady Anelay, continuing in her place in the Foreign Office and on the Front Bench, and a positive delight to see the noble Earl, Lord Howe, taking his place as Deputy Leader of the House and in defence and, in that sense, foreign affairs. I have got to know him very well in dealing with health matters over the years, and I can only assume that the Prime Minister looked at the situation and decided that if there was one area that was complicated, difficult, contentious and in need of the attention of the noble Earl, it was defence and foreign affairs. I have no doubt that we are going to be glad of the noble Earl's presence as well as that of the noble Baroness, Lady Anelay.

I shall first pick up defence because I welcome the Government's commitment to continuing continuous-at-sea nuclear deterrence. It is necessary because we are in an increasingly dangerous world. It will not solve all the problems, but removing it would simply add to instability. I also welcome indications that the upcoming SDSR will be different from the last one, which was dominated by austerity in the Budget with our requirements coming second. This time round, it will look much more at our national requirements and then address the need for funding. The noble and gallant Lord, Lord Craig of Radley, was right when he said that it may well require more funding than we expect at this point. It is an increasingly dangerous world and one of the primary responsibilities of government is the defence of the people. There are many other things we like to do, but that is an absolute requirement of government. He spoke about conventional forces, but I think we need to move beyond the conventional in terms of the issues we have to address—notably cyber and terrorism, of course—and in the kind of military strategy and doctrine that we espouse. Will the Minister give an assurance, if she can, that in the United Kingdom's front-line development of NATO policy on what has become known as “understand to protect”—the approach that says that we need to deepen our understanding if we are to be effective in what we do militarily—we are taking the lead and that we will continue to do so with some energy?

When we come to international development, I of course feel that one of the great achievements of the coalition Government and of my right honourable friend Michael Moore was the legislation that embedded 0.7% as our commitment to international development. I hope that the funding available will not simply be used to maintain and build upon the kind of work that DfID has previously done and the kind of NGOs that

have been involved with it but that DfID will understand, as I believe the MoD understands in its territory, that there need to be changes in the way we approach these things. It is no longer appropriate simply to have conventional forces, and it is no longer appropriate simply to have conventional economic ways of dealing with community development in the wider world. I hope that the noble Baroness can assure me that DfID will be looking for new ways of addressing things, not merely the conventional ones.

When it comes to the European Union, I have long taken the view that our people need to have a say on this question because otherwise it will continue to niggle away at relationships within these islands and beyond. I want to emphasise something which the noble Lord, Lord Anderson of Swansea, commented on and which was referred to by the noble Viscount, Lord Bridgeman. One hundred years ago in your Lordships' House, there was a sense that not moving forward on some of the Liberal commitments of the time, notably Gladstone's approach to what we now call devolution but which was called home rule in those days, would provide stability and unity for our United Kingdom. That was not the result; the result was that 27 counties of Ireland seceded. If we do not find a satisfactory outcome in terms of our relationship with Europe, it will endanger the union. Let us be absolutely clear about it: were we to leave the European Union, the likelihood would be that Scotland would choose to leave the United Kingdom, and I fear there would be instability in my part of the United Kingdom because we would be so distanced from England and Wales, as it would be, and some of the historic loyalties to England are much less than the historic loyalties to Scotland. This question of Europe does not involve just our relationships outside the United Kingdom; it involves the very integrity of the United Kingdom, and I plead that your Lordships' House takes that into account more than it was taken into account 100 years ago in this House.

I will focus the latter part of what I have to say on foreign affairs. One of the advantages of the debate on the gracious Speech is that each year we can look back at what we said the previous year and decide whether we were pointing in the right direction or understand things differently and better now. As I looked back in preparation for this speech at the things I said last year and in 2013 I was sorry to see that all the warnings that I had given about the worsening international situation have been entirely fulfilled and built up but that the warnings about what we need to do have not been taken forward. I shall comment on three particular areas. First, when the question of Syria arose, I warned very clearly that the United Kingdom and its allies were very foolish to hitch their whole strategy to the notion of getting rid of President Assad. I said it was understandable, but unwise, and would not lead to success. It has not led to success. Among other things, we now find ourselves in the extraordinary position where our stated policy is to get rid of President Assad and to get rid of Daesh—as most Muslim countries prefer to call IS—at the same time. In other words, we are going to fight a war on two fronts and do not have anybody left in the middle. This simply does not make sense.

[LORD ALDERDICE]

We have to look again at how we deal with Syria. This is where “understand to protect” comes to the fore because it says that we need to look at what we are doing in these situations before we decide that we are going to react to them. The development of Daesh has been outlined very clearly by my noble friend Lord Ashdown of Norton-sub-Hamdon. It is a very dangerous situation. We may be past the post now, but we have probably seen the development of a war which may well continue for longer than any of your Lordships in this House. It is a hugely dangerous situation, and we must see what we can usefully do.

One of the key difficulties is that our relationship with Russia has continued to deteriorate; therefore, at the level of the Security Council and every level below we do not have any way of working together on some of these key questions. That is true in the Middle East. It is true that those questions are spoken about with regard to Israel/Palestine. The position of the Quartet has never been a united one. Russia has always talked to Hezbollah, Hamas and everybody else, while the Quartet maintained that it was not talking to those people. However, the fact is, as many of us have been warning over the past few years, that the two-state solution is as good as gone, and we now have a Prime Minister elected on a mandate—whatever he said after the election—that says that there will be no two-state solution on his watch. There is no possibility of any simple negotiation of the kind we are used to unless we change the situation, and the only way I can see of changing the situation and permitting the emergence of serious discussions on a two-state solution is if this country—and even more particularly the United States—recognises the state of Palestine, and then we move to implement it. Anything else is only fiddling in the wind and, actually worse than that, creates a situation where people such as Hamas are regarded as wishy-washy liberals by young Muslims in the Middle East, who say, “No—we must turn to IS because the only thing the West understands is the kind of force that is really frightening to them”.

In respect of Russia, we wrung our hands at Crimea and we worried about Ukraine. It is coming closer to home. If we look at the deteriorating situation in Macedonia, the foolishness of the EU about extending too far into Ukraine is mirrored by its foolishness at not accepting Macedonia in at a much earlier stage. Now Russia is getting involved in the destabilisation of Macedonia, a place I have had my eye on since around the late 1990s, because I saw that its problems were so similar to those that I experienced at home. We have to repair our relationship with Russia, however difficult it may be, because some of the difficulties of the region from which the noble Baroness, Lady Helic, and her family come will come back to us. Let us not forget that two Balkan wars in the run-up to the First World War were fought in the territory of Macedonia. It remains a key area.

However, lest I simply be the Jeremiah, there are two positive developments, one small and very local to ourselves, and one of geopolitical significance, which could improve things a little. First, I strongly support the initiative taken by the noble Lord, Lord Howell of Guildford, supported by the noble Lord, Lord Triesman,

and by the noble Earl, Lord Sandwich, for the establishment of a permanent committee of your Lordships' House on international affairs. That is absolutely critical. Nothing else is more important than trying to find a peaceful way forward in our world. On that front, there is one bright hope, which is that there will be some kind of reasonable treaty and understanding with Iran. That is the one thing in the short term that could begin to change the geopolitics of that whole region, and I plead for some reassurance from the noble Baroness that our Government are committed to doing all they can to achieve an understanding with Iran and to build relations with that historic community and nation. That is the one positive development for the next few months which could change things for the better.

2.23 pm

Baroness Cox (CB): My Lords, I welcome the Government's commitment in the gracious Speech to play a leading role in global affairs, international security, and economic and humanitarian challenges. I will highlight two relevant areas of concern, namely Burma and Sudan, which are relatively off the radar screen.

First, on Burma, I am happy to report some improvements in regions of Chin State, which I visited in February. Relations between the army, police and civilians have significantly improved, and human rights abuses, including forced labour, have ceased. There is also welcome investment by the Government in infrastructure. It is important to encourage reforms where they occur. However, the Government's continuing assaults on the Rohingya people continue unabated, forcing thousands to flee their land, with many stranded at sea in terrible conditions. As this tragedy has received some media coverage, and as time is limited, I will focus on people whom we visited just last month, whose plight is desperate but not widely reported: the Shan and Kachin people.

Military offensives by the Burmese army continue; in eastern Burma, large-scale military offences in the Kokang region of Shan and Kachin states have occurred almost daily. The Burmese army uses ceasefires to gain ground and enhance its military capability. Meanwhile, expropriation of land and natural resources with derisory or no compensation is associated with large-scale development projects including the building of mines, which displaces thousands of civilians, and dams, which flood thousands of homes. Land grabbing and forced relocations have uprooted people with minimal or no compensation.

When we were there we were told how some development projects begin with photographs being taken of investors handing a cheque to local community leaders. Immediately after the photographs are taken, the cheque is taken back and the project gets under way with no compensation. We met civilians who had lost everything and were forced to live penniless in camps for internally displaced people in Shan and Kachin states. Investment projects are also coupled with an increased military presence and disregard for human rights. Mining projects have caused the environmental destruction of water supplies and crops and have inflicted many diseases, and pollution is

damaging the ecosystem and environment. Meanwhile, civilians who have protested have been arrested and in some cases killed.

With continued conflict and displacement for development, the shift by international organisations from cross-border aid to funding the Burmese Government and larger organisations based in Rangoon is deeply worrying, as there is a much greater risk of corruption and failure to ensure that essential supplies reach people in great need in the areas of continuing conflict. The reduction in cross-border aid has already resulted in drastic cuts in food rations, which are set to decrease even further. Repatriation proposals are also generating fear. Many refugees who return home find that landmines have been placed in their homes or that their homes have been destroyed and their land sold to business or used by the military.

I therefore ask the Minister whether Her Majesty's Government will encourage DFID and other aid organisations to maintain their previous levels of cross-border aid with partners, like those with whom we in our small NGO, HART, work. They are well-respected and entirely trustworthy, and they make sure that the aid reaches those who are still in need. I also ask the noble Baroness whether Her Majesty's Government will press the Burmese Government to proceed with a comprehensive peace process rather than intermittent ceasefires, which are used to promote the Burmese army's positions and then broken. Finally, on Burma, will Her Majesty's Government encourage only those development projects which involve full consultation with local people and which are carried out with full compensation and respect for human rights?

I turn briefly to the de facto genocide being perpetrated with impunity by the Government of Sudan. Around 3.1 million people in Sudan are internally displaced. In Darfur up to 143,000 have been displaced from their homes since January this year. Their tragedy is receiving some publicity, but attacks on people in Blue Nile and South Kordofan are largely unreported. Since 2011, the Government of Sudan have been attacking civilians in those two areas with aerial bombardment, ground attacks and artillery shelling. Human Rights Watch has also found evidence of the use of cluster bombs in civilian areas.

When we visited Blue Nile State in January of this year we saw and felt the widespread fear and destruction caused by persistent aerial bombardment, which is aimed directly at civilians. Since 2012, on average three bombs a day have been dropped by the Government on civilian targets, directly hitting villages, markets, schools, fields, and places of worship. When we were there the planes had now started coming by night with searchlights, so they could continue to kill civilians by night as well as by day. April of this year saw 171% more attacks than in the previous month, including 55 verified incidents of the deliberate bombing or shelling of civilians. Most attacks are carried out by Antonovs but at least two were by jet fighters, which demonstrates the increasing sophistication of the Government's attacks on their own people. There has also been a significant upsurge in such attacks in recent weeks.

The deliberate targeting of civilian sites has caused a humanitarian catastrophe, with humanitarian access blocked by the Government in Khartoum. As of April

2015, an estimated 3.7 million people in Sudan faced acute food insecurity. Moreover, severe human rights violations, including torture, arbitrary detention, and attacks on peaceful protesters, opposition members, the media and civil society, continue elsewhere in Sudan.

These genocidal attacks on civilians and gross violations of human rights are perpetrated by the Government with complete impunity. Recent elections, which returned President al-Bashir to power, have been condemned nationally and internationally. Areas under the control of the opposition were disenfranchised with no polling booths. Civilians in South Kordofan suffered 12 separate air bombardments during the three days of elections.

Will Her Majesty's Government urgently consider measures to end the impunity with which the Government in Khartoum continue their ruthless policies? Will they not allow the election result to confer any legitimacy on that Government? Finally, will they initiate policies to promote essential life-saving, cross-border aid to civilians currently dying from lack of food and medical supplies?

It is the privilege of our small NGO, HART, to be with our partners in these forgotten conflicts, such as those in the Kachin and Shan states and in Sudan's Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile. We return humbled and inspired by their courage, resilience and dignity. I conclude with one story to illustrate the courage of these people.

I introduce a very brave young woman, Nagwa, our partner in Sudan's Nuba Mountains. Education has to be provided outdoors, as schools are especially targeted, but every effort is made to teach the high-quality Kenyan curriculum and to arrange for pupils to take the official examinations. Therefore, when the time arrives for pupils to take their exams, they travel from all over the Nuba Mountains to gather in one place—outdoors, as any school building will be targeted by Khartoum's bombers. Nagwa told us how she sent a message to each child asking him or her to bring a large stone. About 1,000 pupils arrived. When they had all gathered outdoors, Nagwa explained why she had asked them all to bring a stone. She said, "When you are doing your exams and you hear the Antonov bombers coming, you will each take your stone and calmly put it on top of your papers. You will then run, hide in the rocks or lie flat on the ground. Then, when the planes have gone, you will go back to your place and remove the stone. Your examination papers will not have been blown away by blast or wind". Talk about "exam pressure".

These courageous people in Sudan and Burma have suffered far too much for far too long. I passionately hope that the Minister will be able to give a message today which will bring them help and hope, and measures to help promote the peace and justice that they truly deserve.

Now, like every other noble Lord present in your Lordships' House, I eagerly await the maiden speech of the noble Baroness, Lady Helic.

2.32 pm

Baroness Helic (Con) (Maiden Speech): My Lords, I am humbled and honoured to speak for the first time in your Lordships' House. I am grateful to noble

[BARONESS HELIC]

Lords on all sides for welcoming me and for the kind words that have been said during the debate. I particularly thank Lord Jenkin, who was the first to greet me, my sponsors, my noble friends Lord Howell and Lady Hodgson, and staff for their kindness and endless patience.

I gather that it is customary in a maiden speech to say something about myself: to explain how a one-time Bosnian refugee from a town so small that you can hardly find it on a map, who was born in communist Yugoslavia and raised on a diet of brotherhood and unity, and who dreamt of being a Shakespeare scholar or a rock star came to Britain on 3 October 1992 and has now been afforded the greatest of honours—to serve this country, in her own small way.

I could speak about having to flee my home, being forcibly separated from my family, losing everything and being arrested just because I belonged to the “wrong” religion, but I feel a reluctance to do so today, as this story, which seems to be mine, is in fact a story about the United Kingdom. What seems more important to me is what it says about the United Kingdom and why it is still such a great country.

That I stand here is testament to this country—to its tradition of fairness, tolerance, decency and openness. Britain allowed me in, gave me refuge and opportunity, and never once put a wall in front of me. I think of the family who gave me a home when I was a stranger, the university that took me in when I had no papers, and the friends whom I came to know. They were a pillar of strength and support to me. They have been the guardians whom my late parents would, I am sure, wish to thank today.

I will also never forget my first proper job in this country, as an office clerk in the Library of the other place. It gave me the chance to learn about Britain's great democratic institutions and put my feet on a path that I am still on today. In the 17 years since, I have had the privilege of serving in some of those institutions, including the Foreign and Commonwealth Office—surely the finest foreign ministry of any nation.

My experience has taught me that every one of us who has come to this country and has been given the privilege of calling it our own has responsibilities: to defend it, to respect its laws, to cherish its democracy and to better it when we can. Being a citizen of the United Kingdom means not just carrying a passport but sharing an obligation to live by the rules and work for the common good.

Looking around the world today, there is much to celebrate. We have never been closer to each other, never so connected and never so well informed. Yet in this same world there are states that bully and trample their neighbours and smaller countries. There are so called “non-state actors” that are distorting a peaceful religion and using it as a brutal ideology. There are 54 million refugees and stateless people who have only their bare lives and international handouts to hold on to. There are conflicts in which humanitarian law has been replaced by the massacring of civilians and the rape of women, men and children, where nothing is sacred any longer, and where the siege of cities, the starvation of civilians and the flattening of villages and towns have become the new norm. Sadly, there is

a lack of collective leadership. Where previously we had grand coalitions and Marshall plans, there are ad hoc arrangements and donor conferences.

I am proud of our country's record on providing humanitarian aid to refugees around the world, but we know that we cannot donate our way out of these crises. We have to find solutions, as I know the Government are committed to do. As someone who has seen war, this is also a day when I want to plead that Britain as a whole does not ever turn its back on the world—if not for the sake of others, then for our own. If we allowed our red lines to be crossed, our leadership to be missing or doubt to be cast over our commitment to defence spending, we would weaken ourselves in the eyes of those who wish to undermine us or to hurt others.

We are told too often that Britain has lost its ambition and influence internationally, but we have the skills and experience needed. We should have the confidence and determination to use them and never hang back when we should be at the forefront. We must remain a strong and determined country that has a spine of steel to defend itself as well as international peace and security, and the patience to see through what we have begun. Libya is a recent example but Bosnia is again a case in point. It is a unique and beautiful country that I am sure will overcome separatism, small but worrying seeds of extremism and bullying and interference by countries such as Russia. But it will do so only if we do not abandon it to those forces. If we cannot protect multiethnic societies in Europe, we will have little chance of ensuring the protection of minorities in the Middle East and beyond.

I conclude with a final thought. Our strength rests also on our moral authority—on policies that serve our nation's interests through the wider good. I urge the Government—and I know that the noble Baroness the Minister needs no persuading of this—to pursue and further expand the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative. It angers and saddens me that 20 years after tens of thousands of women endured hell in rape camps in Bosnia, the world is tolerating the rampant abuse and enslavement of women and girls in Iraq and Syria, and that rape and torture are becoming the preferred tools of militias and terrorist groups across the world—with impunity.

When I entered this Chamber on 24 November, I fell under its spell. It represents centuries of a country striving to better itself and the world. I am honoured to be here and I look forward to playing my full part.

2.39 pm

Baroness Hodgson of Abinger (Con): It is a privilege to follow my noble friend Baroness Helic and to congratulate her on her outstanding maiden speech. I have had the pleasure of knowing her for a number of years now. She has a remarkable life story, as we have just heard. She served as a special adviser for a number of years, latterly working for William Hague, notably during his time as Foreign Secretary. She has made a particular contribution in highlighting the issue of sexual violence. It is such a great pleasure to welcome her to this House. I look forward to working with her in years to come. I also congratulate my noble friends Lord Howe and Lady Anelay on their appointments.

As we have already heard from a number of other remarkable speakers, in an increasingly unstable world, promoting the British values of social justice, democracy and human rights is more important than ever before. The last Government worked hard to highlight the importance of gender equality and female empowerment internationally, and the Conservative election manifesto made clear that this work would continue. I warmly welcome this, because there is still a long way to go and much work to do.

Why is this so important? Women raise families and thus how they are treated affects the whole of a society. Today, women constitute two-thirds of those living in extreme poverty. Although they form 60% of the world's working poor, they earn only 10% of the world's income and own less than 2% of the world's property. The year 2015 is critical for gender equality and development. Besides being the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, we hope that the sustainable developments goals will deliver a stand-alone goal on gender equality.

Today, however, I would like to focus on two areas. The first, following on from my noble friend Lady Helic, is the preventing sexual violence in conflict initiative—I declare my interest as a member of the steering board. Conflict is a major driver of inequality, which affects women disproportionately. Today, we live in a very unsafe world, with so many countries experiencing conflict: Afghanistan, Iraq, Sudan—as we heard from the noble Baroness, Lady Cox—Libya, Mali, Syria and Yemen, to name but a few. In all these countries, rights for women are pushed back and the women become voiceless. Rape, as we have already heard, is used as a weapon of war, destroying lives and communities. Too often, after the fighting has ceased, sexual violence remains embedded within the society.

The UK is leading a global transformative shift in attitudes to sexual violence. This was always going to take time and needs a consistent, sustained approach capitalising on the momentum built so far. Recent events illustrate the need. Last week, I was in Iraq, where ISIL has abducted and raped thousands of women. There are authenticated reports of the many Yazidi women who have been sold into prostitution in Syria. I heard of one girl who had been sold 21 times. The fall of Ramadi last week created yet more internally displaced, vulnerable people in a country already overflowing with IDPs and refugees, posing enormous dangers for them.

In Iraq, much excellent work is taking place by Her Majesty's Government, through the diplomatic service, DfID and the military. Many of the Iraqi women I met talked about the PSVI. The PSVI was in the Conservative manifesto as a foreign affairs priority, so please can the Minister reassure the House that this remains the case and that it continues to be well-resourced?

Following the international high-profile events last year—the summit in London and events at embassies around the world—the UK is seen as a global leader on this issue. Therefore, what kind of message would it send to the world if, after all the leadership and resources that the UK has invested, we walk away from this now when so many people across the world look to us on this?

Secondly, the UK leads on the women, peace and security agenda at the UN Security Council. This year is also the 15th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, the ground-breaking resolution on women, peace and security. The UN Security Council is conducting a high-level review to assess progress on its implementation.

The nature of warfare has changed. Today, wars are no longer fought on battlefields; they are fought in communities. It is estimated that civilians make up 90% of deaths, 70% of whom are women and children. As Major General Cammaert, a former UN peacekeeping commander, said:

“It is now more dangerous to be a woman than a soldier in modern conflict”.

Over the past 18 months, as a member of the Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme, I have had the privilege of making a number of visits to our Armed Forces, both here and abroad. I pay enormous tribute to them for their courage, dedication and professionalism. They are truly impressive. Last week, I had the pleasure of meeting some members of the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, who are training Peshmerga troops not only in military tactics but in the protection of civilians, including training on sexual violence in conflict. Often, the first person a survivor meets is a soldier, and this training means that soldiers will know how to respond and help them. This is ground-breaking work that reflects the needs of modern warfare and needs to be integrated into the training that we provide to other militaries as well as to our own soldiers. The MoD is starting to make progress on this important agenda. However, much more needs to be done and we need to increase the momentum.

Unlike the majority of NATO members, the MoD lacks a senior dedicated military officer committed to the women, peace and security agenda—a protection of civilians expert. Creating this post would ensure that policy on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 is widely disseminated. Developing doctrine, both stand-alone and threaded across other UK doctrines, would also ensure that the civilian context in today's warfare is always considered, thus enabling UK soldiers to protect vulnerable groups and include women in post-conflict reconstruction. After all, if our own soldiers are training international military on how to respond to survivors of rape, surely a gender perspective should be included in UK training and operational orders.

To conclude, we have the chance over the next five years in the UK to build on the momentum already created and to make historical strides forward that will benefit millions of women across the world.

2.47 pm

Lord Judd (Lab): My Lords, I am confident that I speak for all my colleagues on this side of the House in saying how much we enjoyed and admired the maiden speech by the noble Baroness, Lady Helic. It was, by any standard, outstanding and augurs well for her contributions in the future.

Women's issues, world poverty, development, climate change, migration, terrorism and security, economic issues, trade, health and the rest: there can seldom have been a time in human history when it has become

[LORD JUDD]

more clear that the world is totally interdependent. The issues raised in these spheres simply cannot be managed or met within the national context. Interdependence is inescapable and international co-operation is essential. The paradox is that, at the time that this is becoming so evident, people are becoming insecure when faced with globalisation and looking for security in a closer sense of ethnic, cultural and national identity. Indeed, there is a disturbing resurgence of quite aggressive nationalism in too many places in the world. The challenge for political leadership in the world, at this time of all times, is surely about enabling people to find security in their identity and culture, not to deny it, but also generating an understanding throughout society that it is simply impossible for people to consider sustainable development for their children and grandchildren and the future without viable, effective international institutions. This applies to the arguments about the European Union. I shall never forget serving on Sub-Committee F of the European Union Committee when we were dealing with opt-out, listening to expert after expert, people with operating responsibility, telling us in words of one syllable how indispensable and invaluable their co-operation with Europe had become to tackling the job of our own national security.

But it is not simply about Europe; it is about the wider world community. I was very glad that the noble Lord, Lord Hannay—I am almost tempted to say my noble friend Lord Hannay—spoke so powerfully about the importance of the appointment of the next Secretary-General and of ensuring that we have methods and arrangements in place which can secure the best possible appointment for humanity, and about how indispensable it is that the process is transparent. What has happened to the UN over the years is lamentable, because it has in the practical politics and immediate agendas of too many Governments slipped into the position of being a receptacle when no other arrangements have worked. There has been a cynical approach to the UN. For the reasons that I have explained, I think that time for re-emphasis of the importance of the UN is essential. It provides a global authority and a global context for key decision-making. In the context, for example, of intervention for the protection of people, it gives an opportunity for the global, widest possible endorsement of what is being done so that it cannot be pushed into a position in which it is seen as partisan. That is talking about absolute standards. And it is why, when talking about absolute standards, the debate about human rights is so essential.

I have a favourite quotation, which I keep by me, which states:

“Free men and women denounce these vile crimes, and when this world struggle ends with the enthronement of human rights, racial persecution will be ended”.

That was from Winston Churchill in 1942, in the midst of the bitter conflict of the Second World War. He understood that human rights were not a sort of optional extra for a nice kind of society. He understood that they were part of an international struggle for decency and stability. He saw that human rights were going to become a central foundation stone of sustainable, decent, civilised society.

As a youngster in 1948, I was very privileged to be taken by my father to a conference in which he was involved in Geneva. At that conference, I met Eleanor Roosevelt. I was 13, but I shall never forget the experience: what a powerful woman she was; what an impact on her the war had made. Human rights, again, were not about an effete, nice way of arranging society; for her, they were seen as absolutely essential to the cause of international stability and peace. That is why the European Convention on Human Rights that followed was so important. In our considerations of human rights and European issues, let us please remember that the real importance of the European court is that it demonstrates in the administration of justice that you are not dealing with partial, subjective interpretations of what human rights should be but that you are working for the fulfilment of a shared international ideal and objective of what they should be. If we start undermining the effectiveness and role of the court of human rights, what are the Russians going to do? With all our anxieties at the moment and all the evidence of what is disturbing about Russia today, where will we be when Russia starts saying, “Ah, well, in our interpretation of human rights, these are the standards to which we should be working. Your standards are about Britain”? That is why—the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Coventry brought this out splendidly—we should judge ourselves in terms of the contributions that we are making to strengthening the international collaboration and the international struggle to achieve higher standards. We all have skeletons in the cupboard—none of us is perfect—but in that context what matters is reaching out to what we know society could and should be.

This is what I hope will come out from the review that is about to take place of all our foreign policy and defence. What do we believe in? What do we want to work towards for humanity as a whole? Believe you me, there is no future for our own children unless we are working towards the cause of humanity as a whole, because our children are indivisible from the children of the rest of the world.

One other specific point that I want to mention is on disarmament. Disarmament is not a sort of optional extra when things are going well. In any sane international security policy, in any sane defence policy, disarmament and arms control are a practical and essential part. We have huge responsibilities as a nuclear power. We have huge responsibilities for the effectiveness of the non-proliferation treaty. We must never forget that, as part of originally securing the non-proliferation treaty, the existing nuclear powers gave an undertaking that they would work constructively and consistently for reducing their own nuclear arsenals. There is a major issue of credibility here as we go into the vast expenditure implications for overstretched parts of our security services of a new, regenerated Trident. I am not saying that it is right or wrong—that is not my argument—but there are immense implications for our credibility and leadership in the world if we are saying that we have a responsibility, spelt out solemnly at the time when the treaty was created, to work consistently and positively for the reduction and elimination of our nuclear arsenal.

The new Government face huge challenges, and I believe that a constructive Opposition must help them find the right way forward. However, in helping them

to find the right way forward, the one issue on which I am certain that we all have to agree is that we are part of an international community, and let us for God's sake start talking about our role in it—what we want to join, what we want to strengthen internationally—rather than about everything that we want to withdraw from internationally.

2.58 pm

Baroness Ludford (LD): My Lords, I, too, welcome warmly the noble Baroness, Lady Helic. I strongly appreciated her speech and look forward to her work. I was somewhat involved in EU-Bosnia relations as a Member of the European Parliament, including in the successful campaign for visa-free travel for the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina at least to the Schengen zone. I must confess that I am not sure what has happened regarding the UK visa regime.

I shall focus largely on the UK's role in the European Parliament. The Prime Minister and the Government have taken a huge responsibility upon themselves in their professed ambitions on the linked issues of Europe and human rights. At stake are our United Kingdom and the UK's position in the European Union. That is very risky and radical for a Conservative and Unionist Party—or “brave” as Sir Humphrey might say.

The Queen's Speech promises a, “strong and lasting constitutional settlement”, and in his introduction to the Queen's Speech, the Prime Minister said that the intention was to, “bring every part of our UK together”.

At the same time, the Government envisage very divisive plans such as a possible Brexit and scrapping the Human Rights Act, which provides some of the glue for both our domestic union and our participation in European construction. The union could indeed become unstuck, as my noble friend Lord Alderdice said. The election promises are chickens coming home to roost, and perhaps the sound of flapping in No. 10 is those chickens, but they are putting a lot at stake.

Bedeavouring the whole exercise is the fact that these plans stem not from a strategy of national interest, but one of party interest to buy off the revolting Eurosceptics and attract UKIP voters in the election. So the travails of a fractious and divided party are yet again inflicted on the country. The noble Lord, Lord Collins, reminded us that the Labour Party has historically indulged in the same exercise. I wonder whether the Prime Minister will end up using the same term about his Europhobe rebels as his predecessor John Major did. Certainly, the Prime Minister is destined to practise forlorn appeasement, as one commentator in the *Financial Times* today says.

The Queen's Speech promises to, “renegotiate the United Kingdom's relationship with the European Union and pursue reform of the European Union for the benefit of all member states”.

The problem, as other noble Lords have mentioned, is the tension, and indeed contradiction, between those two goals. To start with, the reference to the UK's relationship with the EU is odd, as though we were already like Norway, Switzerland or Iceland, or indeed Serbia, Ukraine, Bosnia or Macedonia who

are not inside. I would have thought that a better phrase would be our position “within” the European Union.

On the substance of the renegotiation, an opt-out from ever-closer union is already recognised in practice, and anyway, that phrase is relevant only to the eurozone. That goal will be easily achieved. Ensuring that the rights pertaining to the single market are not prejudiced by eurozone rules is a valid goal, but that has largely been achieved through work under the last Government. The Foreign Secretary this morning confirmed that the Government wanted treaty change, particularly on EU migration and the attached welfare benefits, since apparently government lawyers have advised to this effect. But France and Germany, to name but two, have expressly said that they do not want early treaty change. They have made that crystal clear. So the Foreign Secretary's threat that the UK will quit the EU unless the Prime Minister's reforms go through, by which I think he meant renegotiation, is upping the ante in a dangerous and unproductive fashion. It will consume a lot of negative energy and end up by slamming into a brick wall. The best that might be achieved is a declaration about future treaty change, but will that be accepted by the Eurosceptics?

The Conservative Party manifesto refers to having, “already taken action to return around 100 powers”.

Anoraks such as us will know that this refers to some justice and home affairs measures, ranging from the modest to the minor, because the Liberal Democrats in the last Government ensured, with huge support in this House, that we stayed in the 35 important ones. So it is disingenuous to say that 100 powers have already been repatriated. What exactly are the other things that the Government want to return to the national level? Are we talking about powers, competences or individual measures? It is entirely unclear. Why not work with the legislative reforms pursued by the Commission Vice-President, Mr Timmermans, and work with the grain?

Another thing that is mentioned is the power for Westminster to veto any EU law. That is a non-starter and, indeed, was previously labelled by the Prime Minister as impossible to deliver. National Parliaments should instead make more use of the yellow and orange card system and work in partnership with the European Parliament, and press the European Commission, when it gets that strong signal, to seriously rethink, as it did not on the European public prosecutor. That is an example of where reform is indeed needed.

There are great inconsistencies in the Conservative pronouncements on Europe and the world. The manifesto promises to complete ambitious trade deals, but in the small print acknowledges that these would be EU deals with the US, China India or Japan. Similarly, the Queen's Speech looks,

“forward to an enhanced partnership with India and China”, but, again, that partnership will to a large extent be channelled through Brussels.

In contrast to these unilateral measures, pursuing reform on a multilateral basis with our partners and allies could be highly productive and could be based on what turned out to be an excellent balance of competences exercise by the last Government. That

[BARONESS LUDFORD]

would be a worthwhile and positive exercise that could get widespread support throughout the European Union. It would be the opposite of what the noble Lord, Lord Moynihan, called a zero-sum game. It would give us a leading role in the EU and build on the attempt to make constructive alliances that was undertaken in the last Government, not least under the Europe Minister David Lidington, who I am pleased to say has stayed, as well as the noble Baroness, Lady Anelay, in the Foreign Office. I should belatedly also welcome the steady hand of the noble Earl, Lord Howe. The focus should be on strengthening the EU as a whole to cope with all the modern challenges and pressures that we face. As the noble Lord, Lord Hannay, said, the reforms pursued must benefit the whole of the EU, not just be a monument to British exceptionalism.

We will have a chance to go through the mechanics of the Bill, which I have only just received and not had a chance to read yet. I can at least welcome that the proposed question is to be, "Should the UK remain a member of the EU?", which for a host of reasons is the right question. I am concerned that it seems that the Bill will leave the Minister to make regulations, which was not the case with the referendum on the alternative vote or the Scottish referendum, so we will probably want to look at that. We will also want to examine in great detail the proposed electorate, which is unclear at the moment. I am glad it is proposed that we in this House should get the vote—perhaps that is a good precedent for a vote in the general election—but we need consistency on, for example, votes for 16 year-olds and what will happen to Brits abroad or EU citizens resident in this country.

I have time only to say that I strongly welcome and agree with the remarks of the noble Lords, Lord Anderson of Swansea and Lord Judd, on human rights. It is impossible to be a leading member of the EU while boycotting the human rights system, which is woven into the European framework of peace and security. It would of course upset the devolution settlement. The noble Viscount, Lord Bridgeman, stressed the impact on our relationship with the Republic of Ireland.

Not only is there no inherent contradiction between our role in the EU and our global role, we can in fact be strong internationally and punch above our weight only if we enjoy the strength in numbers that the EU gives us. I hope that the new Government, unlike their party election manifesto, recognise that fact.

3.09 pm

Lord Williams of Baglan (CB): My Lords, much of the comment in the press on the most gracious Speech as it relates to foreign policy has dwelt on the commitment by the Government to a referendum on our membership of the European Union, but I am pleased that in this debate we have moved over a terrain much greater, covering the Middle East, Asia and Africa, international human rights and the United Nations. My remarks will focus on some of those issues, beginning perhaps with the Middle East.

I was struck by the comment in the gracious Speech that the Government will continue to focus on degrading and ultimately defeating terrorism in the Middle East.

That is quite an extraordinary remark, coming one week after ISIS captured not one major city in the region, but two—Ramadi, in Iraq, and Palmyra, in Syria—to add to its existing control of Mosul, the second city in Iraq. ISIS now controls about 50% of the territory of Syria, and somewhat less of the territory of Iraq.

Leaving aside the reality of a further deterioration in the situation on the ground, I am struck by how modest our contribution is in the struggle against ISIS. I take very well the point made by the noble Lord, Lord Ashdown, that we should not be looking purely at the military struggle against ISIS. Our contribution is a handful of Tornado jets, now about 25 years old. That compares ill with other countries' contributions. Australia, for example—a country much further away from the Middle East than we are—is contributing several hundred special forces on the ground, far outweighing the overall British contribution. How can this be, welcome though the Australian contribution is? After all, we are a member of the P5, with a population more than twice the size of Australia's. Surely we should be shouldering our responsibilities to a greater extent.

What this and other indications underline is a further retreat from what I consider a meaningful and robust foreign policy, consonant with our permanent membership of the Security Council and, indeed, with our past history. The noble Lord, Lord Ashdown, underlined the importance of a political and diplomatic strategy to deal with the deep and profound problems in the Middle East, and I echo that, but I see no sign of that in the most gracious Speech.

Two main issues confront the modern Middle East. One is a vicious sectarianism between Sunni and Shia Muslims that has taken a deep and profound hold on the states of Syria and Iraq and that will be very difficult to remove. Indeed, Syria and Iraq, like Libya in north Africa, are now hollowed-out states bearing no resemblance to what they looked like 20 years ago. The reconstitution of those countries as nation states as we understand that concept is a very distant prospect that is likely to take decades, not years.

The gracious Speech was also striking in that sadly it said nothing about what used to be termed the Middle East peace process—a term that now ill fits the situation in Israel and Palestine. I can think of no point in the last 30 or 40 years when one could have been more pessimistic about the situation on the ground. That is despite the fact that in the leadership of the Palestinian National Authority, Israel has a partner in Abu Mazen—President Mahmoud Abbas—who is probably more moderate than any other Palestinian political leader. He is certainly far more moderate than any Palestinian leader could afford to be after his period in power. Israel should be looking for opportunities to move forward with a peace agreement, and our Government should be supporting that. We need to see more evidence of that, and its absence in the most gracious Speech is striking.

We also see in the most gracious Speech mercantilist attitudes coming to the fore, as in the comment that the Government look forward to an enhanced relationship with India and China. What about Japan? Japan is a

democracy. There is no mention of that, or of the fact that it is actually the second largest foreign investor in the UK. India, of course, is a great democracy that we admire greatly, and a member of the Commonwealth. China, we need to remind ourselves sometimes, remains a one-party state, governed by the Marxist-Leninist Communist Party of China. The economic realities on the ground may be far distant from any concept of Marxist socialism, but the politics remain that of a Marxist party. There is no freedom of expression in China. There is no freedom of religion. Religion is "tolerated", but it is policed by state entities governed by the Communist Party. When I was in the Foreign Office during the Blair Government, I was actively involved in a human rights dialogue with China. It made very little headway. It continues, and I welcome that, but we also need to recognise some of the realities of contemporary China.

At precisely the same moment when the Government are looking forward to an enhanced relationship with China, Beijing is engaged in an increasingly assertive posture in the South China Sea, with frequent incidents with ASEAN countries but also with the United States keen to maintain freedom of the seas. Only this week, a United States Air Force aircraft was warned by the Chinese that it was approaching their territory and likely to be acted upon if it did not alter its flight path. The likelihood of a serious incident is, in my view, very real. Indeed, I remind the House of the incident over the island of Hainan in 2001, when a US aircraft was forced down and its crew detained for some weeks. That, or something more serious, could happen all too easily in the months and years ahead.

To the outside world, whether Europe, Asia or the United States, we are seen as turning inward. To our most important ally, for the past 75 years we have increasingly been seen to be, to use that very American word, worrisome, whether over the EU referendum, which is seen in Washington as dangerous and incomprehensible, or over a Chancellor petitioning for Arab or Chinese investment as if Britain was a financial haven and not a member of the P5.

I was in Washington last week and met many people from the foreign policy community, but I am sorry to say that many of them raised questions about the direction of this country's foreign policy. Many of those people are close to the Administration of Barack Obama. Colleagues will perhaps remember the comments made, I believe, two years ago by Phil Gordon, the Assistant Secretary of State, about what he perceived as the lack of wisdom in Britain allowing consideration of a withdrawal from the European Union.

The Government have a major task on their hands in addressing the growing concern in Washington, which has been our closest ally for so many decades, about the direction of British foreign policy. One principal foreign commentator, Fareed Zakaria, wrote an article in the *Washington Post* on 22 May stating that:

"Britain has essentially resigned as a global power".

That is not an isolated view but one that is taking hold in the US media and in Congress.

I conclude by commenting on the remarkable speech of the noble Baroness, Lady Helic. I was deeply moved by it, partly because I served in the United Nations

mission to Bosnia and Croatia in the early 1990s. I saw many terrible things during those years. Since then, I have been a prosecution witness in the trials against Milosevic, Karadzic and General Mladic. Some justice has been seen in the International Criminal Tribunal on the former Yugoslavia, but I am struck that we are not going to see justice for the perpetrators of massive human rights violations in Syria and Iraq, whether by ISIS, President Assad or any of the other forces that are fighting there.

I am also struck by the fact that, in conformity with our tradition over the decades and the centuries, we have welcomed the noble Baroness, Lady Helic, as we have other refugees who have come to this country escaping war. I am deeply saddened by the fact that we have welcomed so few Syrian refugees. We have been watching on our television screens what is happening to thousands upon thousands of refugees trying to escape north Africa and come to the shores of Europe. I find it unfathomable—an expression used in Washington—that the United Kingdom has opted out of the agreement to accept 40,000 Syrian refugees. When we compare our figures with those of other countries in Europe, I am afraid that there is little to be proud of.

3.22 pm

The Marquess of Lothian (Con): My Lords, I, too, offer my heartfelt congratulations to my noble friend Lady Helic, who I had the pleasure of working with in 1995 on defence matters and for whom I have tremendous admiration. We heard a great speech from her today.

I would like to ask a question: in a new Parliament with a Government with an overall majority, is it too much to hope that after decades of drift we might at last seek to develop a clear foreign policy strategy to guide us through the turbulent years ahead? There will of course be times when we must simply react to events; we cannot avoid that, but we should remember that in reacting to them we will by definition always be behind the curve. What I look for in a foreign policy strategy is something that keeps us ahead of the curve. To achieve that, we have to honestly learn the lessons of the past.

We should never again undertake military interventions without a clear idea of what we are seeking to achieve, why it is in our national interest to do so, how we will end our involvement, and what we will leave behind. Had these previously been our guidelines, we would have exited Afghanistan some 10 years before we did. We would never have gone into Iraq and Libya, and more recently we would not have started bombing ISIS in Iraq. We have left Afghanistan dangerously unstable—an instability which I now hear China is seeking to mediate. We have left both Iraq and Libya in varying stages of chaos and civil war. As I feared in an earlier debate, bombing ISIS has achieved little except to increase Islamic antipathy towards us, and with it the threat of domestic terrorism.

While we now recognise our error in regarding the so-called Arab spring as an Arab version of events in eastern Europe in 1989 and treating it as such, we have formed no alternative approach to what is fast becoming an Islamic winter. That does not mean that we should

[THE MARQUESS OF LOTHIAN]
consider intervention. The danger of ill-considered intervention is that while we may not originally have had a dog in these fights, to use the American expression, by the time we finish we tend to have bred one or two. To add to that confusion, we seem no longer to know who our enemies in the region are. We are tacitly looking for Shia militia support in combating ISIS in Iraq while vocally supporting Saudi bombing Shia militia in Yemen, even though the Houthis are the most effective forces against the considerable threat of al-Qaeda in that country, which indeed poses a direct threat to us here in the United Kingdom.

More broadly, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, I believe that we should have carefully considered Russia's historical antipathy to western forces along her borders or even within her territory. The extension of NATO to Poland and the Baltic states was inevitable, but we should have been more understanding of Russian unhappiness at it, particularly the proposal to base missiles on Polish soil.

Our immediate and enthusiastic support for the 2008 revolution in Georgia—and even more for the Maidan square protesters in Ukraine last year—inevitably in reaction encouraged Russian popular support for Putin's otherwise unacceptable aggressive actions, including the annexation of Crimea. With that support he is able to do things that otherwise he might have been prevented from doing. We have, as a result, resurrected shades of the Cold War when we should have had a strategic plan for reaching out to the Russian people as potential partners in a new future. Even now, as feelings on both sides harden further, we still have no strategy to develop a more measured attitude towards Russia. We even seem to have abandoned our old Cold War aim of preventing Russia becoming too close to China. It was interesting that it was the Chinese president who stood alongside Putin at the recent VE Day celebrations in Moscow when we short-sightedly refused to go. Whether these failures were political misjudgements or the results of inadequate official advice is unclear. However, what is clear is that we cannot afford to go on getting it wrong.

Now we are faced with another great threat—potentially the gravest of them all—of major population shifts caused by a mixture of civil conflict, drought, deprivation and persecution, all of which could directly affect our national interests. I see little sign of a real strategy to deal either with the causes or the effects of this threat. I have to say that shooting holes in boats off the Libyan coast is hardly a long-term plan and in any event is a pretty strange response, given that our original involvement in Libya was to protect the people there. We must urgently, and with purpose, develop a realistic strategy for meeting this growing challenge, which will not go away.

Finally, we need to look more closely at our own potential for soft rather than hard power—the pursuit through diplomacy and Special Forces of hearts and minds and not just half-baked military intervention. Within that, we need to build a clear strategy which can place us once again at the centre of the international stage. Above all—for too many years we have not—we must ensure that resources match military commitments and vice versa. This is not a matter of political choice

for a Government but one of moral duty, and one in which we have failed for too long and which we must now put right.

3.28 pm

Baroness Crawley (Lab): My Lords, I, too, welcome back the noble Baroness, Lady Anelay to her Foreign Office brief, and I welcome the noble Earl, Lord Howe, to his new roles. Both are highly respected Ministers in this House. I congratulate the noble Baroness, Lady Helic on a quite outstanding and moving maiden speech, which took me back to my own brief time in Bosnia in the early 1990s.

I am afraid that there will be a hint of Private Frazer from “Dad's Army” about my short contribution to our debate on the gracious Speech. It is not really that I think, “We're all doomed”, but I cannot shake off a certain grumpiness, having had some difficulty three weeks ago in persuading enough of the electorate to vote Labour. When it comes to general elections I am a bad loser, and one of the policy areas on which Labour colleagues and I have lost out is on the rules of engagement for an in/out referendum on our membership of the European Union.

However, three weeks seems to be a very long time in politics. Now that there is something of a cross-party settlement in favour of an EU membership referendum, I ask myself: what will our UKIP colleagues have to do next to stay in the game, especially now that the referendum Bill has been published? Will they have to up the anti-European rhetoric even further? I am sorry that the noble Lord, Lord Pearson of Rannoch, is not in his place. We may well hear calls for all civil servants to come to work wearing Union Jack waistcoats, or for Britain to withdraw from the Eurovision Song Contest—mind you, after our performance last Saturday night, they might have a point.

Meanwhile, it is a sad day as we realise that British foreign policy has been well and truly “Faraged”. Can it really be true that we all now at heart fundamentally agree with the basic UKIP proposition that there is in existence a sound ideological, economic and practical argument against the UK's membership of the European Union? Has it really come to this?

Let me predict: when the referendum takes place, whatever the wording of the question, whatever the speeches for or against, whatever the content of the pro et contra campaigns, it will not be exclusively about the EU. It will be impossible to isolate the issue in some kind of purified political quarantine: all the grinding axes, the cosmopolitan contrarians, the disaffected voices in the regions and nations, probably all the foxhunters and certainly all those incidentally disappointed by the Government of the day—there will be plenty of those—will get on to the pitch to create an ersatz general election. We, unlike, say, Switzerland, have no tradition of coherent single-issue plebiscites and, my goodness, will it show.

The referendum could actually settle nothing. It could institutionalise and perpetrate a sterile and retrogressive debate. Imagine: what if the no campaign achieved, say, 35% to 45% of the popular vote? Will our anti-EU propagandists retreat back to the saloon bars of provincial England to talk only of golf and Joanna Lumley for the rest of their lives? I think not.

Here I agree with the noble Earl, Lord Sandwich, and the noble Lord, Lord Moynihan, in wishing for a done-and-dusted settlement. And what if the no campaign achieves, say, 51% of the popular vote? Will the Prime Minister really walk that very day to the Dispatch Box in another place to announce a timetable to formalise the divorce from Brussels? I wonder. Referendums do not always decisively turn the ratchet; they sometimes just drive the car deeper into the ditch—ask all my Labour Party friends in Scotland.

Maybe we can resolve this whole issue today by way of a pub quiz—or a Bishops' Bar quiz, say. What is the answer to these simple questions: would the leadership of the People's Republic of China see its vital interests well served by a plebiscite in the UK that repudiates our status as a member state within the EU? Yes, is the short answer. A decoupled Britain and a weakened Europe, neither capable of standing to their full height amid the rapids of globalisation, would be a good day at the office for a Chinese leadership brazenly devoted to worldwide economic hegemony. Would the Scottish National Party like to see the UK vote to exit the EU? Yes, I think is the short answer, for such an outcome would legitimise its otherwise shallow claim that Scotland needs and deserves a separate political destiny now, as the noble Lord, Lord Alderdice, warned.

Would the international financial community, all those companies which invest in manufacturing here and all those firms which sell foods, fashions, medicines and motors into the continent from Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester wake up the morning after a no campaign's success and conclude that the leadership of UK plc had been secretly replaced by dastardly aliens? Yes is the short answer.

At the start of our recent general election campaign—for the month of March, to be precise—Britain's trade deficit on goods had, according to the Office for National Statistics, risen to more than £10 billion. As we would, I am sure, all agree, this is not a good prospect for our economy which is on offer here. Were there to be a vote in favour of exiting the EU in the near future, do we think—continuing our quiz motif—that this would: (a) help correct the trade deficit, narrow it down to zero or head it in the direction of a surplus; (b) have no impact of any kind; or (c) exacerbate the trade deficit, with consequently increased pressure on sterling? Do we really think that the serious problem of our trade deficit would be positively addressed by a successful no campaign? Of course not.

No one is saying that these are not difficult times for Europe and for us Europeans. The politics of fragmentation and the realities of austerity are all too prominent in Greece, Spain and France, but the centre has to hold. In France, the Front National wants an exit referendum too. People such as Marine Le Pen abominate the whole concept of a solidarity Europe, a place where progressive values are shared and, yes, spread eastwards, and a place where national businesses, big and small, can find their way to millions of consumers who may not actually speak the same language as they do. Is Britain, after all we have been through and all the progress we have made as a society and an economy, really going to throw in its lot with the likes of Madame Le Pen? I very much hope not.

In conclusion, frankly, whatever the deal the Prime Minister secures in the negotiations now under way, we will all have to compromise to back it and mobilise all our friends, neighbours and colleagues to maximise the yes to Europe vote when the time comes. We need to get a resounding 75% of Britain voting yes for it to be done and dusted. That is the scale of the challenge we have unfortunately brought down on ourselves. In order to achieve that resounding yes vote, we have to convince the British people that their future lies in a Europe that works for them. We are not yet “all doomed”, Private Frazer, but the clock is ticking.

3.38 pm

Lord Hylton (CB): My Lords, I believe I can claim to be the first member of this Parliament to visit, just last week, the canton of Jazira, in what can be called a free Syria. It exists in the far north-east of that country and is one of three mainly Kurdish cantons. These make up what Kurds call Rojava—that is, western Kurdistan. The other two cantons are Kobane, which has already been much in the news, and Afrin, still further to the west. The problem is that ISIS has infiltrated itself up to the Turkish frontier, thus cutting off all three cantons from each other. I suggest that the allied strategy should be to drive ISIS out of the two pockets of land that it occupies, thus reuniting the three cantons. This would help to sever ISIS from Turkey, stopping its flow of recruits and other forms of support.

After crossing the River Tigris, with the approval of the Kurdish Regional Government, I was warmly welcomed by the authorities of Jazira Canton. They provided an escort, transport, an interpreter and comfortable accommodation. I was able to meet members of the elected assembly and of all the political parties, as well as the Executive. I also met young men and women being trained for democratic life and practice, which I found very interesting. I visited a large refugee camp with Yazidi people from around Sinjar and Arabic speakers from Rabia, both of which are across the border in Iraq.

When Assad's forces and officials fled the north-east of Syria in 2011, the Kurds, as the largest single group, might have seized power. Instead, they decided to create common citizenship with the Assyrians, the Arabs and other smaller minorities. They call this system “self-administration”. It has a constitution providing for the separation of powers and for the ending of capital and corporal punishment, and torture. A social contract has been adopted, strongly proclaiming equality for women.

ISIS has made attacks on Jazira, but these have been held back by the local self-defence forces, who are all unpaid volunteers. The atmosphere in the four towns we visited was peaceful and friendly, despite checkpoints on the main roads. Morale was high and harvests had begun. Sheep and lambs were being exported to Iraqi Kurdistan. I urge Her Majesty's Government to visit the canton and see for themselves. This can be done quite easily from Irbil.

I have four further suggestions. First, Jazira has a grain surplus. Because of the difficult access, much of last year's crop is still in store, unsold. Will the Government

[LORD HYLTON]

persuade the World Food Programme to buy these cereals, together with a proportion of the 2015 harvest? Secondly, will they persuade the KRG to allow the construction of a second pontoon bridge across the Tigris? The sections for a stronger bridge are already lying idle on the Jazira bank. To do this would double or treble the transit capacity, to the benefit of all. Thirdly, will they examine the state of the oil field, which has some 1,300 wells, only 30 of which are now producing just for local use? The immediate need is for an efficient small refinery to replace very crude methods that cause pollution and involve the flaring of surplus gas. In the longer term, crude oil could be exported via the KRG and Turkey. Fourthly, and perhaps most difficult of all, will the Government seek to persuade Turkey to open its border enough to allow medical and relief supplies to enter all three cantons, perhaps under the supervision of the usual international agencies? This is essential to meet local needs and those of Syrians who have fled the civil war into the cantons. I am providing the Department for International Development with precise details of the medicines needed. I believe that I have met people who would become friends of this country if only we could act effectively to help them. In any case, we should do so for ethical reasons.

As I have a few minutes, I will turn very briefly to our aid budget, now pegged to 0.7% of GNP. DfID seems to have had some difficulty recently in spending this effectively and has had to rely to a large extent on consultants. I therefore recommend that it examines with great care the two cases of Lebanon, where I was in March, and Tunisia, where a British charity of which I am a trustee helped to facilitate the national dialogue which has enabled reasonable political progress to happen. Those two countries, Lebanon and Tunisia, have each taken in more than 1 million refugees—in the first case from Syria and in the second including some migrants from the rest of Africa. As it so happens, one might say that they are also the leading lights of democracy in the Middle East, so I urge that great priority should be given to those two cases.

Lord Gardiner of Kimble (Con): My Lords, I hope it will be helpful to the House if I suggest that if the House is to rise at about 7.30 pm, it would be extremely helpful if noble Lords who are to speak could spend about seven minutes on their contributions. We will otherwise find that the House has to sit late, which I am sure is not the wish of your Lordships. I would be most grateful for your Lordships' co-operation.

3.46 pm

Lord Marlesford (Con): My Lords, I shall get going pretty quick. I very much agree with what my noble friend Lord Lothian said. I hope that now we have another five years, we will have a foreign policy so that our influence on international affairs is more perceptive, subtle and creative than it has been in the last five years. We have in this country the history, experience and wisdom—and, as the noble Lord, Lord Hannay, was emphasising, as a P5 member of the Security Council we have the power to make it so.

I am sure that the greatest challenge to world stability at the moment, and indeed to our own national security, is the deadly threat from political Islam and its Islamist warriors with their weapons of jihad. By “political Islam”, I do not for one moment suggest that the great majority of the world's 1.6 billion Muslims are in any way a threat. Political Islam no more speaks for them than the IRA did for the Catholic people of Ireland. Despite claiming the authority of God for all that they do, in one sense the Islamists are really very secular. Like Marxists, political Islam is convinced that it has the whole and complete answer, and that any other view should be dismissed and indeed suppressed. It therefore rejects not just pluralism and the dialogue that democracy provides but even the nation state.

I want to focus particularly on the present surge in the volume of refugees, which is one consequence of the instability that has developed since the start of the Arab spring, which we and many other countries welcomed when in January 2011 Tunisia's jasmine revolution overthrew a 23 year-old dictatorship and replaced it with something better. Sadly, that swallow did not herald further good news. Far from a flowering of democracy, we have seen one secular Government after another threatened or replaced with theocracies that epitomise intolerance, are medieval in their cruelty and fascist in their brutality, and seek to designate half the human race as inferior to the other half.

Western naivety in believing that any ruler who does not meet the standards of democracy that we expect should be removed has trapped us in this Sunni/Shia conflict. From this conflict springs the Sunni-based political Islam, which for nearly a century has been manifested mainly by the Muslim Brotherhood founded in 1928 in Egypt.

If the Muslim Brotherhood is the trunk of political Islam, its roots are the extreme Sunni doctrine of Wahhabism, and the various jihadist groups such as al-Qaeda, Boko Haram and the rest are the branches. When, in April last year, apparently to the surprise of western intelligence, the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria—ISIS—was formed, it created a canopy for the whole tree of political Islam. ISIS is now a threat to every state in the Middle East, and presently it has a free run. Saudi Arabia is under pressure, both from the ISIS threat to the royal House of Saud and from the Wahhabi clerics by whose consent it rules. The new king, Salman, seems to be relying more rather than less on those clerics.

The UK seems still to look for the removal of the Assad regime in Syria. Does HMG believe that this is inevitable, and if so, are they really prepared to contemplate Syria being run by ISIS? The British Foreign Office line was from the start a serious mistake, which both Russia and Israel recognised. To comment on what the noble Lord, Lord Ashdown, said, it is not so much the lack of diplomacy, but the ill-conceived and ill-informed diplomacy that has been the problem. What is the strategy of the UK towards ISIS? It appears that the US has no strategy at all other than to keep boots off the ground. What the US needs is sound advice.

In Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood has taken up arms in Sinai, where it is killing judges in an attempt to neutralise the judiciary. I suggest that HMG invite

President Sisi, whose country is under attack from Islamist terrorism, to come to Britain to discuss how the West could, perhaps in collaboration with countries such as Egypt and Jordan, deal with the threat.

In recent months, the refugee crisis has been manifested in the Mediterranean by the vast numbers seeking to reach Europe by sea from Libya. Nearly 40,000 boat people have already landed in Italy this year. Rightly, the EU, including the UK, has responded to the tragic drowning of some thousands of these refugees. There is a moral as well as a legal obligation to save those in peril on the sea. However, as under the present arrangements this involves conveying those rescued to Italy, this in practice means offering a safe passage to Europe for all those who embark on the voyage. I do not believe this is sustainable.

The EU quota proposals are not only politically unacceptable to a number of EU states, including the UK, but are not viable under the Schengen arrangements, because those accepted into one country under a quota system can go to another. Indeed, these Commission proposals show how out of touch with its ultimate electorate the EU Commission can be. The quotas would in any case amount only to the tiniest proportion of those waiting to move to Europe. There are already some 4 million refugees from Syria in other parts of the Middle East. There are millions more, including those from African countries—a mixture of asylum seekers, refugees, economic migrants and certainly some Islamist jihadists—ready to take ship from Libya to Europe.

The only way forward is to set up, with a United Nations Security Council resolution, a transit camp in Libya where all would-be migrants could be screened and assessed and to which those rescued at sea could be transferred. Given that Libya is a failing state, it might even be necessary to create a UN protectorate. The cost of all this, including the military requirement to protect and guard the camp, which would involve feeding people and providing healthcare and, for children, education facilities, would have to be paid by the EU. Britain would have to both play and pay its full part, which could come from our well-funded overseas budget. It would of course be far more cost-effective because the resources available would help a far greater number in the camps than those who entered Europe before they were properly assessed.

The growing use of rubber dinghies with outboard motors, with only sufficient fuel to get them to sea and into a disabled and thus in-peril situation, from which they have to be rescued, also poses a more sinister threat. Suicide jihadists could fill a dinghy with explosive, which they could then detonate when alongside a rescue vessel—even HMS “Bulwark” could be at risk.

3.54 pm

Lord St John of Bletso (CB): My Lords, the gracious Speech referred to our Government's commitment to re-engage with and tackle the major international security, economic and humanitarian challenges, as well as to efforts to degrade and defeat terrorism in the Middle East. Briefly, I will focus my remarks today on some of the key challenges in Africa.

Fortunately, last year's Ebola epidemic in west Africa has, in the main, been contained—except for Guinea, which is still struggling. We have also been relieved by the recent presidential election in Nigeria, which went off far more peacefully than everyone anticipated. However, the scourge of terrorism has badly affected Libya, Mali and Somalia. We have also seen horrendous attacks by Boko Haram in the north-eastern region of Nigeria. Despite high expectations after the overthrow of Colonel Gaddafi in Libya, negotiations to achieve peace settlements have become harder and harder. Many noble Lords have spoken passionately today about Libya, which has become a melting pot for extremist groups including Ansar al-Shabaab, ISIS, al-Qaeda, LIFG and even Boko Haram, all of which are opposed to the legitimate Government forced into exile in Tobruk. The House of Representatives was meant to be based in Benghazi and the Ministers in Tripoli, but it is simply not safe for any of them to be in Tripoli.

ISIS has succeeded in consolidating control in unstable political environments in the Middle East but has now turned a lot of its attention to Libya, which has become its key focus in Africa. Boko Haram, which means “the movement against education”, has recently modelled itself on ISIS and is even using its flag. Regional Arab states have lost patience with the United Nations' attempts to broker a peace deal in Libya after almost a year of going nowhere. The European Union's promises of action have brought only fresh delays. As we are all aware, ISIS has shown itself to be adept in deploying what Joseph Nye calls both hard and soft power. It has proved itself fluent in social media, particularly YouTube, Twitter, Instagram and the production of apps that appeal to radicals. This has provoked the US and its allies and recruited support from outside the Middle East. I have two questions for the Minister who will wind up today's debate. What support can be given to the Libyan army to counter the extremist militia and ISIS threat? Secondly, in a more global context, what measures are being considered to counter ISIS's social media campaign? I do not think that much has been done in either of these respects.

Time restricts me from speaking about South Sudan. My noble friend Lady Cox spoke eloquently about the challenges in Sudan. South Sudan currently faces a major humanitarian and refugee crisis, while Riek Machar and his supporters continue to try and destabilise the legitimately elected Government of President Salva Kiir. I was in Juba just a few weeks ago. It would be helpful to get some indication from the noble Baroness as to what our Government are doing with our international partners to restore peace and stability to this young democracy.

I end by briefly making reference to current developments in South Africa and Zimbabwe. As a regular visitor of South Africa and having spent more than 28 years living in the country, I have been deeply alarmed by the recent demise of this great nation. So many of the remarkable achievements of Nelson Mandela in promoting reconciliation, harmony and economic growth have been shattered by the incompetence, mismanagement and lack of accountability of President Jacob Zuma's Government. Not only has maintenance

[LORD ST JOHN OF BLETSO]

of the national electricity grid and the ailing water distribution system been severely neglected, but corruption has been rife. Recent xenophobic attacks are largely the result of people's frustration at the failure of the Government to tackle the scourge of unemployment and poverty. This deterioration has been widely criticised by the IMF and former friends of the liberation movement.

In the light of these developments, what strategy do our Government have for boosting trade and investment in line with the binational agreement between our respective countries to double two-way trade by the end of 2015? In the words of that magnificent man Bishop Desmond Tutu:

"Our rainbow nation that so filled the world with hope is being reduced to a grubby shadow of itself ... The fabric of the nation is splitting".

I find this deeply alarming.

In February, I led a private delegation to Zimbabwe. It was my first visit there for many years. While I was pleasantly surprised and encouraged by many of the meetings with Ministers and senior businessmen, the immediate prospects for the economy are extremely bleak. The country desperately needs a clear political and economic road map, entrenching the rule of law and the protection of human rights. Zimbabwe has huge potential and its people hold huge affection for Britain—but without economic growth, the country risks another humanitarian crisis.

The noble Earl in his opening address referred to the success of our aid budget and other programmes enhancing healthcare, improving nutrition and boosting job opportunities and trade in developing countries, as well as assisting in reducing global poverty. I wholeheartedly support our Government's commitment in this regard and look forward to building on the successes of the past.

4.03 pm

Baroness O'Cathain (Con): My Lords, the gracious Speech states the following:

"My Government will renegotiate the United Kingdom's relationship with the European Union and pursue reform of the European Union for the benefit of all member states. Alongside this, early legislation will be introduced to provide for an in/out referendum on membership of the European Union before the end of 2017".

This morning, 11 words hit our screens—the words of that promised referendum question, namely:

"Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union?".

So we are now on the starting blocks. This was a manifesto commitment, and I hope that it will gain cross-party and cross-Bench support during the passage of the Bill in this House and a similar amount of support in the other House.

For the last five years the subject of the EU has been at the forefront of my work in this House, as chairman of the EU Select Committee's sub-committee dealing with the single market, referred to by my colleague the noble Lord, Lord Kakkar, in his wonderful speech. We have dealt with the single market, employment and infrastructure, and it has been a wonderful experience

to be involved in the scrutiny of directives, proposals and the super information documents emanating from the EU Commission. The excellent work done by the committee members, the staff of the committee and the overall EU Select Committee make me very conscious that we are privileged with time and resources allocated to the scrutiny of EU measures and our ability to call witnesses to help us through and make us understand in much greater detail what the EU is all about, how it works and how it is fundamental to our future. There is also a serious issue of getting agreement to make changes which are not solely for the benefit of the UK but which would benefit all member states and make the EU more relevant to the wider world.

I only wish that the general public and all Members of Parliament could have such a wide breadth of knowledge as we have gained and been given. I say this because I fear there is an abundance of wrong information being repeated day after day in all branches of the media, and the chattering classes are not the only ones who get the wrong end of the stick. Mark Twain got his statement only half right when he said that those that do not engage in informed debate are uninformed and those that do are misinformed. I passionately believe that we must have a serious informed debate, and not just for politicians.

Before any date for this referendum is fixed, it is surely our duty to ensure that the voting public are clued up about the EU and the advantages of being a member. This is particularly important to the youth of this country. After all, it is their future we are proposing to change radically or sensibly. We certainly need all the time between now and 2017 rather than the suggestion by the noble Lord, Lord Triesman, that the referendum should be done and dusted in 2016.

The facts about the EU should be just as well known as any subject on the school curriculum. The problem is that the EU is boring to most people. Who wants to begin to understand economics? I say that as an economist. Who wants to delve into comparisons between growth rates in the UK and its position in the league tables of the other 27 members? Indeed, if I were uninformed, I would give up in despair that the so-called facts about our GDP that sent us into a temporary depression just a short time before polling day 21 days ago were revised upwards two days ago. Yes, I am aware of all the reasons, but does it encourage people to get more involved?

Reports on developments in Brussels are full of acronyms. Just look at one of our Select Committee reports. Each one will invariably have a page of acronyms at the back, and sometimes more than one page. Useful information produced to help us understand is almost always extremely turgid. I believe it is the complete antidote to insomnia. Is there any chance of encouraging the BBC, ITV, Channel 4 or the rest to set their most creative producers the task of dreaming up an informative, attractive, exciting format comparable to "Top Gear", not on car crashes, but on how the EU started and why? The UK has such a good story—once we were able to convince the French that we needed to be a member, we were instrumental in transforming the whole continent in 1989, which is again a great story of UK involvement. Members of the EU need

us and tell us that they need us—just visit the Baltic—and we have been at the forefront of giving a good example, endeavouring to encourage erstwhile undemocratic states with questionable judicial systems and precious little freedom of religion, speech or thought to be members of a group of nations which trade, exchange students, learn new ways of doing things and benefit from co-operating in research and development, in effect making the EU and the world a better place.

Like everything we do, say or wish for, there are always problems and/or misunderstandings, but mostly these can be ironed out by strengthening still further the links we have with all member states. What is quite extraordinary is the respect the UK engenders in the EU. We sometimes forget that although we are a relatively small country with less than 1% of the world's population, our influence throughout the world is huge. In so many areas we are envied, not least for our system of government, the Civil Service and the judicial system, and we are admired for our universities and our culture: our literature, film, music performances and composition, visual arts and architecture. I admit that I am sometimes taken aback by the breadth of it all. To recognise the magnificence of our prowess in architecture, just go to Millau in France.

The UK has always been at the forefront of helping others, and we can certainly help some of the less fortunate states in the EU. By doing so we can help the whole, and at the same time increase our security. The UK was not part of the original European Coal and Steel Community, which led to the Common Market, but now so many want us to stay, and are very anxious about what would happen if we left. The EU was the germ of an idea of Winston Churchill, whose dream, or so we are told, was that there should never be another war on the landmass of Europe, such was the impact the horrors of two world wars had on him. Our current relationship with the EU does not work anything like it should, or could, and it needs to be changed. The problems have to be sorted out. The Prime Minister has already got to grips with that, and civil servants have produced major studies of competencies. We need to convince the other member states of the validity of our case for some change.

There is also a serious malaise in some countries whose accession we supported, which are having a very difficult time. A recent publication by the Henry Jackson Society, entitled *The State of Democracy After 25 Years: Lessons from Central and Eastern Europe*, details how the euphoria following the 1989 revolutions has been dissipated by the global financial crisis of 2008 and the effects are still with us. It gives chapter and verse about how the EU member states of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia have rolled back on the progress made since their accession. That is worrying, not only for the countries involved but for the security of Europe as a whole. Corruption, abuse of power, attacks on the media and increasing links with authoritarian regimes are all part of a backward slide in democracy. The EU as a whole needs to help that situation, and needs to help with the concerns in the Baltics. In fact, it needs the UK and other member states to settle unfair and unjust problems between them and ensure that Winston Churchill's dream is fulfilled.

To sum up, we have a future in the EU, and the 11 words we heard this morning are clear and concise. We now need a full-scale campaign to ensure that by the time the referendum takes place there will be a wider and deeper level of knowledge about the EU which will eliminate all misinformation. It is so important.

4.12 pm

Lord Davies of Stamford (Lab): My Lords, I will make three introductory remarks and will then say a word about the EU referendum, which has been much discussed today, and about Greece, which has not been mentioned at all.

First, the maiden speech of the noble Baroness, Lady Helic, was absolutely brilliant—one of the best I have heard in three decades in either House—and I congratulate her most warmly. Secondly, all of us throughout the House were delighted to hear of the reconfirmation in her role of the noble Baroness, Lady Anelay. She picked up her very complicated brief very impressively in an extraordinarily rapid time in the last Parliament, and has always displayed the greatest conscientiousness and courtesy in her dealings with every Member of the House, which is deeply appreciated. Thirdly, I second the proposals of the noble Lord, Lord Howell, to set up a permanent international affairs committee in this House. That has of course already been welcomed on all sides of the House.

I think that all of us on this side of the House recognise that the Government have a mandate to go ahead with an EU referendum. Personally, I hope that it can be concluded as quickly as possible: first, to reduce to a minimum the economically damaging uncertainty before it takes place, and secondly, to ensure that if we remain in the Union we can have an effective presidency in 2017, which we certainly would not be able to have if we were conducting a referendum campaign at the same time. However, no one will be under any illusion—and certainly not our negotiating partners on the continent—that the whole of the Government's policy on this matter is based on a series of contradictions and self-delusions.

The first contradiction is that the Government are acting in the national interest—they purport to do that—but as we know, the Prime Minister's policy is just being driven by internal party-political considerations. That is why he changed his mind so dramatically on the referendum in the last Parliament. The Government have conducted a very useful exercise, the balance of competences review, which shows that there is no case at all for a renegotiation. All that is required is a normal pragmatic evolution of the European Union, which in my view would be the most desirable solution.

Secondly, there is a fundamental contradiction, in that the aim is clearly to appease the Eurosceptics. But of course the Eurosceptics cannot be appeased by anything other than our withdrawal from the European Union, and, in my view, the dissolution of the European Union itself will be required to satisfy them. So we are engaged in an exercise which cannot succeed in its intended purpose. The conclusions regarding the tactics to be adopted towards the Eurosceptics as a result of that are obvious, and certainly not the tactics that

[LORD DAVIES OF STAMFORD]

John Major adopted so disastrously for himself and his party, of which I was then fortunately, or unfortunately, a member.

Thirdly, the most serious contradiction in my view is that the Government say they are embarked on a course designed to change the treaty. However, you cannot negotiate a change in the treaty with other Heads of Government or State or with the President of the European Commission or the European Council for the simple reason that more and more countries have established that there has to be a referendum if there is a change in the treaty. We cannot complain about that. We did the same ourselves under the Europe Act, which I opposed in the previous Parliament.

Nor can you negotiate with an electorate, and you cannot even predict how an electorate is going to react to a negotiation. Surely we all know that. You cannot rely on the opinion polls, as we also know. It is more than likely that even the countries which geographically, politically and psychologically are quite close to us, such as Ireland and Denmark, will react very badly to being told that they have to go to the polls to revise a treaty—it is their treaty as much as ours—simply to help the British Prime Minister with a party-political problem of his own. Therefore, the prospects are not quite as easy or as bright as the Government often say they are.

My advice to the Government is simply, first, to abandon any idea of changing the treaty. In any case, the substantive objective that they have in that context—to get rid of freedom of movement—is the wrong one. Freedom of movement is an enormous asset to this country, as well as to every other member state and citizen of the Union. There are just about as many British people living on the continent elsewhere in the EU as there are EU citizens living here. Hundreds of thousands of young people are benefiting from the Erasmus programme and the educational exchanges. We will begin to regret all these things just a day or two after we abandon them, and we will not be able to get them back. It is a crazy policy.

I have no objection to extending the period of transition for future member states before they qualify for freedom of movement and I have no objection to making it impossible for people to claim out-of-work benefits when they come from other member states and do not have a job in this country, but I do not believe for a moment that you can deny them in-work benefits. You cannot have a situation in which people pay taxes and national insurance contributions alongside other workers in the same workplace but do not get the benefits. That is a sort of apartheid in the workplace, which would be utterly obnoxious to anybody in this country who believes in our traditions of fairness and equity, so it is quite the wrong road to go down.

I think that the Government should concentrate on positive things: completing the single market, getting a proper services directive, establishing a capital markets union—of which of course we must be a part—and getting a proper energy policy. There are lots of good objectives of that kind.

I want to say a few words about Greece. It is said that Greece may be about to default. In my view, that is very likely. It is said that that would be a great and devastating blow—some would say a fatal blow—to the European Union or to the eurozone. I do not believe anything of the kind. Greece is entirely the architect of its own misfortunes. The malaise or curse from which it has suffered is, ironically enough, a curse which was first defined and given a name by Greeks: demagoguery. You can read about it in Thucydides—it is all there; it has all happened before. Plato's *The Republic* and Aristotle's *Politics* are very different works and propose very different solutions but they are both inspired to a large extent by the need to combat the effects of demagoguery in 5th-century Athens, as we all recall.

Demagoguery consists of politicians offering unrealisable, irresponsible and incompatible policies, and that is exactly what has happened in Greece, although not just in Greece. A lot of people in Latin America have suffered from it, as Argentina currently does. A Government come to power and promise the earth, and then run up debts, which creates a crisis. The crisis then has its own costs. Somebody else comes to power saying, "Don't worry about the costs. We have a magic solution here. You don't have to pay for the costs or have any austerity. It's all going to be fine. Vote for us". That is exactly what has happened in Greece, and Syriza is a very bad example of the original Greek phenomenon of demagoguery.

The bailout programme provided a wonderful opportunity for Greece to address some of its fundamental structural problems, such as overemployment in the public sector and excessive protection in the labour market. Greece was coming through that programme very effectively, as Spain, Portugal and the Republic of Ireland are doing at present. Spain is, I think, the country which is growing fastest in the European Union as we speak. Greece began to grow again last year and unemployment began to fall. Just at that vital moment, Syriza came to power and said, "Don't worry about all this austerity, vote for us and everything will be fine". Well, if it were to be fine simply because everybody else signed a cheque for Greece, it would establish the most appalling precedent. That would be a disaster for the European Union. It would be a most perverse action by the European Union, creating negative incentives and a moral hazard that could be extraordinarily damaging to the future of the European Union.

As we know, what actually will happen if Greece defaults is that the ECB will no longer be able to provide liquidity support for Greek banks. As a result, the Greek Government will have to support their banks. They cannot do that in euros—they will not have any and they cannot borrow any—and so will have to impose capital controls and go back to a sort of drachma mark 2. It is almost inconceivable that any sane person in Greece still has an account in Greece in euros, but of course it will always be the small people—the poorer, less sophisticated people—who suffer from these things. Those are the people Syriza, quite dishonestly, pretends that it is trying to support. The Greek Government, if they go on wanting to spend more money and running a primary deficit, as they do, will not be able to borrow that money from anybody in

Greece, or outside, and will be monetising their deficit. Therefore, Greece faces the prospect of serious inflation, perhaps hyperinflation, and economic crisis. That will not be the case for the rest of the European Union and I do not believe that there is much of a systemic risk. The exposure of other banks in the EU to Greece is only just over €30 billion and much of that is already provided for. Of course the stress tests which the ECB undertook last year took account of the possibility of a Greek failure. If that comes about, it will be the fault of the Greeks alone. The lesson that will be drawn from it will probably be a very salutary one for all concerned.

4.21 pm

Lord Maclennan of Rogart (LD): My Lords, we just heard a very forceful speech, all of which I profoundly agree with. I am grateful to the noble Lord, Lord Davies, for focusing on the European Union, which is, it seems to me, the centre of the debate today. Others have talked about the fallout in the Middle East and the disruption of Africa by extremists. All that is true, but if Britain is going to play a significant role in dealing with these problems, I believe that we have to be part of a strong Europe that can talk to itself about these issues, address the priorities and focus on these global issues. The European Union has the capacity to do that. It is falling apart, in some respects, at the moment, and that is partly because we in this country are taking on 27 members and not addressing the problems of the Union together in a concentrated way. It is inevitable that one against 27 will stimulate opposition. I believe that that is the wrong approach to reforming the European Union.

There used to be a Council of Ministers dealing with the single market. That has passed by, which is, unfortunately, a weakness. The service sector in particular needs attention if we are to see the 70% of the EU economy integrated into the Common Market. The service sector is the area where deepening the single market would deliver the largest gains. We lag behind the United States in that respect and it should be the focus of our Ministers.

There should also be regular meetings between the Commission, the Council and the European Parliament to discern and agree what should be the work programme of the Union. It is not the best way to do things to bat things across the net and to have each body feeling that it can bash out a policy of its own. There should also be an assessment of the impact of rule-making, which should be independent of the Commission. There are commercial bodies that the Council could agree to appoint to assess the impact of the measures being proposed.

The question of subsidiarity also causes anxiety. The Union has in many respects overlegislated, interfering in too pernickety a way with the trade of individual countries. There is a case for national parliaments having an institution in the Union in Brussels so that they are heard before the Union carries its initiation of policy too far. The national parliaments have a good record on showing their appraisals of these things. This country, particularly the House of Lords committee on which I have served and its sub-committees, has shown very effectively how best to analyse what is

happening. The yellow-card proposal has not worked as yet. It would seem to me that if a third of the countries were to produce a yellow card it ought to stop the European Union in its tracks.

Some of the criticisms of the Union are made by those who suspect corruption and ill-directed use of budgetary funds. That could be better overseen by the public auditors. They have a record of producing their reactions too slowly. It takes up to two years sometimes, by which time the issue has flown away. That needs to be addressed.

As far as the European Union's external policies are concerned, it was a great step forward to create the European External Action Service, but it needs to be more integrated domestically and with the Commission. The budget for the External Action Service is not, I believe, big enough. We should look at that because it could be the agency that enables the Union to take stronger action in the global problems that face us.

Finally, if we are to satisfy Britain's requirements, we need to acknowledge that that the eurozone and those members not in the eurozone need to be working closer together. We need to have observers in eurozone meetings so that if the market might be damaged by proposed decisions, that danger can be raised as early as possible.

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: I seek to be helpful again to your Lordships, but we are reaching a point where we will rise particularly late. Many contributions are well served if they are succinct. I hope that noble Lords will forgive me for interrupting again.

4.31 pm

Lord Crisp (CB): My Lords, I will use my few minutes to speak about international development. International development is, of course, intimately linked with foreign policy and is fundamentally about the UK's place in the world and how it is perceived by other Governments and other peoples.

In what has been already described many times as a divided and dangerous world, the UK's commitment to development is a force for unity and security. Those of us who travel in the poorer parts of Asia and Africa—and there are many in your Lordships' House who do—know how well the UK and DfID are thought of by many people in those countries, so I first congratulate the Government on their continuing support for development. This is not just about money, although 0.7% sends a very powerful message of support, but about the golden thread that the Prime Minister has referred to of supporting civil society, commerce, the rule of law and so on. It is also about the fact that the UK operates with a degree more flexibility than other large donors—more as a partner while of course keeping proper processes in place.

This flexibility and sense of partnership are vital for the future and need to be further developed. This is happening in a world where power is shifting and to some extent splintering, as so many noble Lords have already said. New approaches are being developed that are more equal, less top-down, less about richer countries imposing solutions—less, if you like, of the West knows best and more about supporting local

[LORD CRISP]

leaders, local ideas and local innovation, some of which we ourselves can learn from. We are moving towards a time of greater co-development beyond simple aid. As we help to strengthen other countries, we can also strengthen our own.

International development is not the only area where the UK plays this enormously positive and healing role in the world. The arts, science and sports are other obvious areas. I was very struck by the report on soft power produced under the leadership of the noble Lord, Lord Howell, with its analysis of the UK's strength and its vision for the country as becoming the best networked country, with relationships in all parts of the world. That report rather underplayed the UK's role in health. Depending on exactly how you calculate it, health is now the biggest industry in the world and the UK plays a massive global role. This is one area where the UK is truly a global power.

The APPG on Global Health, which I co-chaired in the last Parliament, commissioned an exercise to match the UK's contribution to health globally across the four sectors of commerce, government, academia and the not-for-profit and philanthropy sector. It found, as you might expect, that the UK has a major impact in all sectors, overall coming second only to the US in impact, and doing better than the US in some areas. We will publish the report in a month's time, with recommendations for maintaining and developing that role. My question to the noble Baroness is very simple: do Her Majesty's Government recognise the importance of health being part of foreign policy, and what will they do to make it more prominently so?

Let me finish by returning to international development. The sustainable development goals, which we believe will be agreed in New York later this year, will be another force for unity and peace in the world. I want to make three simple points about them. First, during the process of developing them over the last three years, the great statement was that they should "leave no one behind". I believe that needs to be absolutely central to everything that happens around the SDGs, and that the UK, like others, must ensure that this is not just a nice and pious statement. That means suggesting and ensuring that all the appropriate indicators are identified and measured, so that we have disaggregated data.

The problem is real. Who are the people who get left behind? They are the people you would expect: people with disabilities; women, often; ethnic and cultural minorities; rural populations. For the UK, meeting this commitment also means maintaining the recently launched and very welcome disability framework for UK aid, which has once again put the UK in a leading position globally.

Alongside that principle of leaving nobody behind, I hope and trust that the UK will strongly support the development of universal healthcare and universal health coverage around the world, helping countries to create their plans for doing so. That brings with it the recognition that it will involve a massive increase in the number of health workers needed globally. The UK has an extraordinarily good track record in the education and training of staff, and it could play an even greater part globally in that regard.

Finally, and much more specifically, I turn to a topic in respect of which I ought to declare an interest as the chair of Sightsavers. I request that the Government maintain and enhance the investment they have already made in the elimination of neglected tropical diseases. There is still an enormously long way to go. We have seen around the world many examples of diseases almost being eliminated, only to return because we did not go the last mile. It is fantastically important that we keep up that process. It is also one of the most cost-effective of all health interventions, dealing with diseases that afflict the poorest people. It is an area where the UK plays one of the leading roles in the world; its scientists, as well as its health workers, are making real change happen.

4.37 pm

Lord Sterling of Plaistow (Con): My Lords, first, may I say how fortunate we are in having my noble friend Lady Anelay in the Foreign Office? From my experience over many years, which has been totally international, the Foreign Office is a key instrument of government, one of the most powerful institutions we have had through history, and probably one of the finest to represent and to exercise soft power. It is in the best interests of this country that its budget should be increased and not cut to shreds, as has happened in the past few years. It does a superb job internationally.

Given the time of day, one ends up covering quite a lot of things that other people have covered, but I want to come back to the gracious Speech. It states that,

"my Government will continue to play a leading role in global affairs, using their presence all over the world to re-engage".

There has been a lot of talk today about what our foreign policy is. We have a foreign policy—it was clearly stated five years ago—and it was against that background that the defence review took place. However, the word "re-engage" is very true. I travel a great deal and meet a lot of people internationally, mainly because of the business interests that I am still heavily involved in, such as worldwide shipping.

We are sadly very diminished in world terms. What is more, for the first time people reckon that we have diminished ourselves; it is not that others have done it for us. Wherever I go, whether to the United States, China, India, Australia and so on, there is a feeling that somehow or other we are opting out. Frankly, given that my interests over all my working life have been totally international, I find that pretty sad because in practice, wherever I travel, people still look to us as a country for—to use an old-fashioned term—moral leadership, while a huge number of small countries look to us for help and advice.

I was obviously pleased when the Prime Minister announced that he was going to re-engage, and having been in business, I take it for granted that having a strong balance sheet is hugely important, so the Chancellor ensuring strong balance sheet for this country is an absolute prerequisite. I look at this internationally, and have spent quite a lot of time in Russia. One reason that the Russians well nigh hate the United States of America is due to its extremely powerful

economy and hard power. They have to respect that and they know that they would be defeated if they went up against the US.

What I really want to comment on today is the defence side. Perhaps I may give a little background. Two or three weeks ago I went to the commemorations of the liberation of the concentration camp at Belsen. The atrocities committed there were just unbelievable; we all know that. But what many do not know much about was that when we liberated Belsen, it was the Royal Medical Corps of the Army that went in to try to help save as many people as they could. A lot of people are not aware that many young nurses, doctors and volunteers went over there to work, risking typhus and goodness knows what else. Many of them died, but they looked after the survivors in that camp right the way through. I give that as an example of how through hard power you can also exercise soft power, and that is what I want to talk about a little further.

I have had a lot to do with the armed services ever since the Falklands War when many P&O ships went with the fleet. No one knows better what happened there than my friend, Admiral West—the noble Lord, Lord West of Spithead. Also, through Motability we look after the mobility needs of all the veterans and those who were wounded—some 17,000 of them right up to this day.

There are huge economic benefits in hard power. Defence and national security were ignored in the general election campaign. The subjects were hardly mentioned in the TV debates and got no serious attention in the manifestos of the main parties. Has the world suddenly become a quiet and peaceful place, full of people who love Britain? Are we free of threats and risks? Have ISIS and all the other forms of militant Islam disappeared? As Con Coughlin stated only recently in the *Daily Telegraph*, ISIS is probably our biggest single risk in the near future. Has Vladimir Putin given up his plans to assert Russian power in Ukraine and beyond? Have the state sponsors of cyberattacks stopped trying to penetrate corporate secrets and personal privacy? The reality is that the threats we face have escalated greatly over the past five years while the UK has been reducing its troop numbers and spending on equipment. This has left the brave people who volunteer to fight for this country short of crucial supplies. It has also left Britain in the rather ridiculous position of having aircraft carriers with very few aircraft ordered for them.

I fear that this dangerous situation is about to get worse. The new review of defence spending has already begun and I am afraid that there will be further cuts even though our defence forces are already very hollowed out. Some areas such as overseas aid are protected whatever happens. The National Health Service has been given a blank cheque. However, bizarrely, defence—one of the most fundamental responsibilities of any Government, which has been mentioned several times today—has no such protection. Even the commitment last year to our NATO allies to spend 2% of GDP has been dropped. I know that there are ways in which that 2% of GDP can be demonstrated, but it is not a fact, and it certainly will not be by the end of this review.

I believe that in a dangerous world we need more defence, not less, and that our Armed Forces deserve the best available technology with which to fight. Trident is essential, and I strongly support its retention. But the issue is much wider. Hard power—the combination of cutting-edge technology and great human skills—is key. It is a great deterrent to our enemies that we will fight them when necessary. But hard power also helps to protect our interests in other ways, such as taking aid, as we did using HMS “Argus”, to west Africa, and helping the international effort to break the evil trade in people trafficking across the Mediterranean. As many noble Lords know, without world skills in cybersecurity, London would not have been able to host the Olympic Games.

Hard power cannot be maintained without a strong UK industrial base. It might be cheaper to buy everything from foreign suppliers but our interests might not always coincide with theirs. Some might want to keep the best technology for themselves. The idea that in the crucial science of cryptography Britain should put its security in the hands of others is laughable. No other serious country would believe in that. Professor Nick Butler and I commissioned a report from experts at King's College London which makes it very clear that defence spending creates wealth for the country, good jobs and skills. Indeed, some of our finest brain power is involved in our defence industries and allied universities, apart from the huge spin-offs which benefit the whole economy.

One would have thought that with a general election there would have been much more debate on these issues, but sadly there was not. The British people deserve to be fully in the picture on national security matters, which after all also make an indispensable contribution to our prosperity and strength in the world. Politicians of all parties should confront these issues and tell us where they stand. We have some wonderful people. The armed services are all about people and morale. I shall finish by saying that many in this House have sons and grandsons in the armed services. If I had one going into battle, putting his life on the line on our behalf, I should like to feel that he had the best technology that the world can provide to give him the chance to survive.

4.47 pm

Baroness Dean of Thornton-le-Fylde (Lab): My Lords, in the reduced time available I shall concentrate my remarks on the defence aspects of the gracious Speech. It would be remiss of me as chairman of the Back-Bench Armed Forces defence study group in the House if I did not register our sincere thanks for the work that the noble Lord, Lord Astor, and the coalition Government have done over the last five years. The noble Lord made sure that all noble Lords across the House were kept up to date and briefed, and had meetings. We very much appreciated the way in which he approached his work. We are delighted that his replacement is the noble Earl, Lord Howe, who carries much respect in this Chamber, and has the broad shoulders that he will need in the forthcoming debates about the strategic defence and security review.

I want to concentrate my remarks on that. In 2010, the review took place, and it was generally, but perhaps

[BARONESS DEAN OF THORNTON-LE-FYLDE] not unanimously, agreed that it was superficial, cost-related—the costs had almost been decided before the review was conducted—and that the outcome was less than satisfactory. You can look at morale in a company to see how it is doing. For the first time I can remember, in the last couple of years we have seen the Armed Forces' Pay Review Body's annual report refer to the diminished morale among the Armed Forces. We depend on those personnel for our defence policy. Of course equipment is important, but it is the young men and women, and their families who support them, to whom we have to pay due attention. I hope that that will be a priority for discussion in this review.

The noble Earl, Lord Howe, mentioned that the work would be done and the report will be presented. I hope that that is not the process. I would welcome comment on that when the Minister winds up the debate. That was one of the problems last time: it was done in a hurry and there was not much external input into the report. The report was drawn up at a time when no one had any idea or expectation that we would have such incidents as Syria, Ukraine, Libya and the almost daily flying right up against our borders by Russian military planes. It is not an incursion of our air and sea borders, but they fly right up against them.

The noble Earl said that we live in an insecure world. He is absolutely right. I do not agree with people who think that we should just look inwardly. In this changing world, our internal security depends so much on what is happening outside our borders. So the strategic defence and security review is very important. It was the penultimate paragraph in the gracious Speech; I just hope that they were not listed in order of priority. I would have some concern if they were, but I choose not to think that. We will debate this issue and we need to look at how that 2010 review worked out. Quite apart from the additional operations, we had a reduction in our full-time service personnel, who were to be replaced by the reserves. That has not worked: we have not recruited the numbers that we were told we would.

There are two other promises that the Prime Minister may perhaps be forgiven for thinking, when he made them, that he would not be in the position he is in today. The first was during the NATO conference, where he urged all nations to spend 2% of GDP on their defence budget. There is a difference of opinion over whether we find and pay 2%. I do not believe that we do. I would like to be proved wrong, but that is something we need to address. It is no good urging other nations to do it if we do not.

The other promise that I would welcome comment on is this. When the very cutting 2010 review took place, part of the deal—I am a trade union negotiator so I can use only the word “deal”—between the MoD political people and the Chiefs of Staff was, “If you can deliver this successfully, I, the Prime Minister, tell you that come 2015 you will see a real increase in the defence budget and spending”: in other words, with the new Government. The Prime Minister, in the position that he is in and as the person who made them, now really needs to deliver those two promises. That is something on which we will hold the Government

to account. If the Government assert that they are spending 2%, they need to establish that they are; we would like to see the figures.

I look forward to the debates that we will have and I certainly look forward to the noble Earl, Lord Howe, leading on behalf of the Government, so ably supported by the noble Lord, Lord Ashton of Hyde, who, until he was taken into government, was the secretary of our defence group.

4.53 pm

Lord Avebury (LD): My Lords, in September 2014, President Obama said:

“We will degrade, and ultimately destroy, ISIL through a comprehensive and sustained counterterrorism strategy”.

Those words were echoed in the gracious Speech, except that apparently we think that this is a phenomenon that is confined to the Middle East. In fact, the objectives of the terrorists are of a global nature, as I shall attempt to show.

On 19 March, the noble Baroness, Lady Anelay, said that the strategy for clearing the Daesh out of Syria and Iraq was to provide military support to the Iraqi forces fighting the terrorists. This policy is now in ruins, with the ignominious defeat and expulsion of government forces from Ramadi, following a similar exercise in Mosul. US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter has said that the Iraqi army has lost the “will to fight” but it would be more accurate to say that it never had the will. Only the Shia militias are capable of preventing the terrorists occupying Baghdad, let alone recovering Anbar province. They and the Kurdish Peshmerga are the effective military opposition to the Daesh on the ground in Iraq.

In Syria, as my noble friend Lord Alderdice has said, we cannot make up our minds whether the priority is to get rid of Assad or to eliminate the Daesh. The Kurdish YPG beat off a determined attack by the Daesh against the city of Kobane and has emerged as the only plausible ally for the US-led coalition. Is the UK helping YPG operations with military supplies and logistics, and what are our ultimate goals in Syria? The public need to know where we are going and that means not only with the military operations but also with the countermessaging strategy on which the noble Baroness said we are chairing a subgroup with the UAE and the US. It would be interesting to know a little more about what that subgroup has been doing.

The ideology of the Daesh is metastasising to other Islamic countries. Leaders of the Pakistan Taliban have pledged allegiance to the Daesh, and other Pakistani terrorist groups, which carry on relentless campaigns of murder and massacre against Shia Muslims and other religious minorities, including Christians, are dedicated to programmes of religious hatred and cleansing.

President Ashraf Ghani warned of impending terrorism by Daesh in Afghanistan in March, and sure enough, Shahidullah Shahid, claiming to be a spokesman for the group, said that it was responsible for a suicide bomb in Jalalabad on 18 April which killed 33 people and injured more than 100, many of them children. Most of the followers of the Taliban in both Pakistan and Afghanistan will switch to the Daesh, which has said that the two countries form part of its caliphate.

In Nigeria, Boko Haram is reported to have declared allegiance to the Daesh, as the noble Lord, Lord St John, mentioned. In Libya, Daesh militants took over the cities of Derna and Sirte and are terrorising the local populations with summary executions and public floggings. They executed 21 Egyptian Copts in Sirte. Forces of the Government in eastern Libya under General Khalifa Haftar are said to be preparing a counterattack, but with no end to the civil war between the two halves of the country, the outlook is grim. I would like to know what the Government are doing to try to bring the two Governments together so that they can at least stop fighting each other and concentrate on the threat from the Daesh.

In Egypt, the local affiliate of the Daesh claimed responsibility on 3 April for deadly attacks on army checkpoints in the Sinai peninsula that killed 15 soldiers and two civilians. It has called on its followers to kill judges and court officials in retaliation for sentences passed on terrorists for offences in Sinai. As the noble Lord, Lord Marlesford, mentioned, three judges were shot dead in El Arish in northern Sinai on 16 May.

In March, the Daesh bombed a Zaidi mosque in Sanaa, the capital of Yemen, killing 137 people and wounding 350 at Friday prayers. Then, in April, it posted a video online of the execution of 15 Yemeni soldiers, and last Friday it bombed another mosque in Sanaa, wounding 13 people. The Saudi-led military coalition against the Houthis is weakening the only force that might prevent the establishment of a Daesh territorial base in Yemen. The noble Marquess, Lord Lothian, drew attention to the incompatibility of the Saudi coalition's activities with those of the 80-nation coalition led by the United States, of which Saudi Arabia is a nominal member.

Last Friday, a Daesh suicide bomber blew himself up in a Shia mosque in eastern Saudi Arabia, killing at least 21 people and injuring more than 80 at prayer. The so-called caliph, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, recorded an audio message calling on his Saudi followers to attack Shia targets, but the Daesh has a particular hatred for the Shia in every country.

Paradoxically, the Wahhabism of Saudi Arabia is similar to the theology of the Daesh, which in fact uses Saudi textbooks on Islam in its schools. The difference between them is political rather than theological because of the Daesh claim that its caliph has jurisdiction over the whole of the ummah and its practice of killing infidels in territory under its jurisdiction who refuse to convert to its particular version of Islam. Clearly, Islamist terrorists all over the world, including thousands here in Britain, see advantages in being part of a movement that is dedicated to the universal reign of Salafist Islam and sharia jurisprudence through conversion or conquest. An intermediate stage based on the maximum extent of Islamic rule in the Middle East, Spain, the Balkans, north Africa and south and central Asia makes it seem plausible, and that is the intermediate plan of the Daesh.

I agree with my noble friends Lord Ashdown and Lord Alderdice that whatever our differences with Russia on Ukraine and with Iran on nuclear development, we need the co-operation of these states on a new diplomatic initiative against the terrorists. Perhaps

when the noble Baroness deals with that proposal, she would also like to say whether any fresh initiatives are contemplated to bring Turkey into the equation, which has been mentioned so far only in connection with humanitarian supplies to the KRG.

The Daesh is,

“the negation of God erected into a system of government”.

We need to wake up to the scale of this challenge and develop a robust answer to it, with the authority of the UN Security Council and the approval of the highest levels of religious authority in all the branches of peaceful Islam.

5.01 pm

Baroness Flather (CB): My Lords, I will focus on international development, but before I start I would like to say how much I enjoyed the opening given by the noble Earl, Lord Howe. It was his usual thoughtful, well-considered opening and it is good to see him in a new role. Perhaps he will not be on the Front Bench every day I come into the Chamber, as he was in the previous Session. I think he got a bit tired.

I would also like to say how much I associate myself with the remarks of the noble Baroness, Lady Helic. I feel very much in a similar position to her, although I came to this country much earlier and not from an area that was badly damaged or treated badly. This country has been good to me. I have enjoyed living here and I cannot now imagine living anywhere else. I am glad she said that and I absolutely agree that this is a country where you can make your own life. You do not have to be given it, you can do it yourself. Another noble Baroness across the Chamber is shaking her head.

I turn now to not so pleasant things. The topic is international development, but it is really about 1 billion people—women—who are not remembered. In India and Africa, and maybe in one or two other, smaller areas, you will find that there are 1 billion women altogether. The lives they lead are really not imaginable by people who live in this country. I use the word “imaginable” advisedly, because their lives are unbelievably horrible. They have no status. They are not even treated as human beings. If they get ill, people wait for them to die because it is so much easier if they die, because then they get another woman who is stronger and younger. It is really time for us to start focusing on the situation of women. We cannot change anything through international development unless we change the lives of women.

We have allowed this to go on and we have allowed the lack of family planning to go on. The population of the world is burgeoning. Have we not noticed that? Have we not noticed the impact of that? As there is no water and very little food, nearly 8 million children die before they are five years old, and 2.4 million children die when they are just born. This is a world that we should not be accepting. Some 290,000 women die every year in childbirth and still we do not focus on family planning. It has barely made its way into everyday language. People speak about it but they are still a bit edgy or nervous; it is not a subject that you talk about. I went to my local Rotary to talk about women and their situation, and afterwards a number

[BARONESS FLATHER]

of people said to each other, "We do not really want to hear these things". No, they do not. Nobody wants to hear these things. A woman in India who gets HIV is not allowed to go to the clinic because then everyone will know that she has HIV, so she is kept in until she dies, or whatever. It is not a good world for women.

With all due respect to the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Coventry, it is all right to talk about religion, but what has religion done for women? It has done nothing for them. Catholicism or Islam have positively been bad for women. If women are not allowed to have contraception, then in some areas, especially in Africa where there are so many Catholics, they may have seven, eight or nine children. Three or four of those will die of disease and hunger because the men do not bother. It is the women who have to feed them and find their food. That does not matter to anybody. It does not matter to the bishops. A bishop in Uganda recently said to all his priests, "Tell the women that they are going straight to hell if they use contraception". This is not the kind of world that we should be living in in 2015.

In 1950, there were 2.7 billion people in the whole world. There are now about 7.25 billion in this world, and the demographics suggest that by 2050 there will be between 9 billion and 10 billion. I know that it is too late to turn the clock back, but we could at least stop it ticking on and on, forwards and forwards, and try to help especially the women who do not really have lives; they are either baby-making machines or just workers. It is said that women do three-quarters of the work but earn 10% of the wages and own 1% of the property in the world. It really is time that our attention is focused, when it comes to development work, on the women. They change very quickly if they are given the opportunity. They learn very quickly. They have nothing, so if you do anything for them they change.

On that note, I say to the noble Lord, Lord Collins of Highbury, that the garment factories are extremely important to women. Okay, they do not get paid the wages that women earn in this country, but they would have nothing without those garment factories. Please remember that that is all they have. Also, in regard to children working, a poor family cannot manage unless the children work. It is no use trying to be very moral and grand and saying, "Oh no, we do not want children working". No, tell the companies that employ them that we will buy their goods if they let the children work for five, six or seven hours and give them a good meal. Do not say, "Don't work", because families cannot survive and will beg on the streets, which is no better. In fact, it is worse. So there are things happening in the world that we really do not know of.

The noble Lord, Lord Crisp, was the first person to mention women today. I told him, "You mentioned women", and he said, "I knew that you would, but I was ahead of you". I am often the only one who talks about women in this Chamber. I was the first person to talk about population connected to climate change. What are we doing? Okay, everything is going to change if we do not do this or do not do that, but if the number of people keeps on increasing, the climate

will keep on changing. It is a self-evident fact; if you have 7 billion-plus bodies, it is not going to be the same as having 2.7 billion bodies.

Let us, therefore, start really looking at the elephant in the room and start working on population. Bill Gates, who spends the money perhaps of a small country's GDP, says that he wants to eradicate malaria. That is wonderful, but every time he goes to eradicate malaria, there will be that big tranche of children who we will not have vaccinated. If he put his money towards family planning instead of malaria, we would see much better results than he thinks are made in respect of malaria.

5.10 pm

Lord Dobbs (Con): My Lords, it is always a great pleasure to follow the noble Baroness, Lady Flather. I would follow her anywhere. We have heard many fine speeches this afternoon—from my noble friend Lord Howe from his new position on the Front Bench, my noble friend Lord Lothian, who is not in his seat, my noble friend Lord Howell of Guildford, that very special maiden speech by my noble friend Lady Helic, and many others. It has been an excellent debate so far.

On my desk at home, there is a chunk of the Berlin Wall. I knew the wall: when I was a teenager in the 1960s, I used to run messages back and forth across it for families who had been ripped apart by its construction. Yet that wall came tumbling down, and it is worth remembering how it came tumbling down. Despite the massive arsenals that were built up on both sides, that wall—that physical expression of evil—was not blown apart by bombs. In the end, it was torn down by the bare hands of millions of ordinary people from the East, who saw in us, yes, an opportunity for economic advancement of course, but more profoundly a set of values in which they wanted to share.

I wonder how we would fare today if we were playing by the rules of the Berlin Wall game, where we are judged by the extent to which we manage to persuade rather than simply bludgeon. We have been doing a lot of bludgeoning in recent years. We often see the merits of our western values to be self-evident, yet I fear that there are many around the world today who do not see those values at all, even in places we have tried so hard to impress, such as Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya. For some reason, many see us as aggressors rather than liberators, and we need to understand why.

We went to war in those places for two purposes: to rescue them from chaos and to make our own streets safer. However, in both of those aims, we have failed. We have not rescued the Middle East. We have not even rescued ourselves: our terrorist threat is now increasingly homegrown. A little soul-searching is in order. We need a thoroughgoing and fundamental review of British foreign policy, warts and all—and not one that is simply squeezed inside the confines of the SDSR. For instance, how much is it our priority to spread human rights and democracy elsewhere in the world? Instead, should the emphasis be more on seeking stability and security? Which of those alternatives would end up saving more lives? It is not an easy discussion but it is one we must have.

We should welcome new ideas and new insights. The Cold War was a period of intense intellectual activity and of sometimes torrid self-questioning here in the West, by academics and analysts such as George Kennan and Henry Kissinger in the States and Sir Michael Howard and Professor John Erickson over here. Their analyses helped transform the world because, while communism stood still, we overwhelmed its people with ideas and fresh thinking. That is the way we shall eventually defeat ISIS: not by bombing it into oblivion but by denying it its followers, pursuing a policy of patience and persistence in which military activity is always subordinate to political and diplomatic strategy, not used as a knee-jerk response to glib commentators insisting that “something must be done”.

We got Iraq wrong. We got the Arab spring wrong. We got Ukraine wrong. We have meddled and muddled. We have not always lived up to our own standards. The Chilcot report seems likely to highlight some of those failings. Whatever that report says and whenever it comes, it should be seen not as an end but as a beginning, the first part of an ongoing and thorough, open inquiry where we test every aspect of our foreign policy and what it is that we need to achieve.

Yet, enough of the negative. In that analysis, we should not forget that we still have extraordinary scope for influence. We have the world's fifth-largest economy and the world's fifth most powerful Armed Forces. We commit a higher percentage of our national wealth to foreign aid than almost any other country. We are one of the most generous nations in the world. We are central members of the UN, EU and NATO. London, this wonderful capital city, is the most dynamic capital in the world. We have one of the richest cultures and one of the world's most extraordinary histories. These are assets of real value. We do not travel alone in this world. We have many friends. Yes, we have the BBC. Though it needs a good kicking and fundamental reshaping and rebuilding, let us never forget what it does for our ability to use soft power—about which this House has written and reported on so eloquently in the past.

Here in Britain, we punch above our weight and, as I like to say, sing above the scale. We rescued Europe from dictatorship and despair more times than Brussels has managed a balanced budget. The walls that divide the world today are built not so much of concrete but of extremism, intolerance and ignorance. Our Britain is one of the finest and freest countries on the planet, a beacon of hope and values in a dark world. Our foreign policy should reflect that far better than it manages at the moment.

5.17 pm

Baroness Berridge (Con): My Lords, as I joined your Lordships' House during the last Parliament in January 2011, the world was beginning to shift on its axis. It is quite remarkable when one reflects on those changes.

The tragic self-immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi on 17 December 2010 began the Arab spring and, by 14 January the next year, President Ben Ali was gone. Egypt was still under Mubarak, and the election of Morsi brought a theocracy experiment, another uprising, another election and another former general in President

al-Sisi. Crimea was still part of Ukraine and Ukraine was at peace. The abbreviation IS was as unknown as the religious group Yazidi were to the world. North Korea went from obscure, closed nation to Hollywood fame and the new leader Kim Jong-un surprised the world with North Korea's hacking skills utilised against Sony Pictures. Lampedusa was known as an Italian tourist destination, not a migrant landing base. For the first time in nearly 600 years, a Pope resigned and cardinals chose a jolly Argentinean who refuses to live in a palace. His transformational leadership of an institution then viewed as somewhat corrupt is now studied by Harvard Business School—and perhaps by football fans, as maybe the Pope could turn around FIFA.

Of all the things that also changed, there was the recognition of the role of religion in foreign affairs. It had never actually left but had become harder to see from this, the only secularising continent in the world. The role of religious actors in the period of history mentioned by my noble friend Lord Dobbs is now without doubt, particularly the role of the Catholic Church in bringing democracy and freedom to eastern Europe. However, even before Daesh, according to academics such as Monica Toft and Jonathan Fox, of the 16 ongoing civil wars in 2010, 50% had a religious basis. Other academic studies claimed that, when religion is a factor in a civil war, it is more brutal for combatants and civilians, lasts longer and is more likely to recur. So Foreign and Commonwealth Office training courses by the Woolf Institute on religion and expert teaching on ethno-religious violence to the stabilisation unit are most welcome.

Within the Queen's Speech, whether it is defeating terrorism in Middle East, national reconciliation in Iraq or the political settlement in Syria, religion needs to be understood as part of the problem, maybe, but also the solution. Erdogan's desire to be executive president in Turkey, which, if it happens, will subordinate the parliamentary process there, cannot be fully understood unless one remembers that the last caliphate was not in Iraq—it was Ottoman. Regional peace needs the HDP Kurdish party on 7 June to break through the 10% threshold to get parliamentary representation to thwart the supermajority that Erdogan is in danger of achieving.

Over the last Parliament, there was the same realisation in relation to human rights abuses, which were due not to politics, resource battles or ethnicity, but to religious identity. Whether it involved Shias in Pakistan, Yazidis in Iraq, Baha'is in Iran, or Christians in Syria, the fact you are “the other”, defined by religious difference, was a factor that determined these people's fate. As the most reverend Primate the Archbishop of Canterbury last summer seemed to be alone in stating, what we are seeing in Iraq violates people's freedom of religion and belief, as set out under Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. British men and women have gone to join this, after a liberal, pluralist education, and I think we have many questions to ask ourselves in relation to that. There was a clear commitment in the Conservative manifesto that:

“We will stand up for the freedom of people of all religions—and non-religious people—to practise their beliefs in peace and safety, for example by supporting persecuted Christians in the Middle East”.

[BARONESS BERRIDGE]

So I hope that my noble friend the Minister can give some detail as to how the commitment will be worked out in the Foreign & Commonwealth Office and DfID under this Government.

These issues matter to the British people. No, I am about to rely not on opinion polling to support that assertion but on what I personally consider to be much more reliable. Hold an event here in Parliament and see how many MPs and Peers you can get to attend—and not just pop their head through the door, but actually attend. At the launch of the Open Doors World Watch List for countries where Christians are persecuted here in Parliament in March 2015, 74 Members of Parliament attended, including two members of the Cabinet.

The Queen's Speech also outlined,

“an enhanced partnership with India and China”,

and many people may respond that it is all about trade, really. But in a world of globalised communication, human rights abuses have the potential to damage deeply corporate brands. Perhaps companies are worried about investing in Burma now, and not just because it seems that progress to democracy may have stalled. What will their consumers, especially Muslims, think of a company that invests there while Rohingya Muslims are denied citizenship and when their temporary ID cards are prevented from giving them a vote in the election? Human rights and trade are increasingly interconnected, and I do not just mean the trade in humans that clearly this has led to with the Rohingya Muslims. It goes without saying, perhaps, that it may be the sponsors of FIFA that prove to be more powerful than even the FBI in bringing about similar change.

I wish to end where I began in my speech on the 2014 Queen's Speech, with a country that has for the first time broken down along religious lines, the Central African Republic. United Nations OCHA summarised recently:

“After more than two years of conflict in the Central African Republic, the humanitarian situation remains appalling: more than 2.7 million people—out of a total population of 4.6 million—are in dire need of assistance and protection. Close to a million people remain displaced in and out of the country”.

There is encouraging news that recently all the rebel groups agreed to release the estimated 10,000 child soldiers they had recruited. The Bangui forum process of national reconciliation has started and elections are now rescheduled for the end of 2015. We have contributed, most particularly with the deputy head of the UN peace-keeping mission being the former UK ambassador Diane Corner, but what further involvement does the UK anticipate having in terms of the state building, civil service reform or tax reform that we were so successful in bringing to many east African countries?

One looks to various measures to assess a country's progress. Unfortunately the CAR is now 185th out of 187 on the Human Development Index. It is now bottom of the league of the Legatum Prosperity Index for the whole of Africa.

The CAR has a group of people who have more than the average awareness of its existence. I am told that the tea-time audience on BBC1 is most aware of it. It is the “Pointless” audience. “Pointless” is a quiz

show where you get the most marks for thinking of the answer that nobody else is aware of. In a recent question on the Francophone countries in Africa, the CAR was one of the answers. The measure of progress for the CAR will be when it is no longer a “Pointless” answer.

5.25 pm

Lord West of Spithead (Lab): My Lords, I would like be associated with the praise that has been heaped on the noble Baroness, Lady Anelay, the noble Lord, Lord Astor, and the noble Earl, Lord Howe. Of course, the noble Earl is the son of a naval officer and so by definition a splendid chap—although having suffered studying classics at school, I am a little less sure of his expertise in Latin verse.

When I spoke after Her Majesty's previous gracious Speech in June 2014, I commented sadly that defence hardly featured, as was the case in the three previous Queen's Speeches since 2010—and this time there is even less.

“My Government will undertake a full strategic defence and security review”,

is hardly an earth-shattering announcement, bearing in mind that it had already been decided that there should be a review every five years. The next bit is,

“and do whatever is necessary to ensure that our courageous Armed Forces can keep Britain safe”.

That is the prime duty of any Government. Would we expect the Government to allow our courageous Armed Forces not to keep Britain safe? We must not delude ourselves. Defence has not been mentioned that much today. We are at a turning point. Unless more money is found for defence, defence is in a crisis. When one turns to the government website to expand on the sparse statements in the speech, it states that the 2015 National Security Strategy and SDSR will ensure that Britain remains a leader on the world stage, maintain our world-leading Armed Forces and build on the enormous progress that has been made since 2010.

Let us look at those statements in reverse order. The first is that we will build on the enormous progress that has been made since 2010. Let us be clear: since 2010, there has been an approximate 9.5% reduction in defence expenditure, which research by the International Institute for Strategic Studies has shown has reduced our military capability by approximately 30%. In other words, it has had a catastrophic effect on our defence capability. Defence is in crisis—so is this progress?

The next statement is that we will maintain our world-leading Armed Forces. Our people are fantastic, as has been said by many speakers, but there are not enough of them, and pressure on resources means we are in danger of no longer being world-leading. As the noble Lord, Lord Williams of Baglan, stated, the US President, and many senior US military leaders and opinion makers in America have expressed huge concern about our military capability and our ability to act as an ally.

The last statement is that we will ensure that Britain remains a leader on the world stage. Why do our Prime Minister, Chancellor and Foreign Secretary think that historically we had influence on the world stage? It was because as well as all our soft power, which many speakers have talked about, and which is amazing and important, we had military capability—but we are

losing it, so their input will become irrelevant in key global decision-making. As the noble Lord, Lord Sterling, explained so well, the status of our nation is changing by default without any debate—and I do not think people realise this—because of the reduction in our military capability. As my noble friend Lord Anderson of Swansea said, we have already seen that our Prime Minister was completely absent from discussions on Ukraine between Chancellor Merkel and Presidents Hollande and Putin.

Others have spoken about the shortcomings of the last non-strategic security and defence review and the importance of the national security strategy, so I will not go on about that. I will say only that the timescales are much shorter than people think, because it will have to feed into the comprehensive spending review. The hearts of a number of us leapt when our Prime Minister told all NATO members in Newport to spend a minimum of 2% of GDP on defence. It was strong, positive stuff, but I am not sure that the Prime Minister intends to practise what he preaches. Can the noble Earl or the noble Baroness say whether our defence spending as a percentage of GDP will be 2% for 2015-16? This CSR will hardly affect it—surely it is almost decided already. RUSI believes that it will be 1.88%, no matter how you play with the figures. Do we really intend, in the remaining years of this Parliament, to meet the 2% target we set our allies?

However, the yawning gap in Her Majesty's most gracious Speech is the lack of mention of Trident. This was seen as so important by the Conservatives that the right honourable Michael Fallon wrote to every household in Barrow before the election saying that voting for the Labour candidate would put the deterrent at risk and hence all their jobs. More widely, a key plank in the election campaign was scaremongering about Labour and the SNP not replacing the deterrent. Of course that was rubbish, but bearing in mind how important it seemed then, where is the reflection of the manifesto commitment to four replacement submarines in the Speech? Why is it not there? Is it of so little consequence?

I was one of many signatories to an open letter to the Prime Minister printed in the *Times*, which put the urgent need for a decision very clearly. It said:

"In an uncertain world where some powers are now displaying a worrying faith in nuclear weapons as an instrument of policy and influence, it would be ... irresponsible folly to abandon Britain's own independent deterrent. That fact ... encapsulates the enormity of the ... Main Gate decision ... for the security and ultimately the survival of our nation".

It noted that the Vanguard submarines are coming to the end of their lives, and that,

"due to the age and fragility of the existing fleet",

their replacement "cannot be delayed further".

However, the Prime Minister and Chancellor do not have a good track record. The submarines could have been ordered early in the last Parliament, but the decision was postponed, and Trident was instead relegated to becoming a political football. Let us strike now, rather than wait until next year to make this crucial decision, when deals will be being done on human rights and the new RIPA legislation, not to mention the Scottish elections and the EU referendum. We should ensure that the decision for replacement of our

submarines is made this year. The vast majority of Conservative and Labour MPs will vote for it, a manifesto commitment can be rapidly met, and the ultimate safeguard of our national survival will cease to be a political football.

Can the noble Baroness say whether there is any reason why a decision in principle should not be taken by the House of Commons before the Summer Recess to go ahead with the new submarine programme? Main Gate should ideally await formal contract placing—and people will unnecessarily obfuscate—but that should not preclude a Commons decision on four boats enabling continuous at-sea deterrence. The paving debate on 4 November 1992 on the Maastricht treaty ratification provides an excellent precedent. It is crucial to put this whole argument beyond question, and an early vote would clear the air. Does the Minister agree with me that that is the case?

Lastly, I know that all noble Lords would be very disappointed if I did not mention the Royal Navy. Successive cuts mean that we have 19 escorts to protect British global shipping, which is run from London; to escort our forces, which are necessary for global reach and protection of our dependencies; to help ensure the stability necessary for our worldwide investments; and to meet our commitments as a permanent member of the Security Council. Only 19 escorts is nothing less than a national disgrace. We must order the 13 planned Type 26 frigates now, as was promised by the Government before the election—and that should be the start of a rolling programme of frigate-building to ensure a constant load for our defence industry, building up over time to a force of about 30 DD/FF, which is what this nation needs.

As a nation, we should be proud of our Navy, its people and what it achieves around the world, day in and day out, but we are balanced on a knife edge. Without an increase in defence spending we are on a road to disaster. The Navy and the other military forces in this nation will not be able to do what the nation expects of them. Is that really the intention of the Government?

5.34 pm

Lord Loomba (LD): My Lords, I welcome the gracious Speech and the opportunity to speak on international development in this debate.

The United Nations has decided to adopt the sustainable development goals for 2015 to 2030. The post-2015 MDG framework, which is being prepared by the UN at present, will aim to fill the gaps and build on the successes achieved since 2000. It will also target areas in a more specialised and specific way to ensure that the progress that has been made is not lost and that the areas and issues that need the most help are not left out.

In the UN report, *The Road to Dignity by 2030*, the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, sets out his vision, saying:

"We have a shared responsibility to embark on a path to inclusive and shared prosperity".

It is a well-known fact that prosperity and sustainable development in today's world are mainly dependent on the education of children and the socioeconomic

[LORD LOOMBA]

empowerment of women. This is where I declare my interest as founder and chairman of the Loomba Foundation, a charity which I set up in 1997 to help widows around the world. The Loomba Foundation is now a UN-accredited global NGO which cares for widows. The foundation designated 23 June as International Widows Day—a day of action to raise awareness of the plight of widows and their children around the world. International Widows Day was unanimously adopted by the UN at its 65th General Assembly in 2010.

A new report commissioned by the foundation this year highlights that since the last research study in 2010 the number of widows has grown to more than 258 million, a rise of 9%. This number is on the increase due to many factors: poverty, war, such as the conflicts in Syria and Iraq, famine, the continued spread of HIV, and the Ebola epidemic. As more and more women become widows, so the demographics of this group have changed. Many younger women, through cultural practices such as forced marriage and the acceptance of child brides, are marrying at a younger age and then, in turn, becoming widows. The latest census shows that more than 269,000 children became widowed before the legal age for marriage in India. The problems that widows face are the intensification of poverty through loss of income and lack of employment opportunities; health risks such as malnutrition and infectious diseases; the fact that males are often prioritised for schooling and healthcare; social marginalisation due to begging or prostitution; social attitudes that accuse widows of witchcraft; and a lack of inheritance rights.

The UN report sets out the importance of justice and effective governance. It says that a country's success must be measured not only by its GDP but in,

“ways that go beyond GDP and account for human well-being, sustainability and equity”,

which means that widows and their particular problems, especially surrounding inheritance rights and their status in society, need addressing. The deprivation faced by widows and their children is a human rights issue of such magnitude that it demands action by the UN and other international bodies and special consideration in development programmes.

The Loomba Foundation report 2015 recommends, among other things, increasing advocacy on behalf of widows, especially surrounding cultural beliefs, the reform of legal systems and the provision of legal advice, increased social service provision by NGOs, better welfare systems, improved literacy and, of course, microfinance programmes. Ban Ki-moon, in setting out his “call to dignity”, asks that it be answered by, “all our vision and strength”—

something I hope that the Government will respond to in a positive, imaginative and proactive way.

Widows are victims of double discrimination: they are women and they are widows. That was the main reason that the UN agreed to recognise International Widows Day when we already had International Women's Day. It was also acknowledged and accepted by the DfID Minister in one of my debates in the last Government. My communication with DfID this year

has confirmed that the Government support widows through their international programmes. However, I would like to ask the Minister whether, at the UN sustainable development summit in New York, in September, the Government will take a lead to ensure that issues relating to widows and their children are specifically included in the post-2015 MDG framework.

5.40 pm

Lord Alton of Liverpool (CB): My Lords, in welcoming the talented team of Ministers who have responsibility for international affairs and security issues, I see that it is clear from the debate today on the gracious Speech that there is no shortage of challenges facing them. In my remarks, I should like to follow those who have spoken about the challenge that is posed by ISIS.

Last week, the barbaric beheadings in Palmyra, accompanied by the blitzkrieg of antiquities and ancient colonnades, graphically illustrated the nature of the depraved ideology that animates ISIS or Daesh, while, in a double victory, its capture of Ramadi underlines the serious threat that it poses and, as other noble Lords have said, the urgency with which we must re-evaluate our military and diplomatic approach.

ISIS may call itself a state but, despite its name, it is not a state, merely a cruel ideology. As a report published today reminds us, ISIS continues to attract adherents from the United Kingdom, including young women whose allegiance and imagination we have failed to capture. The orgy of violence for which ISIS has been responsible, and which has already destroyed the ancient Assyrian city of Nimrud, along with Hatra and Khorsabad, accompanied by the carnage and slaughter of innocent people, cannot be left uncontested, neither at a military level nor in the battle for ideas. We are pitted against an ideology that thinks nothing of defiling Shia mosques, destroying Christian churches, blowing up Afghanistan's Bamiyan Buddhas and eradicating the Sufi monuments in Mali. It was Edmund Burke who remarked that, “Our past is the capital of life”. What we are witnessing is an attempt to eradicate the past and eliminate humanity's collective memory, while cynically smuggling and selling on the antiquities that are not destroyed to fund this campaign of mass murder.

Last month, jihadist ideology led to the deaths of 147 students and staff in Kenya's Garissa University College, with Christian students specifically singled out; to the burning alive in a kiln of a Christian couple in Pakistan by a mob of 1,300 people while their young children were forced to watch; to the abduction of young girls in Nigeria by Boko Haram; to the beheading in Libya of 21 Egyptian Copts who were working there; and to the beheading of 30 Ethiopian Christians trying to flee these depravities.

Since 2011, more than 4 million Syrians have been killed or forced to flee their homes, with around 30,000 people added every single day to the 140 million people worldwide who are affected by conflict or natural disasters such as that which has occurred in Nepal. Is it any wonder that the desperate, from Rohingya Muslims to Middle Eastern Christians, take to the high seas to try to escape? Since 2011, of the 4 million Syrian refugees, the United Kingdom has offered shelter

to just 187, a point that my noble friend Lord Williams referred to in his excellent speech. Let us compare that to the 1.2 million refugees that Lebanon has accepted. Of course, the long-term answer is for people to be able to return to live in peace in their own homes, but we are further away from that than ever.

Echoing what the noble Baroness, Lady Helic, said earlier in her magnificent maiden speech, I say that today's realities in the region were spelled out by the United Nations Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict—an issue in which I know the noble Baroness, Lady Anelay, has taken a particular and significant interest. The special representative reported last week that young Iraqi and Syrian women, particularly from the Yazidi community, are subjected to the most traumatic, degrading and inhuman treatment before being sold in slave markets to the highest bidders. Human Rights Watch reported on the girl, referred to by the noble Baroness, Lady Hodgson, who had been traded more than 20 times, but that same report describes how traumatised girls had been banned from using headscarves after some used them to hang themselves. At the start of this Parliament, I hope that the Government will take more effective action to have those responsible for such atrocities brought to justice before the International Criminal Court, a move that we should initiate in the Security Council. Championing and upholding the rule of law is the antidote to this ideology, not assassination squads or endless bombardments.

We also need to create more safe havens, a point which my noble friend Lord Hylton and I and other noble Lords from all sides of your Lordships' House addressed recently in a letter to one of the national newspapers. We need to do that in the affected regions to stem the flow of migrants. We need also to promote Article 18 obligations. When a country like Saudi Arabia passes legislation defining atheists as terrorists, beheads its citizens, and refuses to protect the right of minorities to follow their beliefs, or to have no belief, is it any wonder that such actions are mimicked by Daesh? The noble Lord, Lord Wallace of Saltaire, referred earlier to Saudi pressure on the United Kingdom to draw up a report on the Muslim Brotherhood. Perhaps when the Minister comes to reply she will tell us when that is likely to be published.

At the heart of all these issues is the challenge of learning to live together and of respecting difference. Our failure to make the battle of ideas a priority was underlined recently in a reply to the Member of Parliament for Westmorland and Lonsdale, Tim Farron, when it was stated by the Foreign Office that just,

“one full time Desk Officer”

is,

“wholly dedicated to Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB)”,

and that,

“the Head and the Deputy Head of HRDD spend approximately 5% and 20% respectively of their time on FoRB issues”.

Understanding authentic religion and the forces that threaten it is more of a foreign affairs imperative than ever before, and the resources we put into promoting Article 18 should reflect that reality. I hope that freedom of religion and belief will be a specific priority in the FCO business plan and that the Government will

make common cause with the Labour Party, which gave a manifesto commitment to appoint a special envoy to promote Article 18. I also hope that, in the battle of ideas, we will think again about our foolish cuts to the British Council budget, from £190 million to £154 million. We should not emasculate the BBC World Service. We should promote the Commonwealth, as the noble Lord, Lord Howell of Guildford, said in his remarks, particularly as an agency for education in parts of the world that will change only with the opportunities of education.

In conclusion, it is sometimes suggested that Britain should retreat from the world and relinquish our international responsibilities. How right was that great Pole Maximilian Kolbe, who was murdered by the Nazis at Auschwitz, who said:

“The most deadly poison of our times is indifference”.

Such indifference would be bad for Britain and even worse for the rest of the world.

5.50 pm

Lord Elton (Con): My Lords, like many other noble Lords, I start by congratulating the absent noble Baroness, Lady Helic, on her admirable maiden speech. She has a valuable new perspective for us and the gift of focusing it down very precisely in excellently clear language, as well as the seductive gift of expressing it in terms that make us feel even better about our own self image. When she is free of the restraints of the conventions concerning maiden speeches and the prudence of new membership, I hope that she will develop and hone her critical faculties, because what we really need to hear is not how good we are but how much better we ought to be and how we can be. I am sure that she has a great deal to say on that.

The scope of this debate has been admirably demonstrated by the brilliant speech of the noble Lord, Lord Alton, in its geographical and moral terms. I hope that noble Lords will forgive me for focusing briefly first, for reasons that will become clear, on the forum within which it is being conducted. I find a certain curiosity in the fact that we are very much concerned with the size of the membership of that forum, which, following the resignations taking effect that were published in today's Order of Business, will be one more than it was in 1945. When I joined this House, the membership was over 1,100, and it still continued to function effectively thanks to the Salisbury convention from the day when the Labour Party had a government membership of 16 in this House and the Conservative Party of 400 had an overall majority in the House as a whole right up to recent times.

I mention that because at the back of my mind are the disadvantages with the scale of the influx that we now have. There is pressure on our machinery at a very large cost to the taxpayer. This is not a debate in which to go into the reasons for that, although I would like to do that at a future date, but I would like to bring to the attention of the Government what I believe to be the general consensus of this House and the public that maybe we should diminish the flow into this House. We have already accelerated the exits from this House. We are not accelerating death, but political death is being accelerated by pressurised retirement.

[LORD ELTON]

That brings me to my justification for mentioning this. In this debate, where we are focusing on our defence powers and must look at our recent wartime experiences, there are just five people speaking who are able to recall in adolescent memory—childish memory really—the world before the start of the Second World War and our close interest as we grew through that war of how it started. It is the duty of my generation to point out that in the 1930s a great European power considering itself to be disappointed and belittled by history—I am talking about Germany and the Treaty of Versailles—threw up a dictator, Hitler, who gained immense popularity by annexing neighbouring territories on the grounds that they spoke the same language as his. He did so at a time when our defensive forces were greatly diminished. Your Lordships will already be thinking of the remarkable speech made a few minutes ago by the noble Lord, Lord West. I am thinking of the spectacle of virtually the entire British Army being swept into the Channel in a matter of weeks, some time after a Prime Minister came back from conversations saying that all would be well for the foreseeable future.

I look to the east and I see a country that considers itself to be belittled by history—the break-up of the Russian empire, as it was—throwing up a dictator who gains immense popularity at home by annexing neighbouring territories on the grounds that they speak the same language as his people, and doing so at a time when our forces have been hugely diminished. Those forces must not suffer the fate of the British Expeditionary Force in 1939-40.

We are at a crisis of security, and I endorse all noble Lords who have said that we have to turn our attention to our defences and to our organisation. The only way to protect the peace of our people is to make it clear to aggressors that we have not only the means but the will to inflict such punishment on those who threaten us that they will not be prepared to take us on. That involves convincing them that we are not only able and willing to use these resources, but ready to. I cannot see NATO, at the moment, scrambling to the rapid defence of western Europe as it now stands. I sound a threatening note.

May I turn briefly to other matters that have arisen? We need forces to defend our society to enable us to conduct our role, contributing to the development of an equitable and stable world community, and within it an equitable, stable, fair and sound British population. What have we done for that so far? One thing that was very undersung in the general election—if indeed it was mentioned at all—was the extraordinary work that has been going on in the last few years through the Troubled Families programme. It started with six government departments making available £448 million. We are talking joined-up government here, also involving all 152 upper-tier local authorities in England. Key workers from those departments were allocated one to one to the whole-family care of people who were struggling. More than 105,000 families' lives have been turned around, enabling people to get jobs, contribute to the community, come out of prison and live civilised lives in communities that they were disrupting. That programme has now been extended by £200 million in

the first year of a five-year programme to reach up to 400,000 other families. This is having a real effect on cities and on the lives of citizens in this country, and I do hope the Government stick to that and carry on with it more aggressively.

There is also the realisation, which some of us have been preaching for decades, that it is much better to intercept children before they become criminals, rather than to try and fail them afterwards. At the moment, we have a high crime rate. We catch a percentage of the people who commit crime. A percentage of those go to court. A percentage of those—the numbers are getting smaller and smaller—have their cases heard and brought to a conclusion. Of those, a percentage are convicted, of which a percentage are put into programmes for rehabilitation, a very small percentage of which are actually turned around into decent citizens. How much better to spend a fraction of that money on early intervention—and by “early” I mean very early. I was impressed to see that the Early Intervention Foundation runs a troubled families programme parallel to the one I have just described, which goes into families when the children are born. Its work has been shown by academic research to reduce criminality and increase productivity and the contribution made to society.

We have been asked to stick to 10 minutes. I may be becoming incoherent, but I am also becoming enthusiastic and I would like to go on. “Go for it”, I say to my noble friends on the Front Bench. “Get to our young people and see that they turn into decent citizens, not refugees from the police”.

6 pm

Lord Clinton-Davis (Lab): My Lords, several hours ago, the noble Lord, Lord Howell of Guildford, paid a deserved tribute to a friend of us both—the noble and learned Lord, Lord Howe of Aberavon. I can well remember when I was a commissioner in Europe that the noble and learned Lord was universally welcomed by people in the Commission and elsewhere. I think, therefore, that the noble Lord's tribute was well deserved, but there our partnership must cease.

Perhaps I may say to the noble Earl, Lord Howe, that I welcome his appointment. He is universally popular in this House. One of the things that endears him to us is that in his past role he was both critical and supportive, but what is most welcome about him is his integrity. I thank him very much.

There are three possibilities so far as Britain and the European Union are concerned. First, some who are known as Eurosceptics would assert that we should not be part of Europe at all, a view which I reject utterly. Secondly, we should accept Europe as it is, subject to minor amendments. The Prime Minister has declared that this is beyond the pale. The third possibility is that we should stay in the European Union but pretend that we can effect fundamental changes and reforms. I think that that is based on something of a pretence which is designed to mislead several sections of the Prime Minister's party and, more significantly, the British public. It is the route favoured by the PM, but I hope that, even at this late stage, he will move away from it.

It is now inevitable that we will have an in-or-out referendum on the EU, but is it right? There have been no basic changes to the European Union over the past few years, which represents an enormous obstacle to the Prime Minister's plans. Secondly, the Prime Minister, even now, is somewhat fuzzy about his intentions. I was a former commissioner in the EU, playing an influential role in helping to develop its policies. The amount of debate that goes on within the Commission is enormous and sometimes it prevails, but it does not always.

On EU law, it is often difficult to come to firm decisions. I know that only too well because I witnessed it during the time I was a member of the Commission. Everything proposed by the Commission is scrutinised by national Governments and Parliaments, by the European Parliament and its various committees, and by European Union institutions. To suggest that there is inadequate consideration is palpably absurd.

Of course, mistakes, however rare, can occur, but that also applies to national Parliaments, including our own, as we have seen from the present Queen's Speech. To withdraw from the European Union—this remains a possible route favoured in the main by Conservative Back-Benchers—would, in my view, be absolutely disastrous. Those favouring this course say that nothing very substantial would change. Frankly, I dispute that. It is both unrealistic and it plays with fire. Our trade with the EU is huge and it is put at risk by this sort of talk. Furthermore, we would have virtually no chance of influencing EU policies if we were outside it.

From an international point of view, this possibility of withdrawal is to be avoided at all costs. The United States and others have expressed the view that the possibility of our withdrawal from the EU is nonsensical. I agree. Britain would, of course, continue to trade whether in or out, with countries within the EU but our membership provides an invaluable link with other countries. It is indisputable that our EU membership is vital. Even Boris Johnson could not persuade otherwise. Trade, however significant, is not the sole criterion. From a political stance, Britain—a middle-ranking power—could no longer let its voice be heard if we moved to leave the European Union.

I have tried to present the reasons for staying in the EU and indeed, within the European institutions, which are not always part of the EU but play an invaluable role in framing our law. As a lawyer, I think that we have learnt a great deal from the EU and we have a great deal to impart to it as well. I hope, therefore, that we will not put this in jeopardy.

Lord Ashton of Hyde (Con): My Lords, can I remind the House of what the Deputy Chief Whip said? If we are to finish at a reasonable time—and, more importantly, have adequate time for Front Bench speeches—although I know that there is no advisory limit, it would be very much appreciated and helpful if noble Lords restricted themselves to about seven minutes.

6.10 pm

Lord Palmer of Childs Hill (LD): My Lords, I am the first Lord to speak with a restriction applying. I would like first to speak on defence. I hope that the

Minister will confirm in her reply that, in the uncertain world in which we find ourselves, the Government will keep to the commitment of spending 2% of GDP on defence. However, I hope that the Minister—I might say Ministers in this case—will go further and undertake to place in the Library a breakdown of that proposed expenditure for 2015-16 and 2016-17.

What concerns me is that without a detailed commitment there is too much scope for the battle cry to be, "Onward to creative accountancy". What is to stop the MoD meeting its target by moving heavy items of expenditure from one year to the next? In simple terms, what is to stop the bringing forward of expenditure of a new frigate or some F35B assault aircraft, and thus, with a flick of a pen—or nowadays a mouse—to meet the pledge, but not, as in the Conservative manifesto, to,

"maintain our world class Armed Forces",

so they continue to guarantee our security; or, as it said in the gracious Speech, to do,

"whatever is necessary to ensure that our courageous Armed Forces can keep Britain safe"?

The other minimal commitment in the manifesto was not to reduce the Army to "below 82,000". My questions to the Ministers are: what about the size of the Air Force and the Navy? Can we please have a commitment as to their size as well? In the reduced Army, how many officers are there at the rank of brigadier and above—and indeed, what are the comparable figures for the Air Force and the Navy? A simple calculation will show the number of such officers per 1,000 men and women. How does this compare with the forces of other active military nations—take your pick from France, the United States, Australia, Israel or Saudi Arabia? Can the Government justify any disparity?

We have heard and will hear of areas of concern to the UK defence establishment. In the rest of my speech I will highlight the lack of a realistic strategy regarding the ambitions of the Republic of Iran, which are a danger beyond the Middle East. We all hope for a diplomatic solution that will be durable and will ensure the prevention of Iran's warlike nuclear ambitions, but the parameters of the framework agreement with Iran fall well short of the goals originally set by the P5+1 and President Obama. There is much speculation about the differences that remain between the negotiating parties, which makes me anxious, as it surely gives Iran the space to push for yet further concessions in future talks.

I contest the argument made so often in your Lordships House that Israel is the source of all the Middle East's woes. Iran's regional ambitions are no longer just ambitions but reality. One needs only to take a snapshot of the region to see Iran's fingerprints in Yemen, Lebanon and Iraq. Iranian officials continue to sponsor terrorist groups, such as Hamas and Hezbollah, and, in recent months, have continued to incite acts of terror against not just Israel, but supporters of Israel across the world. I quote Mohammad Hossein Nejat, deputy commander of the Revolutionary Guard, who stated that,

"nowhere in Israel is safe now and the Israelis should wait for their death everyday ... the Zionists shouldn't feel safe in any part of the world".

[LORD PALMER OF CHILDS HILL]

He later added:

“Hezbollah and us are one single hand ... and anything that they do is as if we did it”.

Given the nature of the Iranian regime—its pattern of seeking to deceive the international community on its nuclear programme; its support for global terror and its regional ambitions to control; its repeated calls for a world without Israel; and its clandestine weapons efforts—I remain concerned about whether Iran will abide by any undertaking or treaty it makes, as has been suggested by other noble Lords, and whether any inspections regime will be sufficient to monitor its full compliance. The IAEA, which will be mandated to conduct the inspections, has faced repeated obstacles from Iran, especially when it comes to the possible military dimensions of the Iranian programme.

We are near to the lifting of sanctions. They will be difficult to put back in place should Tehran subsequently seek to violate commitments made, given the realities of co-ordinating with other countries. As Iran's economic recovery becomes more durable and its economy in general becomes less susceptible to the impact of what are called snap-back sanctions, where sanctions will be suspended and then reimposed—I cannot believe it—in the event of Iranian non-compliance, economic pressure will diminish as an effective tool to respond to non-compliance. Can the Minister say when she replies whether it will become more likely that the US, the EU and the UK will be forced to choose between either tolerating Iranian deviousness or deploying military force or some further diplomatic initiative or treaty, as was detailed eloquently by the noble Lords, Lord Ashdown and Lord Alderdice, to enforce the deal and prevent it unravelling?

The framework agreement entirely fails to address a number of critical issues, including Iran's development of ballistic missiles, human rights abuses galore and support of international terror groups galore. Indeed, negotiations in Switzerland occurred at a time when Iranian-backed Houthi rebels seized control of the Yemeni capital and Iran extended its presence in Iraq and attempted to establish a new front in the Golan Heights in co-ordination with Hezbollah. How can we be sure that Iran does not spend the reported \$30 billion to \$50 billion in repatriated escrowed oil revenues to fund terrorism?

Finally, can the Government comment on Iran's extensive ballistic missile programme—in effect, a nuclear weapons delivery system—which has been omitted from the nuclear agreement despite being in breach of United Nations Security Council resolutions?

6.17 pm

Viscount Craigavon (CB): My Lords, before addressing my speech on international development and DfID, I personally give my thanks to the noble Baroness, Lady Northover, for her sure-footed role and enlightened guidance over the years. We will miss her charming and persuasive Dispatch Box manner.

We are now grateful to have in this portfolio the noble Baroness, Lady Verma, who has been listening to this debate and demonstrated her experience in this field of international development early in the last

Government. We look forward to working with her. We should also be grateful to benefit from the continuing back-up of the same Minister, Justine Greening.

I should like to speak on the subject of population dynamics, which is the current phrase for the interaction of population with other factors such as conflict or climate change, and encourage the Government to go further in acknowledging the central role that population concerns play in so many areas of DfID's remit.

I have had the benefit of seeing the draft of a report on recent hearings by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Population, Development and Reproductive Health on population dynamics and the sustainable development goals, which will be published on 11 July, World Population Day. The final form of the SDGs are still to be negotiated in September this year at the UN. This Government have a good record in this but it is hoped that they can join, if necessary with EU partners, or take the lead in any negotiations to emphasise the importance of population assistance in so many fields and at least to hold to what have already been set out as targets relating to sexual and reproductive health and rights. The previous MDGs in this area fell far short of what was hoped for, but there is a good chance that these new targets are supported by strong indicators to measure their effective implementation. Also in that context, there should be an emphasis on better-quality data in future to help make the case and to underpin serious investment in this area; for example, data to help convince on the central argument of the extent of the unmet need for contraception, as well as to quantify the various shortcomings and conflicts that need our assistance.

There is no doubt that greater resources are needed in this field. In its annual report of 2013-14, the International Development Committee in another place concluded that it was,

“concerned by the reduction in spending in some areas vital to achieving key MDGs such as reproductive health and recommend that DFID significantly increase spending in this area”.

Regular international conferences, some in Europe, following up the International Conference on Population and Development's *Programme of Action*, have passed motions which recommend that at least 10% of official development assistance should be spent on reproductive health and family planning. Although we are better than many countries on this measure, which is difficult to quantify, we might now be nearer 7.5%. Such funds are money well spent and it is accepted that for every pound laid out on this, value of many times that is achieved. While focusing on these important goals, we should not forget the resource consumption and carbon emissions caused particularly by developed countries. For those who believe in climate change and global warming, these exacerbate the problems in many developing countries.

I congratulate the noble Baroness, Lady Helic, on her remarkable maiden speech, in which she underlined the area of conflict that is multiplied by shortcomings revealed in population dynamics. I hope that the Lords ad hoc committee that she has been instrumental in setting up can concentrate our focus on preventing sexual violence in conflict and helping to support its victims.

I very much support the speech of the noble Baroness, Lady Flather. One of her complaints was that there was very little mention of women in this debate. My final quote is actually from the Prime Minister, entirely on women, so I hope that gives her some comfort. It is from a very positive speech made by the Prime Minister at the 2012 London Summit on Family Planning. He said:

“When women have opportunity, resources and a voice, the benefits cascade to her children, her community and her country. So family planning is just the first step on a long journey towards growth, equality and development. But it’s an essential step—saving lives and empowering women to fulfil their potential as great leaders of change”.

I hope that DfID will forcefully continue to recognise and spread the vital role of reproductive health and rights in so many areas of its concern.

6.22 pm

Lord Selsdon (Con): My Lords, I admit that I have rather enjoyed myself today. It is a sort of day out. I feel in a rather difficult position because I have always believed that the United Kingdom is global but now, suddenly, someone is trying to confine this to Europe.

I will begin with a little quote that I like:

“Roll up that map; it will not be wanted these ten years”.

That was after the Battle of Austerlitz. The first question I ask myself is: are we European or are we solely British—are we global or are we insular? The short answer, as we have heard today, is that we are a global power or a global country and we must proceed as such. That leads us to the question: if we are not European, how are we global? Are we going to be confined by some demand of the public, which we had a few years ago?

As we come to the question of a referendum, I remind your Lordships that back in 1971, when we had a Motion on the,

“decision of principle to join the European Communities on the basis of the arrangements which have been negotiated”,

the Lords gave a majority of 89%; in the Commons it was 60%. That was a fairly strong response. Then in June 1975, when we had the referendum with the question:

“Do you think the United Kingdom should stay in the European Community (the Common Market)”—

as many of us preferred to call it—there was a total electorate of 40 million, a turnout of 64.5% and 64.5% said yes.

That meant that 66 out of 68 counties had also said yes and that it was only Shetland and the Western Isles which said no. At that time, Alec Home said:

“In this House and out of it, there is widespread recognition that we have reached the time of decision, and that the proper place for that decision to be taken is Parliament”.—[*Official Report*, Commons, 21/10/1971; col. 912.]

Callaghan also pointed out that:

“Tonight is no more than the first skirmish in the struggle, in the course of which we shall, I hope, by debate and discussion between ourselves, establish what is Britain’s correct relationship with Europe and what is our rôle in the world ... ahead”.—[*Official Report*, Commons, 28/10/1971; col. 2202.]

This great country of ours is, and has to be, global and one therefore almost has to ask, “Are we European or are we global and worldwide?”. When we look at

our trade, we have always had something of a deficit in our balance of trade in manufacturing. That is partly because we do not manufacture enough at home and have then been required over the years to import more and more. But when we look at invisibles and the service industries, we are far and away the most influential and dominant in the world. Again, I have been asked, “What happened to the British Empire?”. It did not suddenly dissolve. If I am asked, “Are we all British or European?”, the feeling I have is that we are not European but global. As my noble friend Lord Howell has made clear from time to time, surely we can count the Commonwealth and our relationships there as part of our network. To say that we are just a European country rather downgrades us, in a way. Where does Europe start and the Middle East begin? Where do things end?

I have found over time, as I have explained before in your Lordships’ House, that wise men used to choose young Peers who came in rather reluctantly and put them on to difficult little jobs. I was given the Middle East and told by Lord Jellicoe and Lord Shackleton, “My dear chap, get involved in the Middle East. It is going to take a long time to come alive but we would like someone to be alive at the time when that happens”. It was the same again with Lord Shackleton and eastern Europe. He took me with his team over to Moscow, where I had never been. We had to speak in the basement and then found that it had been bugged but he said, “Remember this: the Russians are no fools”. Today we look at Russia and ask, “Are we dealing with Russians or dictators? Is Russia a cultured country, or what?”. After that time, I had the privilege of going round most of it and I went to Ukraine. I sat next to Ukraine at a conference because UK and Ukraine went together, and the Ukrainian said, “We must do some things together. Why don’t you come and see what we can do?”. I went out and found that it was an extraordinarily interesting country. I have raised the point in the House before that when we went round the missile factories, we realised that they were in a very profitable and successful country but one dominated by a neighbour whom they did not wish to retain.

I will now sit down but I have a simple question. I believe that we are and should be global. I am very grateful to my noble friends here who have spoken in the past but they tend to be a little parochial, so in that belief, may I recommend strongly that we become a global nation?

6.28 pm

Lord Hunt of Chesterton (Lab): My Lords, first, I congratulate the noble Earl, Lord Howe, on his return to the MoD, where I worked for him when I was head of the Met Office, which was then part of the MoD.

The Queen’s Speech refers to some of the most dangerous issues facing the UK and the whole world, in climate change and the effect of nuclear weapons. On nuclear weapons, we have to consider their past, their present and their future. In his opening address the noble Lord, Lord Collins, emphasised the challenge of global poverty and population, which I will not discuss.

[LORD HUNT OF CHESTERTON]

I believe that the Government should do more to publicise and explain the vital role of international organisations in their work, especially the United Nations and the European Union. They could be more vigorous in doing so. Using these agencies is the responsibility of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, within which there was formerly something called the United Nations department, which we have debated here before. I was debating across the Floor with the noble Lord, Lord Wallace, on that question. This UN department co-ordinated the UK's role in the United Nations agencies. It is now called the international organisation department, because it takes a broader view of many other organisations, including regional organisations such as the Arctic Council and the European Union. I know something about that, having represented the UK in several such organisations, particularly in relation to the international environment, when I was chief executive of the Met Office.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office should surely also be a great promoter of the ideal of internationalism, as we heard this afternoon from my noble friend Lord Judd. Even though in our Prayers, as I noted yesterday, we pray for the Royal Family and for the Queen to vanquish our foes, we do not do much praying to get on with other countries. Perhaps we should change the order of the Prayers from the beginning. That might be an interesting development.

In other countries, of course, every aspect of international policy is more strongly led by Governments, for example in the cultural sphere, from language teaching to communications—although of course in the UK the BBC is at arm's length from government—education, foreign school visits and the twinning of cities. I put down a PQ about whether the Government are interested in the twinning of cities. No, they are not interested; it is nothing to do with the Government. Perhaps that could be changed. It is quite an important way in which people get to know each other and schools around the world communicate. Surely the event in the recent election campaign of a young pupil controversially talking to the shadow Education Secretary about his concerns about foreigners in the UK showed that these issues have to be considered very seriously.

The FCO also needs to be much more proactive in encouraging other parts of government to work with United Nations agencies. There is sometimes a rather snooty view that we do everything better in the UK and that we do not need to work with them. I believe that this is really important, particularly if we can provide more funding in a way focused to particular topics. For example, the amount of money spent by these UN agencies on water is very small indeed by comparison with meteorology, which is a bizarre choice, but that is the historical situation.

This is of course even more essential as the resources in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office have declined—a point made very strongly by the noble Lord, Lord Sterling, this afternoon. If we have a declining Foreign Office capability, and the privatisation or even decline of many of our laboratories, surely it becomes even more important for the UK Government to work in a very constructive way with these agencies and their experts. The amount of money being put

into these international agencies by other countries whose incomes are increasing, for example China, is of course becoming more important.

A recent House of Lords report on Arctic issues, *Responding to a Changing Arctic*, commented that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office does not have the resources to attend the meetings of the Arctic Council. The FCO said that it is not very important and it cannot do it. But it is interesting that, in some cases, non-governmental organisations from the UK are active observers in these UN or regional bodies. Perhaps that is a way forward if the Foreign and Commonwealth Office is so underfunded. Again, as the noble Lord, Lord Sterling, said—it is nice to quote from the other side of the House—other countries are rather surprised by the decline of the UK presence in these bodies. Indeed, remarks were made along those lines at a recent meeting of the Arctic Council.

Another reason why the UK should work with these agencies is their increasing technical ability. Again, as the noble Earl, Lord Howe, emphasised, 2015 is an important year for dealing with the big decisions in Paris to do with global climate change. This is the year in which, after many preceding meetings, there is going to be some attempt to derive targets. China, for example, was very reluctant to make climate change targets, but agreed that it would come to some agreement about them in 2015. The meetings earlier this year between the President of the United States and China were remarkable, and will perhaps be very helpful.

Of course, the important point is that this meeting will be held when there is great unanimity scientifically—even if not on all the Benches of this House. Indeed, the world's media now accept this situation. Noble Lords might be interested to know that I was interviewed two days ago by the National Public Radio of the United States about some issue of climate change in urban areas around the world. The reference they had was from an article in the *Moscow Times*. I thought it quite something when the US National Public Radio quotes the *Moscow Times*. I looked up the article and it was a repeat of one I wrote two years ago. The world has clearly become quite international.

We now need investment to deal with these problems at a very practical level. I hope that that will be the outcome of the 2015 meeting. I indicate to noble Lords the International Maritime Organization that sits across the river here. I am sure the noble Lord, Lord Sterling, knows a lot about it. It has a very important role in determining fuel consumption by shipping. Shipping now produces 15% of the world's carbon—and that may be rising. Of course, there are now regulations to do with that. Similarly, aviation has had a rise from 5% to 10% of carbon. If we can have non-carbon fuels, which British Airways and others are looking into, that would be important.

Urban areas around the world are increasing their energy use; it is estimated that Chicago will do so by 25%. Very practical measures are needed to reduce this, with new technologies for building. Of course, when it comes to the question of health, the World Health Organization was mentioned this afternoon by the noble Lord, Lord Crisp. There is also the Food and Agriculture Organization. These and all the other

agencies come to consult the different government departments in Britain, but they also ought to involve many other experts in the UK because these organisations will make the practical steps to deal with the climate change issue. It is interesting that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is attempting to co-ordinate the agencies' input to the climate meeting in Paris. I have spoken to two colleagues in the Foreign Office about this and believe it to be a very practical way forward.

On the one hand, the potential dangers of nuclear power are a major problem. On the other hand, the coalition Government put more effort into producing a UK nuclear policy. I believe that that is continuing. It is important to make full use of the International Atomic Energy Agency to produce a co-ordinated plan with other countries in Europe about a combination of nuclear power, a reduction of nuclear weapons and dealing with nuclear waste.

6.37 pm

Lord Hennessy of Nympsfield (CB): My Lords, I declare my membership of the Chief of the Defence Staff's Strategic Advisory Panel but I speak in an entirely personal capacity this evening.

Whenever I contemplate the task faced by the framers of the forthcoming national security strategy and strategic defence and security review—whether they be Ministers, officials or the chiefs of staff—I experience two things: first, a genuine pang of sympathy; secondly, an echo of some words of Winston Churchill's to a group of Conservative politicians with an interest in foreign affairs in 1936. This is what he said, and I promise not to slip into an impersonation as the sentences roll:

"For four hundred years, the foreign policy of England has been to oppose the strongest, most aggressive, most dominating Power on the Continent ... Thus we preserved the liberties of Europe, protected the growth of its vivacious and varied society, and emerged ... with an ever-growing fame and widening Empire ... Here is the wonderful unconscious tradition of British foreign policy".

Why the sympathy? If the drafters of the NSS and the SDSR 2015 suggested opening their documents with resolute paragraphs like that, they would be offered either gardening leave or counselling at the very least.

More seriously, the implication of the Churchillian insight is that while we like to think of ourselves as being guided by the drumbeats of our past which make us natural strategists, I have come to the reluctant conclusion that it takes a Kaiser, Hitler or Stalin to give us a malign threat against which we can organise and plan, shaped by Churchill's "unconscious tradition". Without that external mind-concentrator, we are prone to drift, laced with a tendency to preach above our weight in the world, which on occasion can so irritate other nations.

I am among those who still wish our country to punch heavier than our weight in the world where and when we sensibly can, with our allies—and so are the majority of the public, if an Ipsos MORI poll of last autumn is a guide. When asked whether the UK should still try to punch above its weight in the world, 52% of respondents said yes while 36% said no. Why am I with the 52%? It is not because I am suffering from an atavistic post-imperial spasm or from an itch after the amputation, as a friend of mine in the secret

world likes to put it, but for practical reasons, based on a belief that most of the time our special blend of hard and soft power can be of benefit to the world, as well as reflecting how we see ourselves as a people sculpted by a singular past, with special and valuable contributions still to come.

What might a swift audit of our assets look like? An array of superb Armed Forces—tributes have been paid to them from across the House today, quite rightly—seriously stretched, but studded with some world-class specialities. We have a top-of-the-range nuclear deterrent based on a very special set of deals with the United States. We have a considerable overseas aid programme; a top-flight Diplomatic Service; a position as one of only three powers with global intelligence reach; and a P5 seat on the United Nations Security Council—all this plus a rich barcode of cultural and soft power. There is the BBC World Service and the British Council and a goodly number of world-class universities, as well as a scientific research output out of all proportion to our size and wealth. That is still a very formidable list. Yet we may be drifting without prior thought towards a rim beyond which the world, and our allies especially, will realise that we are no longer the deployer of the influence that we like to imagine ourselves to be.

There was hardly a whiff of foreign policy or defence debate in the recent election campaign, as many noble Lords have pointed out; there was a howling silence. The great 19th-century historian, JR Seeley, noticed that we had acquired the imperial version of our great power as if in a fit of absence of mind; we could be about to lose what remains of our post-imperial influence with an equal absence of mind. Certainly, if we start to spend less than 2% of our GDP on defence, we will experience what my friend Professor Paul Cornish of the RAND Corporation calls "mission uncreep".

I finish with a few thoughts about a very real threat to our country that will appear in neither the national security strategy nor the strategic defence and security review, because it is simply too difficult. It is the possibility that by 2025, in just two general elections' time, we will be out of Europe, shorn of Scotland and a very different country strategically, economically and psychologically. I fear that an exit from the EU would trigger another Scottish referendum that would result in a vote to separate. Were that to happen, we would have shredded ourselves. That could be the kingdom to come, but we must not sleepwalk into it. The first people whom we have to defend ourselves against are ourselves.

6.43 pm

Lord Popat (Con): My Lords, it is a pleasure to follow the noble Lord, Lord Hennessy, today. This is my first opportunity to speak as a Back-Bencher for two years, and I very much welcome the freedom to pursue my own interests. The gracious Speech states:

"My Government will renegotiate the United Kingdom's relationship with the European Union and pursue reform of the European Union for the benefit of all member states. Alongside this, early legislation will be introduced to provide for an in/out referendum on membership of the European Union before the end of 2017".

[LORD POPAT]

The EU in/out referendum, and the prior renegotiation of our terms of membership, is likely to be the defining political issue of the next couple of years. It has certainly dominated our discussions here today. But it is also a form of navel-gazing, amending what we already have, rather than looking to our future economic and foreign policy priorities.

The majority of our future economic opportunities lie not in Europe, but in the emerging economies, and in particular in the emerging continent of Africa. As your Lordships' House will know, I am passionate about Africa's future. Africa and Britain have a great deal in common. This morning, my noble friend Lord Howell mentioned our shared history, language, rule of law, freedom, democracy and, most importantly, the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth binds us together.

We must wake up to Africa's potential. It is home to the fastest-growing middle class in the world and the population is expected to double by 2045. As has been well-stated, six out of the world's 10 fastest growing economies are in Africa, with economic growth averaging more than 5% in the continent, which is three times the European growth rate. Rapid urbanisation, along with increased GDP per capita, are creating a sizeable consumer class across Africa, which is in stark contrast to the economic performance of many European countries. As a continent, Africa represents one of the last growth frontiers in the world. In the past five years, we have increased our trade everywhere in the world. We have seized the initiative, particularly in Asia. Trade with China and other emerging powers is stronger as traditional partners have fallen behind. Yet here in Britain, we continue to view Africa through a time warp. This is a failure of successive Governments, who have focused on our aid commitments and the poverty of parts of the continent rather than on identifying trade potential. Our attitude to Africa has consistently been patronising and demeaning. With the exception of the extraction industries, British businesses have more often than not kept away, perhaps still influenced by the stigmas of the past.

I have been fortunate to have visited Africa on many occasions in recent years. Every time I am in Africa, I am repeatedly given the same messages: "We like you"; "We love you"; "We are part of your colony"; "We want to trade with Britain"; "You are our partner of choice, but we don't see you around". Our trade with Africa is worth around \$35 billion. Over the past decade, the countries that have spearheaded investment in Africa have been China and India, with Chinese-African trade at over \$200 billion last year. This is our failure. We are missing out on a chance to reduce our balance of trade deficit, increase prosperity and expand our diplomatic influence.

The difference between China and the UK is that our private sector is truly private. We have to do a much better job of convincing British companies to go to Africa. It is in their interest as private companies and in the interest of this country. We must show our private sector the opportunities in Africa and work with it to enter those markets. A major part of our foreign policy must be to reintroduce and rebrand Africa to the British business community. Some of the

Government's actions since 2010 have been steps in the right direction: boosting UKTI's presence and resources, the appointment of trade envoys, restoring our focus on the Commonwealth at the FCO and the opening of five high-level prosperity partnerships in Africa. These are all encouraging, but they are baby steps in comparison to what really needs doing.

Last year's US/Africa summit hosted by President Obama in Washington was perhaps the most prominent recent display of interest in African opportunities. It was a clear demonstration of commitment to a great continent of opportunities and an acknowledgement that trade will always have a longer-lasting impact than aid in building a country. Yet again, a competitor is getting in ahead of us, even though we have a substantial African diaspora in Britain that we can tap into.

I urge Britain's business leaders and the Government not to get lost in the minutiae of European negotiations, and to give some thought to a report released by Deloitte at the end of 2014, *Africa: A 21st Century View*. It stated that Africa's middle class is expected to increase to more than half a billion people by 2030. All those people could be buying British goods and services. If they did, it would bring incredible wealth to our great country—considerably more than any European settlement can manage. It is time that we sensibly thought about the future and embraced modern Africa. Let us stop talking about our aid commitments and poverty, and instead seize our opportunity. If we do not do it now, we may well be too late.

Finally, I pay tribute to the Minister, my noble friend Lady Anelay, who is a friend and mentor to me. I will forever remain grateful to her for providing the opportunity to allow an African refugee such as myself to serve in Her Majesty's Government.

6.51 pm

Baroness Falkner of Margravine (LD): My Lords, I start by welcoming the noble Earl, Lord Howe, to the foreign affairs and international defence portfolios. It will be a busy time for him, given the state of the world as we find it, but I am sure that he will bring his usual verve to the Dispatch Box. I also congratulate my noble friend Lady Anelay on coming back to this brief. Foreign affairs always benefits from a level of continuity, but I have to say that I found her to be an exceptional colleague, and I put on record my thanks to her for the many years that we worked together. I know that I speak for many noble Lords in this House when I say that across the Chamber we appreciated her initiative of having an informal advisory group of Peers, who were able to speak candidly to experts in the Foreign Office and other experts and explore foreign policy below the Dispatch Box-level. I hope that that practice will continue, because we very much appreciated it over the period we had it.

I cannot but say what a magisterial maiden speech we heard from my other friend, the noble Baroness, Lady Helic. Over the past five years she was the Foreign Secretary's emissary—that is the word I would use—to the Liberal Democrats, and she did a great job of keeping harmony in the coalition's foreign affairs team. We had a few disruptions over the European

Union and the endless referendums that were proposed, but she was incredibly diplomatic and really helpful, and represented the very best of cross-party working that is achievable in this House.

I should say to her that I came here as a migrant as well—an economic migrant, in more benign circumstances than she did, and in the 1970s, some years before she did. I can only echo what she said about the fairness, tolerance and decency that those of us who arrive here find in this country. The two greatest privileges of my time in this country have been the pursuit of citizenship, which I obtained through naturalisation, and membership of this House. It is a privilege to reflect on that, having heard her express similar sentiments today.

I turn to the two significant themes running through this debate—and I will be very brief. First, on the Middle East, one of the reasons we have failed to think through an effective long-term vision of our interests in the Middle East is that, as several noble Lords have mentioned, our diplomacy was constrained by the most ill-advised appointment of modern international relations: that of Mr Blair as the Quartet representative. It was bound to fail because of who he was—we have heard much about who people are, and their backgrounds—and because of the narrowness of his remit, and that narrowness was designated as such because of who he was.

The second major flaw in our Middle East strategy is the lack of the publication of the Chilcot inquiry. It was the Liberal Democrats in 2009 who said to the then Labour Government that an inquiry of that scope and ambition could not successfully take place with any speed at all. I argued in this Chamber that we needed to have a two-part inquiry. Had we done so, now—some six years later—we might have had some method of ascertaining what our strategy should be towards the cauldron which the Middle East has now become. Alas, it was not to be.

The Queen's Speech has also spoken about Britain's role in the stability of the Middle East. I say to the Government that it will be on their watch in 2017 that we will have the centenary of the Balfour Declaration—100 years of the slow and painful erosion of the rights of those living in Palestine. I can only echo the comments of my noble friends Lord Alderdice, Lord Ashdown and others in their analysis of what damage is being done to our reputation as a UN Security Council permanent member by hitching ourselves to the US's coat-tails in not awarding recognition to a Palestinian state. It is nearly 100 years since our attempts to help one people resulted in such palpable injustice to another, and that must weigh on our contribution to what can no longer be described as a peace process.

The other aspect of our lack of strategic depth was mentioned by the noble Lord, Lord Williams of Baglan, and a few other speakers in this debate, and that is the strategic instability that we are seeing in Sino-US rivalry in Asia. The era of Deng Xiaoping's advice to the Chinese people to hide their light and bide their time is over. It was Henry Kissinger who, in writing about the rise of US power in the late 19th century, said:

“No nation has ever experienced such an increase in its power without seeking to translate it into global influence”.

What we are seeing in the rise of China and the consequent geopolitical upheaval will affect us all. This will not be a far-away country of which we know nothing and from which we can remain detached.

In 2013, the announcement of an air defence identification zone in the East China Sea was an attempt to “control” rather than merely “influence”. We now understand that China wishes to extend it to the South China Sea. Alongside this, we have Chinese attempts to reinterpret the legal understanding of national exclusive economic zones. So, while the general legal understanding is that international freedom of navigation is guaranteed within the 200 nautical miles that countries identify as their exclusive economic zones, we have attempts by China to redefine this in the South China Sea, where China has numerous territorial disputes with its neighbours and wishes to “control” freedom of military navigation.

China's fear of US intrusiveness may well be justified but my point is that miscalculations and misunderstandings have the potential to create conflict. We, as a permanent member of the Security Council, cannot stay aloof from this. Therefore, in setting a strategy, it is incumbent on the Government to create a national understanding of the meaning of security beyond the economic sphere. In doing so, they need to start a national conversation about security having costs—costs that sometimes entail sacrifices in other areas, be they health, education or even the national religion of the United Kingdom, the NHS.

Yet beyond expert debates in this House and in the outer reaches of Whitehall, the debate about longer-term changes to the international order has barely started. As Mark Twain is reputed to have said, “History does not repeat itself, but it does rhyme”. It is the role of government to be vigilant to that tune and to prepare the country for it.

6.59 pm

Lord Rosser (Lab): I begin by expressing my personal appreciation for the very good working relationship that I had with the noble Lord, Lord Astor of Hever, in his capacity as Defence Minister. Like others, I welcome the noble Earl, Lord Howe, to the interesting combination of new positions that he has just taken on in your Lordships' House, and the noble Baroness, Lady Anelay of St Johns, in her continuing role as Foreign Office Minister. I also congratulate the noble Baroness, Lady Helic, on her powerful and moving maiden speech, which has rightly been so well received.

This has been a thoughtful and thought-provoking debate. It covered a number of different issues that have a common theme in that they relate, to a greater or lesser degree, to what the United Kingdom's current and future role in the world at large should be and how that role should be carried out in relation to the resources that can reasonably be made available.

One such issue is our membership of the European Union and the Government's intention to hold a referendum. We will support the Government's Bill, although we also want to see 16 and 17 year-olds have the right to vote in that referendum and thus have a say on whether our country should remain in the EU, just as they were given a say in Scotland on whether or

[LORD ROSSER]

not to remain part of the United Kingdom. We believe that it would be better for Britain if we stayed in the European Union, but we believe in a European Union that is rather more than simply a free trade area. Millions of UK jobs are dependent on the trade and investment benefits that we gain from EU membership. However, the European Union has also, for example, helped to raise labour standards, including the right to paid holidays and to equal treatment for part-time workers. Measures and standards protecting and furthering the safety, rights, interests and quality of life of European Union citizens, both inside and outside the workplace, do not normally constitute unnecessary bureaucracy and regulation; they are an integral part of the concept of social partnership, which to date has been a key building block of the European Union.

It remains to be seen what changes and reforms will emerge from the negotiations that the Government intend to have with our European partners. The Government apparently intend to keep such matters to themselves. I think that the noble Earl, Lord Howe, referred to the key roles of the Prime Minister, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Foreign Secretary, who would, he said, consult the Cabinet and their Conservative Party colleagues. There must be a possibility that although there may be a similar call from a majority of political parties, including the governing party, for our membership of the European Union to continue, the arguments advanced for so doing may not be quite so similar. Whether, if that happens, it will increase or decrease the prospects of securing a yes vote remains to be seen.

The Government have made a commitment to undertake a full national security strategy and strategic defence and security review and do whatever is necessary to ensure that our Armed Forces can keep Britain safe. We depend on our Armed Forces to a greater extent than is sometimes recognised and acknowledged. We express our gratitude to them for their commitment, which, despite issues over morale, to which reference has been made, extends literally to putting their life on the line on our behalf and accepting in serving our country the potential prospect of fatal or life-changing injuries.

I noted that in his opening speech the noble Earl, Lord Howe, said that he could not say too much about the SDSR at this stage. I would like to ask, then, whether the Government intend to issue a Green Paper on the strategic defence and security review in order to promote the widest possible national consultation and debate prior to final decisions being made. If not, by what means do the Government intend to ensure that there is an open and inclusive national debate on the security and defence challenges now facing our country and what needs to be done to meet those challenges? Also, when would such a debate have to be concluded to meet the Government's timetable for finishing the SDSR? To what extent will the forthcoming strategic defence and security review be financially driven as opposed to being strategically driven?

The Prime Minister has previously stated that the size of the regular armed services will be maintained and that the regular Army will not be reduced to below 82,000. In the light of the noble Earl's slightly

vague comment that the Government will continue to recruit the regulars and reserves that we need, does that commitment by the Prime Minister still stand and does it extend to implementing the previously declared objective of increasing our Army Reserve to 30,000, or is the future strength of the Army Reserve one area where further defence cuts are going to be made?

There were no specific legislative proposals relating to international development in the gracious Speech, but in its election manifesto the Conservative Party undertook to uphold the commitment to spend 0.7% of gross national income on international development. My noble friend Lord Collins of Highbury raised a number of points about the direction and objectives of our approach to international development to which I hope the Minister will respond. In particular, I ask her to say whether universal healthcare will be a clearly identifiable goal for the Government at the forthcoming negotiations in September in New York at the United Nations sustainable development goals discussions. I hope that she will also respond to the point raised by my noble friend on the need to ensure that the progress made in September in New York is clearly linked to the work and objectives of the UN Paris conference in December on climate change.

In his opening speech, the noble Earl, Lord Howe, referred to a number of foreign affairs issues of importance to the Government, as have many other contributors, including securing peace and security in Syria and Iraq, the defeat of ISIL, stability in Afghanistan, Ukraine, Israel and Palestine, and the nuclear programmes of Iran and North Korea, as well as a major EU-India trade deal and the strengthening of our economic links with China.

On Syria and Iraq, the fall of Ramadi and Palmyra has called into question the effectiveness for whatever reason of the Iraqi and Syrian armies. As the noble Lord, Lord Avebury, said, the US Defense Secretary has been quoted as saying that the Iraqi forces showed "no will to fight". Is that a view that the Government share?

A UN Security Council report has stated that there are more than 25,000 "foreign terrorist fighters" involved in jihadi conflicts,

"travelling from more than 100 member states".

It seems that the number of such fighters may have increased by more than 70% worldwide in the past nine months and that they pose,

"an immediate and long-term ... threat".

The situation in the Middle East is a major cause for concern, as we seem to be faced not only with the disturbing activities of ISIL and the consequential implications for security in this country but with the apparent reality that two of the region's main powers, Iran and Saudi Arabia, are now involved in a quest for regional supremacy, and over Syria in particular.

On the other side of the world, China has announced a military strategy to project naval power well beyond its own shores, affecting the overlapping claims involving several regional powers in the South China Sea, one of the world's busiest shipping routes.

The Government have said that they will continue to support the Iraqi Government and the Iraqi Prime Minister. Can the Minister say whether the Government regard support to date as having been effective and

what, if any, new or extended forms of support will we provide? The Government have also said that they will continue to seek a political settlement in Syria. What progress has been secured by initiatives in this regard to date and are any new initiatives or actions being considered?

As a nation we need to continue to ensure that any potential aggressor knows that, if attacked, we have the ability to hit back quickly and decisively, but, as has been said by a number of noble Lords in today's debate, we have a key role to play in world affairs and in helping to address or defuse situations that represent hardship and a threat to the lives of innocent people, or a threat to our security and that of others whether directly or indirectly.

We cannot and should not opt out of our responsibilities, but nor can we act alone. We need to work with and through our allies, through other countries as appropriate and through international organisations to achieve objectives that will help to end hostilities and tensions and create the better and safer world that so many are denied and crave and desire above all else.

7.09 pm

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Baroness Anelay of St Johns) (Con): My Lords, it is a privilege to be able to close this day's debate on Her Majesty's gracious Speech. Today's debate has yet again brought into sharp focus the range and scale of the challenges facing us all around the world. We can and will have a stronger voice for our nation on the world stage. We set out our action plan in our manifesto, and, as we made it clear:

"Our long-term security and prosperity depend on a stable", rules-based,

"international system that upholds our values".

Our eight-hour debate has been packed with insights and expertise. Rather like the coastal birds I watched at Brancaster on the north Norfolk coast last week, after an eight-hour debate I need to float across the surface—at my weight that is difficult—and dive down to gobble up some tasty morsels, but for the moment, I will have to leave the rest for another day. In answering some questions today, others will not go unanswered. I will seek to address them over the weeks ahead. Indeed, some I know are already the subject of Questions tabled for next week and Questions for Short Debate. Additionally, I shall ensure that we have the opportunity for a full meeting on the European Union Referendum Bill shortly after Second Reading in another place. It is right that noble Lords around the House on an all-party basis have the opportunity to question me and officials on that matter. I assure my friend the noble Baroness, Lady Falkner of Margravine, that indeed the foreign policy network will continue. I will consult the Front Benches about expanding the membership of that appropriately.

The Department for International Development's success in tackling global poverty is world class and should be a source of pride for our country. It is not just the right thing to do; it is of benefit to the United Kingdom, and some of our press should take note of that. Our recent leading role fighting Ebola in west Africa clearly illustrates the ways in which our aid

directly protects Britain from harm. We have delivered on our promises to meet the UN target of 0.7% of national income as aid and to enshrine this in law. That law takes effect next Monday.

The UK will continue to place girls and women at the heart of international development and humanitarian aid. The noble Baroness, Lady Cox, described conditions in Sudan and South Sudan and painted a clear picture of why international aid is necessary. But there are sometimes problems with delivery. She asked me specifically about cross-border aid into two areas, South Kordofan and Blue Nile. We are deeply concerned by the ongoing military activity in those areas and we have consistently called for humanitarian access. But I am afraid that we judge that the risks of providing cross-border support to be high due to the limited number of implementing partners and our inability to assess or monitor the programmes. However, we are keeping this policy under constant review and are working to develop an in-depth understanding of the humanitarian situation. I repeat my continuing admiration for the noble Baroness's work in those areas and in Burma.

It is clear that we have a duty with regard to delivering programmes on health. I can say to the noble Lord, Lord Crisp, that by 2020 we have pledged to immunise 76 million children against killer diseases, saving 1.4 million lives. Projects such as that are crucial across the development agenda. As noble Lords have pointed out, 2015 is a vital year. We want the post-2015 agenda to eradicate extreme poverty and put the world on a path to sustainable development by 2030. As the noble Lord, Lord Rosser, and others rightly pointed out, it is the year of the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris. It is essential that we not only press forward on both those projects but look at them in a complementary way so that we are sure that we can achieve our goals. Certainly, the post-2015 framework will complement the work of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change with a stand-alone goal on climate change and relevant targets throughout the framework. The UK supports strong integration of climate sustainability—the noble Lord, Lord Hunt asked about climate sustainability—across the post-2015 framework, including the target of holding the increase in global average temperatures below 2 degrees centigrade.

The United Kingdom will continue to push for a strong and explicit gender equality commitment and a strong and explicit commitment to the empowerment and realisation of the human rights of women and girls in the post-2015 framework. This is a top priority for the United Kingdom.

Earlier today, when referring to the work of the MoD, my noble friend Lord Howe explained that to protect our citizens and country, we will keep our Armed Forces strong. I will not repeat all the statistics he gave, but he made it clear that we will keep to our commitment to the NATO defence spending target of 2% of GDP this year, and that, of course, we cannot make clear future spending until after the spending reviews. The same work has already begun on the 2015 SDSR. It will report in due course, and consultation is now afoot. We are preparing to consult

[BARONESS ANELAY OF ST JOHNS]

a wide range of stakeholders. Several noble Lords, including the noble Lord, Lord West, asked about that issue.

Trident was not mentioned in the Queen's Speech simply because legislation is not required, but we will protect the independent Trident deterrent. A minimum continuous deterrent at sea of a four-submarine platform will also secure thousands of jobs here. I hope that that confirms what my noble friend Lord Trefgarne wished to hear; indeed, I made such an announcement recently at the RevCon in New York.

We will also strengthen defence partnerships—from NATO to the Gulf and Asia. My noble friend—he is still a friend—Lord Wallace of Saltaire asked specifically about Bahrain. Coalition throws up many challenges. The one thing it brought me that was of more value than almost everything else was being able to work with him. I treasure that, and learnt a lot from it. I know that he will keep testing me, and we will have different views on things, but I wholly respect his point of view. He asked who is paying for the base at Bahrain. Bahrain has made a significant contribution to the cost of the new facilities, which will provide a bigger base for ships on operations. The UK is paying for the running costs of the base; the Bahrainis have placed no conditions on its usage.

My noble friend Lady Hodgson of Abinger asked whether we include protection of civilians training at MoD in operation orders. It is inculcated in all military training and is fundamental to how the UK military perceive their role. Routine training and operation orders do indeed include protection of civilians. We are rightly proud of our Armed Forces and all that they are able to deliver in protecting our country.

We are determined that the FCO, too, must have the right tools for the job. Our diplomacy will be as important as ever in tackling the challenges and maximising the opportunities to come over this Parliament. As noble Lords have pointed out, there are challenges aplenty. Today, we have indeed introduced the European Union Referendum Bill in the House of Commons, and our priority is to renegotiate the UK's relationship with the EU and achieve reform of the EU for the benefit of all member states, followed by an in/out referendum by the end of 2017. The details will be a matter for later discussion, but I can say yes to my noble friend Lord Trefgarne—Peers will have a vote.

The Prime Minister is determined to make the EU work better for people across Europe. He has launched intensive negotiations with European leaders. Broadly, the issues for consideration are sovereignty, competitiveness, fairness—particularly between eurozone and non-eurozone states—immigration and welfare. We are realistic about the challenges ahead, but we are confident that, with good will and understanding from our European colleagues, we can indeed find solutions that address the concerns of the British people and improve the EU as a whole. I can say yes to my noble friend Lady O'Cathain—the Government will make the results of the negotiations widely available to all.

Several noble Lords raised the issue of ISIL and extremism. Perhaps I may say at this point that I am grateful to the noble Lord, Lord Hylton, for his letter

and for the points he made today. We will be considering carefully his practical suggestions, particularly those which followed from his recent visit to a difficult area—Syria. I can also say that of course it is essential that the UK remains at the forefront of international efforts to degrade and ultimately defeat the real threat posed by ISIL, al-Qaeda and affiliated groups. In October last year I said in this House in my first Statement on these matters that this is not a matter of now or next year, it is a matter for a generation—something which the Prime Minister has made clear. We are not going to be discouraged from that path.

I was asked about our extremism strategy. It was delayed for the usual procedural reasons during the period leading up to the general election, but it will now be published and taken forward over the next several months, and I would expect the main findings of the Muslim Brotherhood review to be published alongside the extremism strategy.

As well as playing a leading role in the global anti-ISIL coalition, we are working hard to degrade ISIL's flow of finance and foreign fighters, and to counter the twisted narrative that ISIL promulgates around the world. As I always do, I listened to every word of the noble Lord, Lord Alton, when he talked about the depravities of people who use the excuse of religion to carry out almost unbelievable atrocities. I would also say that our work includes the reconciliation work referred to by the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Coventry. We will work tirelessly with partners and the United Nations for political solutions in Syria and Iraq. Over the past year we have contributed significant aid to Iraq and Syria, and we will continue to do so. That is vital not only to relieve the acute suffering of the Iraqi and Syrian peoples, but to protect British nationals at home and abroad from this grave threat.

Some Peers referred to Russia and Ukraine. We remain firm in standing against Russia's illegal actions, and Her Majesty's reading of the gracious Speech yesterday made that clear. We do not seek confrontation, but we will continue to engage to resolve the issue of Ukraine. Further, although it is not business as usual with Russia, it has to be business on several levels, particularly when we are talking with Russia at the United Nations on other matters. It is essential that the Minsk agreements are implemented in full. We are also providing technical and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine, but we are of course insisting that there should be reform of its signs of corruption, too.

Several noble Lords referred to issues around migration. We are determined to take a comprehensive approach to dealing with the migration crisis in the Mediterranean. The deaths of thousands of migrants have shocked and saddened us all, and the immediate priority is to save lives. What is HMS "Bulwark" doing? More than 700 people have already been rescued and the ship continues its work in support of the Italian rescue co-ordination centre in Rome. However, we must also address the crisis at source. We need to destroy the trafficking and smuggling networks that are run for vast profits by those who have absolutely no care for human life. We need to step up our work with transit countries to strengthen their borders, and we are involved

in ongoing discussions with the Libyan authorities on just that matter. We need greater engagement with source countries to address the reasons why people feel compelled to undertake such hazardous journeys. Finally, we need an effective, humane programme to return migrants who have no legal basis to stay in the EU, otherwise it will be unfair to those who are yet to make the journey. When do you say, “No. You are the 1,001st. We will let you suffer in the Mediterranean”? That is not the responsible way to behave. We have a proud history of offering asylum to those who need it, but I agree with my noble friend Lord Marlesford that a mandatory system of resettlement is not the answer to the current crisis.

Several noble Lords raised the issue of Palestine and Gaza, and we will have Questions on that next week. I will say again that we remain committed to a two-state solution. It is the best way to deliver peace and security for both the Israelis and Palestinians. However, we would like to see an agreement that ensures that Hamas and other militant groups permanently end their rocket and other attacks on Israel and that Israel ends its expansion of its illegal settlements—illegal in international law.

I was asked by the noble Lord, Lord Collins, and others, about Iran. With regard to our negotiations, we are very hopeful that they will come to a proper conclusion after the technical stage. They have been very tough, but whatever happens when we reach that conclusion, one can be sure that verification on a continuing basis is core to securing that successful agreement. That is essential for the safety of us all. The noble Lord, Lord Alderdice—again, I want to call him a friend—was right to draw attention to the importance of working with Iran. We should not simply wait until all is resolved and then dive in. Any relaxations of sanctions must wait until we are sure of the deal and that it is being adhered to. Clearly, there is also an important role for our actual relationship with Iran. Certainly the work done by the FCO and DfID in the background is to try to work on human rights.

In the coming years we will continue to champion freedom of religion or belief at the Foreign Office, including support—I can say to the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Southwark—for persecuted Christians in the Middle East. Where freedom of religion or belief is protected, extremist ideologies should not be able to take root. The noble Lord, Lord Wallace, asked about our interface work. It will continue—even stronger than ever.

We will continue to champion women's rights around the world. We know that women and girls are powerful agents of change and of peace. We know that the wounds of sexual violence cause not only untold suffering but undermine prospects for peace. I add my voice to others who have paid tribute today to my noble friend Lady Helic and the work that she has

done, and particularly to her maiden speech. I also pay tribute to my former colleague William Hague. They ensured that the United Kingdom has led the world in tackling sexual violence and conflict. Our manifesto is clear that we will continue this leadership. I can assure noble friends and noble Lords generally that we will do just that.

The Foreign Secretary has today asked me to lead FCO efforts to ensure that the agenda is prominent in all our international work. I will travel to Geneva next month to discuss our future programme with the ICRC and the UNHCR, and I look forward to meeting the United Nations Secretary-General's special representative on sexual violence and conflict shortly. We will continue to pursue the work vigorously, and when I say that it is what I mean.

I was asked other questions with regard to other areas, which I think I might just be able to squeeze in. The noble Lord, Lord Hannay, asked about United Nations security reform with regard to the appointment of the Secretary-General. I can say that we want to seek consensus about the appointment, but on his very first day in his post our new ambassador to the United Nations, Matthew Rycroft, engaged in work which shows that we will be taking a leading part in ensuring that there are changes whereby clear deadlines for candidates to declare themselves should take place, and that the selection process should be more transparent. There should be encouragement of greater scrutiny of candidates and it should promote more applications from women.

The noble Baroness, Lady Cox, raised Burma. We continue to remain supportive of the peace process and welcome the progress made towards a nationwide ceasefire and political dialogue. We have no second thoughts about how difficult this will be and we are ready to assist where we can. It is a matter on which we are providing expertise to broker a deal between the various parties and we regularly discuss the peace process with the Government.

Throughout this debate, colleagues around the House have asked, “What is our future?”. Our ambition for people around the world is the same as for our citizens. Those who work hard and do the right thing should be rewarded wherever they are. Everyone should feel safe to pursue their aspirations wherever they might be. Our nation's security and prosperity can be guaranteed only if there is sustainable growth and stability around the world. We stand ready to protect our citizens; to ensure that work on sustainable development goals goes forward; to ensure not only that climate change is taken seriously but that we achieve a resolution at the end of this year; and to ensure that this country is what it is—Great Britain.

Debate adjourned until Monday 1 June.

House adjourned at 7.30 pm.

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