



CHATHAM HOUSE

Chatham House, 10 St James's Square, London SW1Y 4LE
T: +44 (0)20 7957 5700 E: contact@chathamhouse.org.uk
F: +44 (0)20 7957 5710 www.chathamhouse.org.uk
Charity Registration Number: 208223

UK and the World Conference Transcript

The UK and the World: Rethinking the UK's International Ambitions and Choices

Session 4

The UK as a Global 'Thought Leader

13 July 2010

The views expressed in this document are the sole responsibility of the speakers and do not necessarily reflect the view of Chatham House, its staff, associates or Council. Chatham House is independent and owes no allegiance to any government or to any political body. It does not take institutional positions on policy issues. This document is issued on the understanding that if any extract is used, the speaker(s) and Chatham House should be credited, preferably with the date of the publication or details of the event. Where this document refers to or reports statements made by speakers at an event every effort has been made to provide a fair representation of their views and opinions, but the ultimate responsibility for accuracy lies with this document's author(s). The published text of speeches and presentations may differ from delivery.

Alex Evans

On my right, first of all, Ngaire Woods is the Director of the Global Economic Governance Programme at New College, Oxford. Next to her is, Simon Anholt, who invented the whole concept of nation and place branding, and is one of the founder members of the Public Diplomacy Board at the Foreign Office. On my left is, Nick Mabey, a founder and now the Chief Executive of E3G, Third Generation Environmentalism, a consultancy that's making a lot of the running on international climate change, and other areas of global risk. Camilla Toulmin is the Director of the International Institute for Environment and Development, and next to her is, John Ashton, as I mentioned, the Special Representative for Climate Change at the Foreign Office, and also, like Nick, a founder of E3G. So that's enough from me, we've got five minutes per panellist before we open up for discussion, and I'll hand over first to Ngaire.

Ngaire Woods

Great, thank you, and thank you to Robin and all of the staff here at Chatham House for putting on such an interesting day. Let me start with what we mean by thought leadership, because I think there is a certain line in British History that takes us back to the post-war negotiations on global governance, which depicted the negotiations at Breton Woods as the moneybags and the brains. So the depiction was, the United States was there with all the money and Britain was there with all the brains. It was a negotiation between the US officials on the one side and, of course, John Maynard Keynes representing Britain on the other, and this idea of the moneybags and brains, I think takes us to two issues central to today's discussion, and they are the two points that I will speak to.

The first is that we really do need to sharpen, and innovate, and take forward the brainpower, and the brainpower sharpening that Britain does, and can do. And the second is that we really need to move beyond the complacency of the moneybags and brains relationship, the transatlantic relationship, in the way in which we think about global governance, and in the kinds of thought leadership that we offer on global governance. Those are the two issues that I'd like to say a couple of words about today.

So the first is really about the brains and sharpening the brains, and here I speak very much as somebody who sits at Oxford University. Britain has four of the world's ten foremost universities, and I guess, as I'm a New Zealander by origin, sitting in Britain it's always surprised me about the extent to which,

Britain slightly seems to underplay and underestimate its leading universities' role in the world. That sometimes, even sitting inside Oxford, it feels like the British class war is more important to thinking about what Oxford should do and could do, than Oxford's role in the world as one of Britain's strongest exports, in so many different ways.

There are three ways, in particular, I think, that we should revalue and reorient policy towards Britain's top, world competing universities. The first is picking up from this morning's point that Britain's competitive edge, when you look at the profile of the British economy, is in high-end services. Training the whiz kid financiers, and not just them but the lawyers, the accountants, the media and design professionals, the architects. It's training Brits to do these roles that feeds Britain's economic competitiveness. That's clear.

But a second reason to really support Britain's top universities is the extent to which we're training foreigners in those skills. And why is that important, because by training foreigners in a British context, we're actually implanting a future demand for British services. If you look around the world at the many different countries in which Britain has trained leaders, you'll find an extraordinary recourse to British ways of doing, and that is actually an important part of Britain's competitive edge in the services sector. And a third way, very obviously, is that it's a very significant foreign exchange earner for Britain. The fact that some two-thirds of the Oxford graduate community are from overseas is a huge earner for Britain, not just for Oxford.

So indeed, in one set of conversations I had with senior Chinese officials about the School of Government that we're building in Oxford, whereas most governments are terribly keen to be involved, to buy places, if they can, in the new School of Government, and to have their officials trained there, one of China's most senior officials looked at me, and said, ah, you're just trying to keep your market share in global education markets. He saw it entirely as, sort of, Britain clinging to this important share. But I think that all those roles, buttressed by other roles, the training of people to work in the NGO sector, and so forth, that we're going to hear more about on this panel, means that we've got to think very seriously about two sets of policies that are putting Britain's top universities at risk. One is the funding decisions that are now being made, and the impact they will have down the road.

We've been down this road before. In one of the sessions here at Chatham House, we had a former Minister for Higher Education and Funding who deeply regretted the cuts he'd been in charge of in the 1980s, and their subsequent impact on the British economy, and on British industry. We are about to head

down this road again, and that's a cause for pause, but the second policies that are starting really to affect us are the immigration policies. We have to be able to invite and bring to Oxford, and other top universities, the very best talent from all over the world, and it cannot be that our immigration rules only permit us to invite Americans, and other Europeans. It's really important that we bring to top meetings, Indians, Brazilians, Nigerians, and we are increasingly finding that whether it's the senior scholars, or the junior students, it's almost impossible to bring them, in a timely way, into Britain. So the immigration policies have to be better tailored, to achieve that goal.

The second point I'm going to make, just briefly, is about the new thinking on global governance, moving beyond moneybags and brains to a new kind of global governance. I disagree with Jeremy. I don't know if he's still here. Jeremy Greenstock put to us this morning that we can safely ignore the reform of formal global institutions. Let me just offer you a reason why we should not do that, and that's that until now we've been able to exist, the British economy has been able to exist in a liberal hegemony. We've heard a lot about it today already, a British/American condominium, which has kept free markets open, and so forth. That's been the [sound slip] hastened by the financial crisis, because it's not just about the rise of emerging economies, it's now an assertiveness coming from Brazil, from India, Russia, and from China, about different kinds of institutions, and different ways to run economies.

But what's interesting about those economies is that all are open economies. They all rely, sorry, on open markets, so we have shared cause with them in trying to keep markets open. What they've made very clear and will make even clearer over the coming year, is that they are not prepared to be rule takers of rules that they are not party to making. They are not prepared to be rule takers, and to have rules enforced by institutions in which they don't have a voice. In other words, we've moved to the mosaic world that was mentioned this morning, and that requires us to put serious thought leadership into how to reconstruct these institutions. Without those institutions, we'll simply move to a world of regions and much more nationalistic economic systems. We've seen this morning that that's not going to suit the British Economy.

If we're going to piece together rules that have real buy-in from the new emerging economies, these institutions will need rethinking in three areas. We have to rethink representation. We have to give a rulemaking capacity to emerging economies, if we want those rules to apply to them. We have to rethink surveillance, and information. We are still locked into an old-fashioned multilateral model, and we have to rethink collaboration between public and private, as well as between smaller groups of countries, in global governance.

I think there's a lot of work to do there, in thought leadership terms, but it actually needs a sharpening of taste [?] in Britain.

Britain has had really important contributions to form an agenda in each of these international organisations. This is a moment for it to seriously upgrade that thinking, to take on this mosaic world that is going to be a more complicated one for cooperation, but I would urge you not to be complacent about that and to think, well, let's ignore it. It's hard work trying to reform the Security Council, trying to reform the [sound slip]. Many British officials have beaten their heads against brick walls for many years, but that doesn't mean that we can afford to leave it to one side. Thank you.

Alex Evans

Thanks, Ngaire. Simon.

Simon Anholt

Well, what I've got to tell you is normally in a three-day residential seminar, so I'm going to gabble as I've never gabbled in my life, and apologies in advance for that. My subject is the reputation and standing of nations, and of the UK, in particular. This is a subject that I've been researching for quite a few years, so some of the research is in your folders and you can look at that. It may be mysterious without commentary, but you can always write to me if you are mystified. What I've concluded from this research over the last ten years, and over advising governments on the same matters for about 20 years, is that reputation is quite clearly, in many senses, any nation's most valuable asset. Its standing is an asset of enormous value.

I've also discovered that it affects everything that a country does. Countries with a good reputation find that everything is cheap and easy, and countries with a weak and negative reputation find that everything is expensive and difficult. What this means, in effect, is that governments in the modern world have to become, to some extent, brand managers. They have to understand the nature of their good name, or bad name, or weak name, how it came about, how they've earned it, or failed to earn it, and how they can continue to earn it in the future. The world, I've discovered from this research, looks to most people a little bit like this map here. There are no borders, there are no names, and several quite important and interesting little places don't even exist, like the

Faroe Islands, and the Maldives, which are noticeably invisible. I've been playing this game all morning, and lots of countries aren't there.

In fact, the reality, as the survey shows, is that most people only ever think about three countries, their own, a tiny bit, America, a tiny bit, and whichever other country happens to be in the news at any given moment. This basically means that 203 countries effectively don't exist, as far as public opinion is concerned. Now, the UK's reputation, to summarise outrageously, is very, very good indeed. We are admired, we exist, we are one of the top three, generally speaking, in my study, every year. We also have a remarkably balanced reputation. Another thing I've discovered from the survey is that most people in most countries, instinctively, when they are thinking about other countries, put them in one of two baskets, a basket marked decorative, and basket marked useful.

If you separate out the two scores for those, you find that the smallest differential between those two is that which belongs to the UK. Which is just another way of saying that you can statistically justify the claim that the UK maintains a very effective balance of soft and hard power. So how does that excellent reputation...? Oh, by the way, the other thing I discovered is that people almost never change their minds about other countries. Almost never, they are remarkably robust, and that's because reputations of countries are extraordinarily large, robust, deeply rooted cultural phenomena, which people don't change. Which is why I detest the phrase nation branding, as it seems to imply a promise that if you don't like your reputation you can fix it with a logo. Clearly not the case, nations are judged by what they do and by what they make, not by what they say about themselves. So how well does the UK's reputation stand us, in what stead does it stand us in the future when we're facing the challenges we've been speaking about today?

The answer is admirably, but I think that we need to take a look at just how we are regarded, and see how that configures us for influence, or power, or getting our own way in the world in the future. Quite clearly, it supports the kind of future for the UK we've been talking about today, a future based on value-added services. A future based on a diplomacy, which is a kind of diplomacy of service, and there's no shame in that. Rather than going around telling other countries how we think they ought to behave, we should do what marketers do. Marketing is a very wise science. It knows the most important rule of all humanity, which is, before you want somebody to do something you have to ask yourself what they might want from you.

Some of our most effective international engagements have been those where we've started off by asking ourselves what the others want. And then with our extraordinary degree of expertise in so many areas of service provision, in academia, in climate change, in technology, in governance, in civil service, and so on and so on and so on, the creative industries, and all the rest of it, we provide the solutions that other countries still, in many cases, are not able to provide themselves to such a high degree of quality. That, to my mind, is our future, making ourselves useful around the place, and thus acquiring influence by doing so.

Moving from a model where we exercise power by entitlement, in a kind of inherited aristocratic way, to an age where we have to earn our good name every minute of every day by the value that we provide. I think we are extraordinarily well equipped to do that, and to continue to do it. As I go round the world advising governments on these questions of national standing, I feel more and more optimistic, because what I've noticed is that public opinion, with all the force that public opinion wields in global affairs, is behaving towards governments, and towards countries today, as it's got into the habit of behaving towards corporations.

Corporate social responsibility was a revolution. Even if one is a sceptic about it, and one says that perhaps only 25% of the companies that now preach the triple bottom line and social responsibility are actually being sincere, that's still a revolution by any standards. It's particularly a revolution, because of a delightful consequence of human nature, which is that if you win a good reputation, even by false and hypocritical means, as soon as you've won it you start to treasure it, and you'll do almost anything in order to maintain it, because you've fallen in love with the feeling of being admired. Now, corporate social responsibility, I begin to see, has its exact counterpart on a much larger scale, let's be phrasemakers and call it governmental social responsibility. And why wouldn't it be so?

The same consumers who won't buy Nike shoes, because they believe they are made by children in Thailand, also will not go on holiday to country Y, because they don't like country Y's stance on climate change. This is the way the world is going, and a more benign, more benevolent, more caring, more consumer oriented foreign policy is the way to win the reputation that every country needs, in order to achieve its aims in the world. There are only two objections to this model, or rather, two challenges to us continuing to take our place in this world order. One is that in order to be leaders in services, and to be able to provide those necessary pieces of advice to other countries, we need to invest constantly in education.

The plummeting standards of education in our country, at the moment, the prospect of my children's generation running the country, on the basis of knowing almost nothing, really seriously worries me. So unless we start investing in a really substantially changed way in education and research, we cannot perform the role that is the only role currently on offer for us. The other thing, of course, is that we need to be, as a country, properly set up to take control over our reputation. To manage it, lest international public opinion, ignorance, and the United States of America take control of it for us.

Nick Mabey

I'm just going to talk through five simple things, firstly a bit of anti-revisionism, and then some of the themes about this issue. I want to talk about having one leader, about alignment, not instrumentalism, walking the talk, and then some future priorities. A lot of this is based on my time in government, and my first one is to say, despite the flavour of having a new government in power, I think we should acknowledge that the Labour Government was incredibly successful in thought leadership, on things like debt, and aid, and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, and responsibility to protect, (also it had its failures on thought leadership), mainly by ad hoc groups of people around the centre reorganising themselves around particular ministers. It wasn't very planned, but it was certainly more successful than its peers, its country peers, including the US, at the time, so it shows we can do it, and we didn't have to be that organised to do it.

We need to be more organised to sustain it, and perhaps avoid mistakes, and that's the first thing, more than one leader. Thought leadership sounds very individual, but actually, if the point is, in a multi polar, complex, interdependent world that needs more innovation, alliances, and particular conversations, and we all know that, for more thought leadership you need more than one thought leader. So how do we generate more leadership from more countries, particularly starting in Europe, for example? We need more leaders in Europe to take hold of things, and so in the UK you have to think more than just the thought leadership piece.

I'd like to think of being a pathfinder rather than being a thought leader. You know, steering people through obstacles, taking away the burden of innovation from them, but also, catalysing their activity and building the coalitions. You can only do that in a few areas, but you need others to do it, so the first one is you have to think of this as more than one leader, otherwise we risk being seen as arrogant, which despite the good polling, is actually defining the impression

of the UK in the world. Especially to the emerging economies, and in particular, India, the country we have declared we want a special relationship with, that's probably the best way to make the Indians never want to have a special relationship with us. And it's the most abysmal piece of diplomacy I've seen in my life, and my wife is Indian, so that's kind of... but it's not been unnoticed in India.

The second one is alignment, not instrumentation. We know UK thought leadership has been at its most powerful when it aligns broader assets, to use the uncomfortable word in UK society [unclear] higher education elsewhere. But the thing is, you can't deploy the authority of universities, or scientists, NGOs, or other people, you have to have an aligned agreement. Actually, if you look where we were successful over the last 13 years, it's been when a coalition has been built between individual insiders and outsiders, whether they were ministers with CEOs, or groups, or officials with activists, and driven, actually, usually by the outsiders. So aid was driven by poverty, history, Gordon Brown and Clare Short's commitment personally, debt, Jubilee, the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, and Global Witness.

Climate change was incredibly successful when it was driven by UK science, and was a nightmare when civil society coalitions failed to come together. Actually, government worked very hard to try and make civil society coalitions work better, but the civil society coalitions couldn't. Responsibility to protect, as well, I think, failed from having a civil society champion with a government champion, so you have to get that right, the insider outsider relationship. And lastly, walking the talk, and again, thought leadership is the first stage but it only really works when it's backed up by action, by the 0.7% commitment, by debt relief. The Climate Act was a great commitment on climate change. It was totally undermined by a lack of delivery on things like renewables, and energy efficiency at home, in terms of its impact, and just recognising that in some of our traditional areas we've got some weaknesses. I think the UK has no thought leadership left on the economy, if you talk to people in the emerging economies, not the transatlantic alliance where perhaps...

The issue of the financial crisis, the rise of the Chinese model, and a complete lack of strategic economic policy capacity, which is actually what's driving the major new economies, means we are in a very poor position to thought lead. So, in Europe we argued forever that the renewable obligation was a great policy instrument, and we're still denying that all the evidence shows that the Continental view on feed-in tariffs was a different instrument, which wasn't classically economically correct, but actually delivered on time, more efficiently

to cost. And you will still find UK officials who think that's a wrong answer, even though it's been proved by reality.

On security, we also often overestimate our thought leadership. Perhaps it's because the only thought leader is the US, really, when we're honest about it, but I think we need a lot more thought leaders on security if we're going to have the kind of security conversations we need. The one area I would say we've been powerful in is in things like the conflict prevention. Of course, some of our innovation and institution has been very powerful, and I think one thing to realise is pragmatism is a very powerful part of the UK thought leadership, and our constitutional flexibility, i.e. we haven't got one, which allows us to innovate and change institutions on foreign policy issues. And where the US, Germany, and others have huge barriers deliberately constructed in their constitutions not allowing whole of government approaches. There is a huge advantage there, because we can actually do what they struggle to do.

So where to go forward on this? I think you can see that thought leadership is a powerful and dynamic force, which could be harnessed to a strategy, as opposed to intermittently successful but ad hoc efforts. I think it works if it's seen as part of a systemic shift in an approach to global affairs, not a tactical way to deliver in national interest, because then you are instrumentalising again, and you can't align your forces around a kind of narrow definition of an interest. These are just bigger coalitions. Mobilising UK assets, this is as much about listening as coming up with clever ideas, and we need to do a lot more listening, to find out where those alliances lie that allow leadership to emerge, rather than thinking it's all about cunning policy papers. If government wants to do this, as Alex said, it will need to work in a very different way.

There is a load of areas in which we could do this, and some of the trickiest, I think, are areas like multiculturalism, gender and sexuality in foreign affairs. I think that's one of the difficult areas we're struggling with in Afghanistan. How do you convince people to intervene in countries where we fundamentally disagree on value systems around gender and sexuality, and attitude towards ethnic minorities that is the norm, not the exception, if you think of difficult areas, if you want to do thought leadership that's where you could go. Where will we do this, where do we have a place, and where are we humble enough to stand back and let other people be thought leaders, without thinking we always have to get a seat at the top table, and we will support them to help them drive that forward? Thank you.

Alex Evans

Terrific. Thanks, Nick. Camilla.

Camilla Toulmin

Good afternoon. Two years ago, a friend and research colleague of mine said he was looking for a new job, and he wasn't going to look for that new job in London he was going to look for it in either, Beijing, or Seattle. Essentially, that statement and choice brought home to me the fact that, as Ngaire rightly says, there's this very close link between moneybags and brains. Yet at the same time, London has managed to retain a very strong central role in the field of international development and environmental debates. And we should remember that the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation recently opened their European office here in London, so somehow, even though we may not have a huge amount of the money, our brains and intellectual assets continue to play an important role.

I wanted just to say a couple of words about the organisation for which I work, and the broader ideas business in which the UK is, and I hope will remain a key player. The International Institute for Environmental Development, IIED has its origins 40 years ago in the rise of environmental research and understanding from the late 60s. It's got its head office in London, and a small office in Edinburgh, but we don't have offices anywhere else in the world, because we work through partner organisations. We don't need to be in the UK, less than 10% of our money comes from UK sources, yet the UK is a very good place for us to be

That's because London has the most tremendous concentration of research centres, universities, other NGOs, and parts of government that are very open and sympathetic to the kinds of aims that we have. You had only to see what happened in 97 when Clare Short took over the Department for International Development, to see it had a revolving door between DFID and a whole number of different parts of the academic and NGO community. So our business, if you like, is very much a question of generating and infiltrating ideas into government, business, media, and civil society, bringing evidence from practice, and trying to document what works on the ground.

Why do people and organisations in middle and low-income countries want to work with a group based in London? Well, I think it's partly access to new thinking and ideas, the platform that London provides for an exchange between people that may come from many different parts of the world. It's an arena in

which you can talk, discuss many different things. I think London provides a kind of network, a Diaspora of people and ideas that spans the whole globe. London also has access to some of the top media, whether it's the BBC, the FT, the Economist, and so on, and I think that London is central to a whole publication and communication set of activities that offer great value to people coming from middle and low income countries, who want to have access to some of the main international development agencies in OECD nations. London provides that platform.

This morning, Jeremy Greenstock said, events not ideas matter, it's events that bring change not ideas, and while that may be true, in terms of short sharp shocks that come from events, I'd argue that ideas and a generation of ideas are key in that longer term framing of how we look at the world, and how we try to change the design of institutions for dealing with some of the difficult problems that we have. But ideas are closely linked to economic power, and I think it's important to ask ourselves if we no longer have that economic strength, both in the UK and in Europe, more generally, and in the West, how strong will our ideas be seen to be in other parts of the world? That's one question I have.

The other is that ideas really need to be closely attached to practice if they are to have much purchase. As Nick said, ideas need to have some backing with clear evidence of action. When politicians stand up and say Britain is at the forefront of the Green Economy it sounds great, and almost by saying it you could wish it to be true, but it's empty and hollow unless you can point to very specific things that could confirm such an ambition. And as our friend from the German Embassy showed us before lunch, we are not able, in fact, to document the kind of investment that we're making in that field.

So ideas don't exist in a vacuum. London has been a great centre for thinking, and Oxford. Forgive me, when I talk about London I mean London and the broader association of UK centres, for thinking on, particularly, international development and the environment. And it's interesting that despite many of us being in London, there is relatively little connection that's been made between the financial and business capital that we have down the road, and the intellectual capital that we find within these organisations. But as I say, as economic and political powers shift, particularly to the East, so will the power of ideas, and the framing of global problems that these new economic powers will generate.

So, we were asked how can the UK leverage its soft power to promote its vision? Let's take its key assets in the soft power game, the world of ideas, to

be in the think tanks, the NGOs, the universities, and research organisations within Britain. As Ngaire rightly argues, over the next 20 or 30 years we really need to make the most of our university and research sector. Some of that is about resources, investing in education, as Simon said, but it's also about encouraging this open platform for people to be able to meet, to argue, to contest their visions of the world. And to raise the visa problem again, just to push that a bit harder, that creates multiple problems for that open platform. So much so that we are now organising events in the Netherlands, because it's part of the Schengen Zone, and that makes it easier for many of our colleagues from different parts of the world to come together and meet, and talk.

Finally, I think we need to be better at describing this world of ideas. So that we can argue for why it really matters in the future of the UK and Europe, to help us frame the debate and to help influence the design of policies to cope with the big problems that we face, both at local, but also at global level. Thank you.

Alex Evans

Thanks, Camilla, and finally, John.

John Ashton

Thank you. It's hard to follow all that, but I will try. It's a tired, it really is a tired debate, isn't it, that we have again and again, and you can see it, sort of peeping out around the edges of the agenda for these two days. Are we at the top table, or aren't we at the top table? Are we punching above our...? Well, I'm not sure how we punch while we're at the top table. That's mixing our metaphors. Should we or shouldn't we be? It's not the issue; it's not the thing that should be at the centre of our debate about British foreign policy.

The issue that should be there is the issue that will determine whether taxpayers, who pay for our foreign policy, receive a useful return on the investment that they make, or not. And that is what are the conditions, the global conditions that we need to secure in order for British people to be secure and prosperous, and what are we, the UK doing to make it more likely that we will enjoy those conditions? That's really the only issue, it seems to me, particularly in an interdependent world, an open global economy.

The UK has quite a large interest in an open global economy, a global economy where the dominant dynamic is one of cooperation rather than

competition, particularly in relation to energy, and other resources. A scramble for resources is not good for the UK. A successful response to climate change, rather than an unsuccessful response, because if we have an unsuccessful response it will actually amplify some of those other negative dynamics. That's the set of issues that we need to focus on, and can we bring them about? And if we can have a positive influence on securing those conditions then I think we will justify, if you like, a way of thinking about ourselves that does put us somewhere near the top table. And if we can't, then actually the rest is just like moving deckchairs around on the deck of the Titanic, to take another metaphor.

That's the issue, and thought leadership is right at the heart of that, because a lot of the assets that the UK can bring to bear, and my colleagues up here have mentioned many of them, are thought leadership assets in pursuit of securing those global conditions. For me, thought leadership is not just about good ideas in speeches, and articles, it's a much stronger, richer, but more sophisticated concept. It's about how do we use soft power? We have a lot of soft power in this country, if we think about it, and how do we use it as a precision instrument, in order to secure the conditions that I'm talking about? How do we use it to set the agendas that will drive the politics towards those conditions, to shape the narratives that will bring the right people to the table and build the coalitions that don't yet exist?

It's all of that, and as Nick and Camilla have just said, that's not just about what we think. It's not even just about having thought what we say to other people, it starts with what we do, because if we're not doing it, I can certainly testify, from my experience in the diplomacy of climate change, it is just a waste of time asking other people to do it, not to put too fine a point on it. I think that in the area of climate change, the UK has generated a record of achievement, which certainly confirms to me that it's worth the effort to invest in the kind of thought leadership that we're talking about. The British Government, and actually, others in the British climate change conversations set out several years ago, very consciously, very systematically, to shift the core narrative about climate change away beyond the environment and into the economy, and into security, to enrich them.

Yes, of course there's an environmental debate, but it's not just about the environment it's about prosperity, security, and equity as well. There was a systematic effort to do that, and although that's still work in progress it has unleashed some very powerful new political forces, and I think it has been relatively successful. The Secretary General of the United Nations, I'm told, tells people that he thinks the UK is not just a leading voice on climate change,

it is the leading voice, and people pay more attention to what the UK says on climate change than to others. That may or may not be true, but I think it's certainly arguable.

In 2005, the year in which the UK held the Presidency of the European Union, and the Chair of the G8, there was an active effort, starting with the conference some of you may remember, the science conference in Exeter, to get climate change out of the middle pages and on to the front pages, off the agenda of just environment ministers and on to the agenda of leaders. And actually, that's when it came on and it's more or less stayed there. It might be slipping back a little bit this year, after Copenhagen, but it was a relatively successful effort. In 2006, the British Government commissioned Professor Nick Stern, as he then was, to open up the debate about the economics of climate change. He didn't win that debate entirely, but he created a very powerful new battlefield in the battle of ideas about climate change, a very powerful new lever.

In 2007 the UK took climate change, for the first time ever, to the UN Security Council. We had the first ever so-called, climatic debate, in the Security Council at that time, and it was the most heavily subscribed climatic debate that has ever taken place in the Security Council. More people, more countries participated even than in the famous debate initiated by Dick Holbrook about HIV in 2000, or 2001. That opened up a security salient, and actually started to mobilise a debate in the security establishment in the US, which was one of the things that we were seeking to do with that initiative in the first place. I think there is a track record of achievement of trying to move the limits of the possible, trying to extend the limits of the possible through thought leadership, which should encourage us as we look at the challenges ahead, and in the area of climate change the challenges ahead are absolutely formidable.

The tide has gone out following Copenhagen. I have the privilege of having just been appointed to my role by a government that wants to be seen, looking back, once it's established a track record, as the greenest British Government ever. Camilla is absolutely right, it's not just enough to announce yourself as the greenest government ever, you actually have to do it, but on the other hand, I would rather be working for a government that wanted to do it than one that didn't. In fact, I wouldn't be working for a government that didn't. At least you have a basis, and also, I think that... Different people may have different views about this, but my view is that it is a real one, the attempt is going to be a serious attempt, not a superficial attempt, and for all kinds of reasons, not least because of the importance of this issue in the politics of the coalition.

Above all, thought leadership on climate change, we need it to become the dominant view that the kind of global economy that we are seeking to build in the next phase, the kind of economic recovery that we're trying to build coming out of the continuing economic crisis is a low carbon recovery. Because if we don't do that we can forget about the climate negotiations, we can forget about, more or less everything else we do. We need the decisions that are taken about infrastructure, about policy choices, of one kind or another, in the core economic debate, to be decisions that build us a low carbon economy rather than a business as usual economy. And that has to start with thought leadership, which in turn, as I said, has to start with what we do, not just what we tell other people to do.

The real issue isn't the quality of our ideas it's actually about confidence. For those of us who have the privilege to work in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, as I still do, we look around ourselves every day and notice that this is a building that was not built by people who had a high degree of diffidence about their ability to shape the world in British interests. Now, times have changed since the FCO was constructed, and as I said at the beginning, there's a lot of agonising now about whether we should come out of our, sort of, post imperial fantasies, and accept our rightful place as a much less influential, much less significant middle ranking power. Well, if we do that then I think we can be pretty sure that we won't enjoy the global conditions that we need.

We can be pretty sure that British taxpayers will get less than the return they deserve on every pound that is invested in our foreign policy apparatus, and I think the challenge for this community is to re-establish the confidence to use the reach, to use the assets that we have. That's not just about the British Government it's about a much wider community of people, whose views shape foreign policy. That's why I welcome the initiative that Chatham House has taken, of which this conference is part, because I think this is a conversation we need to keep on having. Thank you.

Alex Evans

Great, well, thank you all very much. We've got just under 25 minutes for discussion, so I'm going to ask questioners to keep their questions brief, and also to identify themselves and their organisations. And in the time honoured fashion I'll take them in threes, so who would like to go first? The gentleman there, by the microphone.

Peter Marshall

My name is, Peter Marshall. I'm an old-age pensioner. Three quick points, and first, the discussion this afternoon has been an excellent example, surely, of what Mark Malloch-Brown was talking about this morning, of smart power as distinct from hard power, or soft power, in other words, the practical application of soft power to achieve specific objectives. Secondly, as regards Professor Woods' point, Jeremy was talking, I think, about getting the maximum practical relevance out of institutions, as being more important than reforming, and according to some plan of what might correspond to current needs. I think that is a question of balance, because, of course, its existence and the continued authority of the institutions obviously contribute to the rules-based system on which we depend. As a third point, I do very much agree that you've got to think specifically about thought leadership, and of course, one area of this, and again this conference is an example, is the management, the practical management of international business, what I would call diplomatic grammar.

Alex Evans

Thank you. The gentleman over there.

Muhammad Abdul Bari

I think overall, even after losing the Empire, Britain has maintained its lead in thought leadership in many areas and the speakers have mentioned this, in publishing books, universities, and in many areas. There are one or two areas I must mention, and do not underestimate the damage that British foreign policy has done to this, because of the thoughtless foreign policy, following America, and also some of the thoughtless antiterrorism measures, and being a bit narrowly focused.

The reason it's important is the thoughtless foreign policy, and invasion of Iraq, and also, antiterrorism measures have alienated the Muslim population and, in fact, the whole of the Western world, and then certain sections of the media have worked to more or less undermine the Muslim community. Where the Gallup Poll says the Muslims are the most loyal citizens in this country, the recent Global Poll [?] that says that Muslims are probably [unclear] people, is a very negative image. What I'm saying is that this is going to have a ripple effect in the Muslim world, in the Third World countries, and in the Commonwealth countries, and gradually, if we don't address this issue very,

very seriously, gradually it can chip away at the thought leadership of Britain in the world in the future.

Alex Evans

Thanks very much, and then lastly, the gentleman in the second row here, who co-edits the blog that I also edit [?].

David Steven

David Steven, from New York University. I just think one thing I'd like to put to the panel is that actually, this is a period where we don't know what to do. We've been through a period of quite a clear global consensus on a number of problems, and now we face issue after issue, where you look at the store cupboard of ideas and it is pretty much bare. Whether that's the financial crisis, what to do on climate after Copenhagen failed, and fragile States, or nuclear proliferation, the list goes on, and I think we're going to see quite a profound crisis of authority. We are going to find it very hard to get out there and prophesise in the way that we have done during the Labour years. I don't think that means we should stop. I'm quite with John there that this work is even more important, but I wonder what style of thinking, what style of thought leadership we need in an age of uncertainty?

Alex Evans

Great. Thanks, David, and, Robin wants to jump in on this before we go to the panel.

Robin Niblett

If that's all right? Robin Niblett, Chatham House, and I wanted to piggyback a little bit on David's point, rather than leaving it until the next round of questions. It strikes me that a lot of Britain's thought leadership, as described over the last five to ten years, occurred during the times of plenty, and the times when government intervention, and the prospects of government intervention, whether in aid or in the climate change solutions that were being proposed, were possible from a financial standpoint. That the government could very much take the lead in an activist way, and I think this is what David was saying.

The transition, perhaps, and we heard a little bit about this in some of the earlier sessions this morning, was moving to a role where the private sector takes a bigger role.

Somebody noted that's where the money is right now. It's not with the government it's potentially hoarded, in some cases, in parts of the private sector. How does one make that transition, so that the thought leadership, or the thought responsibility if we're talking about government social responsibility...? We're back with the companies, perhaps in some areas, but not from a social responsibility standpoint, but from a point of view of business return, being involved in some of the development, climate change, and other big challenges?

Alex Evans

Thanks. Okay, panel, over to you, and if you could aim to speak for just a minute or two each, so that we can do another rounds of questions, that would be great. Ngaire, we'll start with you.

Ngaire Woods

Well, some very good questions. I guess, on the question of where we've got to, and a couple of people have raised financial regulation, and the post financial crisis, and post-war on terror, to me, the positive opportunity that comes from Britain and the United States, each being forced to engage in a very different and more inclusive multilateralism, is that it offers a way to reinforce them against being simple exponents of special interests within their own countries. We see this really in financial regulation, where the easiest conversation is actually a transatlantic one. Where, on the positive side there's been a transatlantic opening up of a little bit more space for governments to discuss regulation, but where the size, the resources, the information of the financial sectors in the United States, and in Britain, end up pushing each of those governments to the lowest possible sort of denominator of policy.

I think we've seen this very clearly in Britain, where the extraordinary resources and thought leadership that the banks have been able to purchase, has actually ended up being very powerful in framing the government's policies. So there, in my view, if you look at the wider British interests, there is an interest of the wider tax paying Brits that Britain be involved in those negotiations with China, with Brazil, with other countries, who bring different stakeholder

interests to the table. Countries, who don't have big open financial sectors, but who have really suffered from this financial crisis, and therefore, who come with a more robust attitude towards regulation. So I think there is actually a rebalancing role that the international negotiation can play for the British Government operation, in itself.

Alex Evans

Thanks, Ngaire. Simon.

Simon Anholt

I'd like to respond to Doctor Abdul Bari's point about the reputation of Britain in the Muslim world. It's one of the great injustices, or perhaps from our point of view, justices, about having a good and solid reputation, that it does protect you to an extraordinary degree from censure. It's a little bit like one of those huge diesel generators that they have outside office buildings, to keep the lights on for a little while when there's a power cut, and your reputation, because there's such an enormous lag between deeds and perceptions of deeds, we get away with it. Not forever, but there's a little moment of grace there, and you can see this quite clearly from my survey, and from other surveys. If you look at the impact that the invasion of Iraq, for example, had on the reputations of Britain and America, it's a quite extraordinary and shocking thing. I hesitate even to tell you about it, but it benefited our reputation.

Now, that's partly because public opinion likes to make comparisons, and there was an easy comparison made available to them, which was the Americans were the baddies, and that we were a little bit better in some ways. Perhaps it was something more to do with the fact that it reminded people that we think we are important, and therefore, perhaps we might be important. I don't know, I'm only guessing here, because, of course, people don't give their reasons in a survey. All I can say is, whether we deserved it or not, these cataclysmic negative effects on our reputation, as a result of mistaken foreign policies, are never quite as bad as we expect them to be. Amongst elites, certainly, elites can change their mind from one day to the next. They are very well informed, and they are very quick to change their opinions, but the mass audience that I'm concerned with is extraordinarily slow to change its opinion.

It might also interest you to know that during the six or seven years now that I've been running this survey, by an enormous margin, an enormous margin,

the most admired country of all the Muslims in my survey, which was in a great number of countries, has been the United States of America. That has been their number one country since the beginning. It's never wavered. Everybody else stopped liking America under George W Bush, and it recovered under Obama, but the Muslims have been steadfast in their admiration of America. Go figure, as they say, one would need to look in more detail at the numbers, to see it. But reputation is a strange, strange beast, and it sometimes does what natural justice would suggest is the wrong thing.

Alex Evans

Thanks. Nick.

Nick Mabey

Moving to David's point, what kind of...? I think you're right in this uncertainty. Two suggestions, one, dialoguing, not campaigns, so going and talking to other countries and other groups, and saying, okay, we didn't agree to solve climate change at Copenhagen. How much climate risk are you prepared to take? What's your risk threshold? I know what mine is, and let's have a discussion about this, and with the public a much more discursive conversation, where it's not asking people it's drawing them out. The second one is demonstration, not analysis. The UK changed, I think, 60% or 70% of global electricity systems through privatisation, through the model it developed here. Well, we are just about to redo that model, because it won't deliver a low carbon economy, to produce a low carbon liberalised system. Perhaps that will change the same number of systems and be a model around the world?

The second one on Robin's points, I think we did a lot of stuff with public money, and a lot of private money during the period of prosperity, and we're not going to get that lassitude again. That's very clear, but I think we should really... When I was in government, trying to do public sector reform in the foreign policy sector, it was very clear that no one had ever done public sector reform, particularly on Cabinet Office, or Foreign Office. The Health Service went through it all the time, everybody else went through it, but actually, these people didn't. The understanding that you have a public sector reform process through our foreign service was not for the likes of us, and actually, this is the opportunity to really do it. We could do so much more with the money we have, particularly the money that DFID has, on conflict prevention, on really getting to move on climate change. On leveraging that money through a green

investment bank 35 or 70 times, instead of spending it one time through a bad process.

Let's really use this, and let's make our international policy as open to criticism, and modern methods of dialogue as the poor people on the front line of public services domestically. Because it really is amazing, the disparity between the focus on teachers, policemen, and hospitals, compared to the performance of our international policy civil servants, who really get away with basically no scrutiny.

Alex Evans

Camilla.

Camilla Toulmin

Yes, David, your question was on the sort of trauma, post Copenhagen, that I think a lot of people in our sector have been suffering. I suppose what we are thinking in that mode is that we've got to try and run with something else, given that I fear the climate change negotiations may hit the doldrums, a bit like the WTO has. What kind of new idea might, not just the UK promote but a much broader spectrum of countries and interests, and that has to be the green economy. It has to be some kind of low carbon growth set of measures that are grounded in some very practical examples of what that might mean. And I guess our particular interest is to make sure that that's not just green economy that makes sense to OECD countries, but also translates into the interests and priorities of low income countries, and some of the least developed countries like, Mali, and Mozambique, not just countries in Europe and North America.

So I think we always have to be ready to go "Hmm, well, that didn't work, did it? Now how can we pick ourselves up and run in a slightly different way, in a different vehicle, but find other opportunities to pursue some of the same interests and concerns that we've got?" You know, we've got Rio plus 20 coming up in 2012, and while my heart sinks at another big global jamboree, these do offer platforms. They offer opportunities for bringing people together from every single part of the world, and it's that much flatter network and coalition that I think we need to be continuing to maintain, and build.

Alex Evans

John.

John Ashton

I think that David Stevens is absolutely right, but in a more fundamental way, perhaps, than others have touched on. Nobody is on the case. Nobody is on the case. We are living under conditions, which are fundamentally different from those that drove the world even quite recently. The tightening of interdependence, the way in which our destinies are woven around the world together in ways that we actually haven't really begun to understand yet, and how that plays into the politics, not just in the international conversation, but domestic politics in countries. And then secondly, the shift from globalisation under conditions of abundance, which we've had for nearly a generation, to globalisation under conditions of scarcity. We have moved into that.

I don't just mean the short-term fiscal pressures; I mean resource scarcity as well. Remember, it was why did holders of sub prime mortgages in the US start defaulting on their mortgage payments? They did so, because the cost of fuel and the cost of food started to shoot upwards, for structural reasons. Not temporary reasons that we can now forget about, and have gone away, but because of the growth of the middleclass, and the demand associated with that in the emerging economies. That's going to come back. Look at what people like Goldman Sachs are saying about what they expect the oil price to do if we get a healthy recovery, and nobody has really worked out... And that's the thought leadership, it's not just the opportunity but it's the thought leadership requirement.

I think, Robin's point about private finance is a really interesting part of that. It's amazing how, if you are in any kind of government conversation and somebody starts observing that money needs to be spent to address this problem or that problem, how deep the reflexes in governments nowadays to think, ah, yes, that must be private capital that we're talking about, because there's no public capital available. At Copenhagen, one of the issues on the table at Copenhagen was how do we mobilise additional investment to help developing countries deal with the challenge of climate change rising to US \$100 billion, or so, annually, by 2020? By the way, that was the number, and that was the way the challenge was framed, because of British thought leadership, actually, more than anything else.

How do we do that? Well, being in the middle of some of those conversations, a lot of the participants, particularly the American participants, weren't actually focusing on that problem, they were focusing on how do we minimise the public sector contribution to that additional finance? And it's actually too easy for

government officials to just switch off their brains about where public finance can come from, but equally, it's too easy for private sector participants in those conversations to just lapse into deeply engrained habits of trying to gain government policy to their short-term competitive advantage in any such conversations. So in answer to your point, I think we need to build a much higher quality conversation between the public sector and the private sector that will enable us to use really smart public policy, in the way that Nick was talking about on the green investment bank, to leverage much larger flows of private capital. That starts with trust, and the trust actually isn't yet fully established.

Just as a final point, because it just permeates all of this, these are realities that will only be addressed seriously if we can, not just reduce, but just remove the barriers, the psychological barriers between how we think about foreign policy, and how we think about domestic policy, because there is no such place as abroad any more. That's the consequence of interdependence, and I get really frustrated. I'm talking under the Chatham House rules, so I should be a bit careful in saying this, but if I look at foreign policy establishments, not just diplomats but foreign policy media commentators, foreign policy people, who pride themselves in their contribution to the foreign policy debate, there is an awful tendency in these uncertain times to cling to Mummy. To retrench into a narrow, traditional foreign policy agenda, without understanding that you can't deliver the objectives that that agenda sets unless you open up a much broader conversation that brings in the domestic actors, the private sector actors. The kind of network diplomacy, actually, that William Hague was talking about in the speech that he gave in the Foreign Office a little while ago. That really needs to happen, and it's not happening yet.

Alex Evans

Thanks, John. Right, we've got time for one very brief last round of questions. We're not going to fit all of these in. [Overtalking]. There was a lady on the aisle here, I think, who caught my eye, if she's still there? Yes, there she is, the lady in the white jacket. Can you keep it to 30 seconds, if at all possible?

Tracy Elliott

I'm, Tracy Elliott, from the Royal Society. Nick mentioned that climate policy worked really well when driven by the science, and science is one of the UK's success stories. Our science base is the most productive amongst the world's

leading economies, and has been an important factor to our economic prosperity over the last two decades. Does the panel think we've done enough to promote UK excellence in science, as well as recognise its role in good governance, through robust evidence-based policymaking, and indeed, its role as a soft, or smart power in foreign policy and diplomacy?

Alex Evans

Great, thank you, and then the lady in white, over by the door.

Mary Dejevsky

Mary Dejevsky, from the Independent, and to John Ashton, I'm slightly puzzled, because I had understood that climate change was being removed from the Foreign Office and being put back into the Department of Climate Change, and that it would effectively cease to be something that the Foreign Office was talking about. Is this just plain wrong, or is there something more to it? And to Simon, I'd quite like to echo what my neighbour was saying, at least the scepticism on the matter of image. Both on the aspect of whether Britain's image was so positive, and on the consistency of the image over years, because it seemed after 9/11, for instance, the US image was hugely positive, and it took George W Bush, I think about nine months to squander all the political capital. So you said, well, maybe the elites are different, but is it not the elites that we have to deal with, and the elites whose image is quite important?

Alex Evans

Okay, thank you, and the gentleman in the blue shirt towards the front here.

Jim Rollo

Jim Rollo from Chatham House and the University of Sussex. The universities have got a problem, because whatever you say about private money, John, we're going to need to bring private money into the universities somehow or other, because the government is walking away in large numbers, while remaining to regulate us in a way that no market has been regulated since God's [?] plans shut down. So there's a real problem there, and we

really need some hard thinking on that. This is one of the areas where we might demonstrate some thought leadership, and some action, and it takes me to the second point, which is to really reinforce this point, it's not thought leadership we want it's action leadership.

The point at which our reputation went up, in the 1980s, following the most horrible decade of my lifetime, and that excludes this one, was when Thatcherism started to work, and privatisation, all of those ideas went out. Why? Because they were being done and they were being successful, and it didn't matter whether we had a veto in the Security Council, or a single constituency in the IMF, in the 1970s everyone thought we were the pits.

Alex Evans

Thank you, and the gentleman with the tie, by the rear doors. I'm going to take two more after this.

Paul Adamson

Yes, a bit of telepathy. I'm Paul Adamson, from E!Sharp magazine, and a bit of telepathy with Jim's point. Listening to the panel is a bit like the discussion about science and technology, Britain is very good at inventing things, and other people go off and make a commercial success in some other foreign country. And absolutely, Jim, I totally agree with you, more focus on action, and implementation of thought leadership. The room is full of academics, and NGOs, think-tankers, and government people, maybe for whom the main objective is to produce a report, or a pamphlet, or a book, and then that's it, you've done your bit, as it were. The follow-up action is much more important, I suggest, and John and Nick also alluded to it. It's creating coalitions of support beyond that, beyond the publication of a report, or the enunciation of a thought, which is really critical going forward.

Alex Evans

Thank you, and the gentleman there.

James Dean

James Dean, from the BBC World Service Trust. I've got this slight problem with this term thought leadership. I think it's not just the Orwellian undertones

of it, but it's also the idea, particularly around climate change and development, that thought leadership is going to come from this country in the future. Surely the engine of ideas around this is going to come from those countries that are going to be most hit by climate change, and have got most to win or lose from the impact of the development strategies?

I don't think this idea of thought leadership, in these terms, is going to be where we need to be. I think it's going to be much more about the catalytic home for debate, and bringing together research and global conversation. These are global problems and we need to have a global conversation, and it's not clear where that's going to be. I think that's where we do continue to have a role, but the idea that we are going to be really the engine generator of ideas around these two particular issues, I think, looking forward ten or 20 years that's very difficult to conceive.

Alex Evans

Okay, and then finally, the gentleman by the aisle, who had his hand up, if you still want to?

Neil Crumpton

Neil Crumpton, Bellona Foundation, echoing the gentleman behind me, is it un-British to develop British inventions and build a strong British economy?

Alex Evans

Great, well, thank you all for your questions. We're slightly over time so, panellists, perhaps you'd like to take one point to pick up on from the questions?

Ngairé Woods

I'd like to take Tracy Elliott's question, from the Royal Society. It strikes me, you asked two things. Is enough being done to support science, and it would be great to see the Royal Society work with Chatham House to capture what the 1980s minister said about regretting 20 years later the savage cuts they made on core science funding, because the effects of those cuts were so bad [?]. I think that's a really important contribution to current debate.

The second, is public policy taking enough account of science, that's something that, we are just setting up a school of government in Oxford, and it's interesting you say that, because we are actually giving 25% of the curriculum to science and medical science at Oxford. What they are doing is designing what they think non-scientists need to know to be informed consumers of scientific advice, and what's been astonishing in the process of consultation is how strongly they feel about that, and also, how clear their view is of what we non-scientists need to know to take proper advice. So I think there are ways to bridge that.

Alex Evans

Simon?

Simon Anholt

Very briefly on that same point, yes, there is something going on. The Public Diplomacy Strategy Board, which is... Sorry, the Public Diplomacy Partner's Group, I beg your pardon, which is organised by the Foreign Office, is amongst many other things, looking very hard at how the UK can promote science more effectively, and also at education, and various other things as well. To Mary Dejevsky's point, it would take longer than we've got to explain why one piece of research can produce this kind of result and another can't. Broadly, this is not an opinion survey. We are not asking people what they think about certain things that have gone on, or certain things that have happened.

What we are trying to do, we're trying to plumb the depths of what people fundamentally believe about foreign countries when they think about them, which is almost never, and that, unsurprisingly, is almost completely static. Nonetheless, there's enough change there to be really interesting and stimulating, when you look at it in great detail. Do we need to care about these opinions? Yes, of course we do. However, the two are linked, and in the same way that we've been saying all along today that domestic and foreign policy can no longer be separated, the same is true of mass and elite opinion. In some ways they behave very differently, in some ways they look very different, but in other ways they are intrinsically connected, and you need to measure the difference between them to really understand what's going on.

Nick Mabey

Two points. On the idea of home and global conversations, I agree, I think the ideas are going to come from all over the place. I think it's more than just being a hub for conversation though, and you need to be more... One thing we do have is actually a lot more money per person than lots of other parts of the world where lots of the ideas have come from. We need to be the venture capitalists, helping to bring those ideas to the point where they can be replicated at a scale that makes a difference, because I can tell you that no one else is doing it. Certainly, people in their countries aren't doing that, so that's one thing, as well as being a hub, and the second one is are we afraid of actually bringing ideas [?] to this market? Yes, it's one of our worst thought followerships that we spread our money around so thinly we ensure losers, in an attempt to stop picking winners. Policymaking is changing from the politicians down, but the civil servants are still trapped in that trap in the UK, and that's why innovation policy is still a mess.

Alex Evans

Camilla.

Camilla Toulmin

I very much doubt that most people in this room are only interested in producing reports. Certainly, speaking for myself, and I know for Chatham House, and a number of others, we are interested in trying to make sure that those ideas get tested out on the ground, and fed back into thinking, so you've got a real interrelation and process there. I'm not interested in research for its own sake. I think organisations like ours want to make a difference in the world, through that practical engagement. James, thank you for that question, because that allows me to tell you and others that we have a centre in Bangladesh that we're working with. Precisely to allow people involved in trying to adapt to climate change, from a whole variety of different contexts, to come together to look at what each other is doing, and to provide the possibility for exchanging good practice in the way that Nick says is so important.

The trouble about inventions from the UK being taken up by others, and exploited by others, in the ideas' field success is when other people think they thought up the idea, and so in some senses, you're hanged if you win and hanged if you lose. I mean, questions of attribution mean that you very often

can't say, well, we did that, because the very moment that you do that people lose that sense of ownership.

Alex Evans

John, you have the last word.

John Ashton

Well, I have to answer Mary's question, I think, to which the answer is, yes, it is plain wrong to think that the Foreign Office is going to get out of climate change. It would have been pretty perverse of the incoming Foreign Secretary to decide, on the one hand, that he wanted to do that, and on the other that he wanted to appoint a special representative for climate change, and it would have been, frankly, perverse for me to accept an appointment on that basis. William Hague wants the Foreign Office to play its full part in making this coalition actually live up to the commitment of being the greenest British Government ever.

When you think about it that part is quite an important part, because what will determine success or failure will not be our ability to influence the climate policies of other countries, or even, actually, the energy policies of other countries, which are, if you like, what DEC brings to the team effort. It will be our ability to influence the way other countries think about their security, their prosperity, and their fundamental interests, and the way in which climate change is woven into that. That's core business for the Foreign Office, that's geopolitics, and geo-economics, and if the Foreign Office doesn't do it, doesn't mobilise the assets that it has, then the UK, or at least the British Government won't be doing it. So that's my answer to that question.

I have to just say something about James's question, because there aren't opt-outs. Interdependence means that, maybe, yes, there are countries that are going to have some climate consequences sooner than others, but actually, we are all on the frontline, and so the thought leadership challenge is a challenge that is open to anybody who wants to address the problem. I think it was Camilla, but someone certainly said... No, it was Nick, actually. This isn't about having one pre-eminent thought leader up on a kind of podium somewhere, and everybody neatly follows. It's about creating a collective leadership, because we are dealing with a set of collective problems.

Alex Evans

Great, well, thank you very much to the panellists for their contributions. Thank you very much to you, the audience, and in particular, thanks very much to Chatham House for hosting today, and for publishing our report. Many thanks, Robin. Just to remind everyone, there's a drinks reception now upstairs where you had coffee before, and so we'll see you up there. Thanks again.