

Debate Pack

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UK Government policy on China

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1 Summary

A Westminster Hall debate on the UK Government's policy on China is scheduled for Wednesday 15 May 2024, from 2:30-4:00pm. The debate will be led by Bob Seely MP.

You can watch the debate on [Parliamentlive.tv](https://www.parliamentlive.tv).

2 Background

2.1 From 'Golden Era' to deteriorating relations

Over the last several years, the [largely cordial relationship between the UK and China has deteriorated sharply](#).

In the previous two decades, regardless of the political make up of successive UK governments, the trend had been towards closer engagement and cooperation.

The high-point of UK-China relations was during the 2015-17 Conservative Government, when there was talk on both sides of a "[golden era](#)".¹

However, growing controversy in the UK over [China's human rights clamp-down against the Muslim Uighur population in the Western province of Xinjiang](#), as well as concerns about the [erosion of the "one country, two systems" status quo in Hong Kong](#) and the [threat of espionage and influence operations by China in the UK](#), have dramatically changed the atmosphere between the two countries.

2.2 2021 Integrated Review

The UK Government's March 2021 [Integrated review of security, defence, development and foreign policy](#) (Integrated Review, IR) described China as a "systemic competitor".²

¹ HM Treasury, [Chancellor: 'Let's create a golden decade for the UK-China relationship](#), 22 September 2015.

² Cabinet Office, [Global Britain in a Competitive Age: the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy](#) (PDF), 16 March 2021, p26.

The review said the UK will “do more to adapt to China’s growing impact on many aspects of our lives as it becomes more powerful in the world”.³ And that the Government will invest in “China-facing capabilities” allowing the UK to better understand China and its people, and improving the UK’s ability to respond to the challenge it poses to “our security, prosperity and values – and those of our allies and partners”.⁴

However, the review also emphasised the Government’s intention to continue pursuing a “positive trade and investment relationship” with China, while also ensuring that national security is protected.⁵ It also acknowledged that cooperation with China on transnational issues such as climate change is a necessity.

2.3 Integrated Review refresh

On 13 March 2023 the Government published a [refresh of the Integrated Review](#) (PDF). The refresh was produced in response to the significant world events that have taken place since the original strategy was published in 2021, including the war in Ukraine, and what the Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, described in the refresh’s foreword as “China’s willingness to use all the levers of state power to achieve a dominant role in global affairs”.⁶

Mr Sunak also warned of “China’s more aggressive stance in the South China Sea and the Taiwan Strait”.⁷

The refresh describes an “epoch-defining and systemic challenge posed by China under the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) across almost every aspect of national life and government policy”.⁸

The refresh says the UK must respond to two over-arching factors that have continued to evolve since the IR 2021:

- 1) China’s size and significance on nearly every global issue which will continue to increase in the years ahead, and so its choices, including in areas like climate change, will have a profound impact on the UK; and
- 2) The UK’s growing concerns about the China’s CCP leadership’s actions and intents including its strengthening partnership with Russia,

³ As above, p22.

⁴ As above.

⁵ Cabinet Office, [Global Britain in a Competitive Age: the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy](#) (PDF), 16 March 2021, p22.

⁶ Cabinet Office, [Integrated Review Refresh 2023 Responding to a more contested and volatile world](#) (PDF), 13 March 2023, p2.

⁷ As above.

⁸ As above, p6.

disregard for human rights, military modernisation and actions in the South China Sea, and its espionage and interference activities in the UK.⁹

Despite these factors the refresh also states that the UK “does not accept that China’s relationship with the UK or its impact on the international system are set on a predetermined course”, and that the UK’s preference is for “better cooperation and understanding, and predictability and stability for global public good”.¹⁰

The UK will “engage constructively” with China when it aligns with the UK’s core national interests and with maintaining an open and stable international order, but wherever “the CCP’s actions and stated intent threaten the UK’s interests” the UK will “take swift and robust action to protect them”.¹¹

It will pursue this policy through a three-stranded ‘Protect-Align-Engage’ framework, stating the UK will:

- **Protect** its national security, strengthening protective measures in “those areas where the actions of the CCP pose a threat to our people, prosperity and security”, while also increasing protections for academic freedom and university research.
- **Align** with core allies and partners, recognising the UK has “limited agency to influence the CCP’s actions” on its own, with Mr Sunak in his foreword saying: “where there are attempts by the Chinese Communist Party to coerce or create dependencies, we will work closely with others to push back against them”.
- **Engage** with China bilaterally and in international fora, strengthen diplomatic relations, and pursue a positive trade and investment relationship while ensuring trading and investment is “safe, reciprocal and mutually beneficial”.¹²

Alongside the refresh the [Government announced extra funding](#) to “further boost skills and knowledge for government staff on China, including on economic and military policy as well as Mandarin language skills”.¹³

⁹ As above, p30.

¹⁰ As above.

¹¹ Cabinet Office, [Integrated Review Refresh 2023 Responding to a more contested and volatile world](#) (PDF), 13 March 2023, p30.

¹² As above, p31.

¹³ Prime Minister’s Office & FCDO, [Press Release: UK announces increased funding for China Capabilities Programme](#), 13 March 2023.

2.4

Recent ministerial visits, speeches and evidence to select committees

April 2023, Foreign Secretary speech on China

On 25 April 2023 then Foreign Secretary, James Cleverly, made [a speech setting out the Government's China policy](#).

Mr Cleverly said he did not see “anything inevitable about conflict between China and the United States and the wider West”, and that “we must face the inescapable reality that no significant global problem – from climate change to pandemic prevention, from economic instability to nuclear proliferation – can be solved without China”.¹⁴

He said the Government will “advance British interests directly with China, alongside our allies, while steadfastly defending our national security and our values”. While giving examples of the UK successfully engaging and influencing China, for example through the UK’s membership of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, and arguing “engagement can succeed”, he also acknowledged that “the truth is that a country like ours, devoted to liberty and democracy, will always be torn between our national interest in dealing with China and our abhorrence of Beijing’s abuse”.¹⁵

He summarised that the UK’s policy “has to combine 2 currents: we must engage with China where necessary and be unflinchingly realistic about its authoritarianism”.¹⁶

August 2023, visit by Foreign Secretary

On 30 August 2023, [James Cleverly travelled to Beijing](#) to meet with the Chinese vice president, Han Zheng.

The visit was criticised by some, including Sir Iain Duncan Smith MP, who has [been sanctioned by China](#), who was [reported to have said](#) the visit was the latest stage of “Project Kowtow”, and that the UK position “smells terribly of appeasement”.¹⁷ Mr Cleverly [defended the trip](#), telling BBC News it would not be “credible” to disengage from China, and that it would help avoid “mistrust and errors”.¹⁸

¹⁴ FCDO, [Speech: Our position on China: Foreign Secretary's 2023 Mansion House speech](#), 25 April 2023.

¹⁵ FCDO, [Speech: Our position on China: Foreign Secretary's 2023 Mansion House speech](#), 25 April 2023.

¹⁶ As above.

¹⁷ [“Disengaging with China not credible, says James Cleverly”](#), BBC News, 30 August 2023.

¹⁸ As above.

November 2023, China invited to UK Government AI safety summit

From 1-2 November 2023, the UK hosted an [Artificial Intelligence \(AI\) Safety Summit](#) at Bletchley Park, to consider the risks of AI and discuss how they can be mitigated through internationally coordinated action. More than 25 countries were present, including China. China joined the UK, US, most EU countries, Japan, India and others in [signing a joint declaration](#), agreeing to collective action to manage the potential risks from the new technology.

January 2024, Lord Cameron gives evidence to Foreign Affairs Committee

On 9 January 2024, the new Foreign Secretary, Lord Cameron, while giving evidence to the Foreign Affairs Committee, also [defended his predecessors trip to Beijing the previous year](#) saying “things probably would be worse without it”.¹⁹

Asked if it was that the FCDO had resisted taking a tougher stance on China, the [Foreign Secretary responded](#):

I would say that the Department has a lot of people who understand China very deeply, and who want us to have a relationship that can bear a load, so that we can deal with things like climate change, and make sure that we have diplomatic relations, but there is no naivety. I do not sense in the Department any naivety on this. It knows that China has changed in the last few years, and become more assertive and more aggressive, and that is why the protect part of the policy is so important.²⁰

March 2024, Prime Minister’s evidence to the Liaison Committee

Giving [evidence to the House of Commons Liaison Committee](#), the Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, was asked about the use of Chinese-manufactured goods in the UK’s critical national infrastructure such as cellular modules (electronic wireless components embedded in devices, such as CCTV cameras and utility meters that connect to the internet)²¹. He responded that “The first thing to say is that China represents the greatest state-based threat to our economic security, and recently we have seen behaviour that we just won’t stand for” and that “Their actions in relation to our and our allies’ democracies are deeply concerning, which is why recently we have taken

¹⁹ Foreign Affairs Committee, [Oral evidence: Work of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office](#) (PDF), HC 325, 26 July 2007, Q712.

²⁰ Foreign Affairs Committee, [Oral evidence: Work of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office](#) (PDF), HC 325, 26 July 2007, Q710.

²¹ For more see Council on Geostrategy, [Chinese cellular \(IoT\) modules: Countering the threat](#), 19 March 2024.

retaliatory action, and we will continue to address their behaviour with tough action”.²²

Mr Sunak talked specifically about actions the UK had taken to restrict Chinese investment in the country, including the Government’s decision to force the Chinese-owned Nexperia firm to [sell the majority of its stake in the Wafer Fab microchip factory in Newport on national security grounds](#); and the Government’s [buying out of the state-owned China General Nuclear’s stake](#) in the proposed Sizewell C nuclear power station.

Challenged by Liam Byrne MP, Chair of the Business and Trade Committee, that the UK was not acting as decisively against China as its allies such as the EU and the US, the Prime Minister responded:

I would say that our approach to China is undoubtedly more robust than most of our allies, in fact. The language we use is very similar, if you look across all our foreign policy strategies. You talked about Huawei. There are European countries—including Germany, when I last checked—that have not removed Huawei kit from their telecoms infrastructure. We placed export controls on sensitive technologies to China last year. Again, they have not been replicated by the EU and in some cases are broader than those in the US. The foreign investment regime that we passed is the most recent version of that law out of any of our allies, and as a result is more robust—probably than you would find in any European country, or in the US.

[...] On trade, we are already less dependent on China for trade than Australia, Korea, Japan, the US, Germany and many other countries.

Lastly, I don’t think any other country has set up a National Protective Security Agency—which we have funded, dealt with by MI5—which means that we can provide specific support to companies to manage the threats from all states when it comes to IP theft and espionage. I am entirely confident that our approach to dealing with the risk that China poses is very much in line with our allies, and in most cases goes further in protecting ourselves.²³

2.5

Human rights

China is one of the UK’s 32 ‘human rights priority countries’ as identified by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). These are countries “which either have particular human rights or democracy challenges, or are on a negative or positive trajectory, and where the FCDO considers that it can make a real difference”.²⁴

The FCDO’s annual human rights and democracy report published in July 2023, looking back at 2022, said [there continued to be “widespread restrictions and violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms” in](#)

²² Liaison Committee, [Oral evidence: Work of the Prime Minister](#), HC 572, 26 March 2024, Q62.

²³ Liaison Committee, [Oral evidence: Work of the Prime Minister](#), HC 572, 26 March 2024, Q64.

²⁴ FCDO, [Human rights priority countries: ministerial statement, January to June 2023](#), 20 March 2024.

[China](#) in 2022. This included “systematic human rights violations in Xinjiang”.²⁵ In its [2023 refresh of the 2021 Integrated Review](#), the Government also argued that China is “challenging the centrality of human rights and freedoms in the UN system”.²⁶

The UK Government says the former Foreign Secretary, James Cleverly, [raised violations in Xinjiang directly with the Chinese Government](#) when he visited Beijing in 2023. The Government has also raised “grave concerns” about violations in Xinjiang [at the UN](#), and [imposed asset freezes and travel bans on those involved](#) under the UK Global Human Rights sanctions regime.

The Lords Library briefing, [China: Allegations of human rights abuses](#), November 2022 and Commons Library debate briefings, [The Uygur tribunal](#), January 2022 and [Persecution of Buddhists in Tibet](#), December 2023, provide background on reports of human rights abuses in China.

2.6

Hong Kong

Since June 2020 when the People’s Republic of China’s parliament passed a [National Security Law for Hong Kong](#), most observers have stated there has been a serious deterioration in human rights in Hong Kong.

The Hong Kong Government [claim that human rights are better protected since the legislation was passed](#).

The National Security Law criminalises any act of:

- secession – breaking away from the country;
- subversion – undermining the power or authority of the central government;
- terrorism – using violence or intimidation against people; and
- collusion with foreign or external forces.

The law established a new Beijing-led security office in Hong Kong, with its own law enforcement personnel – neither of which come under the local authority’s jurisdiction. Hong Kong’s political leader, called the Chief Executive, now has the power to appoint judges to hear national security cases. Beijing also oversees how the law should be interpreted, rather than

²⁵ FCDO, [Human Rights and Democracy Report 2022](#), 13 July 2023,

²⁶ Cabinet Office, [Integrated Review Refresh 2023 Responding to a more contested and volatile world \(PDF\)](#), 13 March 2023, p30.

any Hong Kong judicial or policy body. If the law conflicts with any Hong Kong law, the Beijing law takes priority.

The National Security Law is also extraterritorial, that is it states it applies to anyone regardless of where they live in the world or if they are a citizen and/or resident of Hong Kong.

Hong Kong authorities target those abroad including British citizens

The Hong Kong authorities have used the extra-territorial nature of the law to target individuals abroad. In March 2022, Benedict Rogers a British national living in the UK who runs the Hong Kong Watch, a charity which campaigns for human rights in the territory, [said the Hong Kong Police had written to him](#) stating he faced charges of “collusion with foreign forces”, should he return there.²⁷

In July 2023, police in Hong Kong [issued arrest warrants for eight exiled Hong-Kongers](#), including former members of the Legislative Council, for reportedly committing offences under the National Security Law. A HK\$1 million bounty was also offered for those offering information that leads to the arrest of those individuals. Three of the individuals were said to reside in the UK, and in response [the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office \(FCDO\) stated](#) that a senior official conducted a formal diplomatic démarche (official protest) of the Chinese Ambassador at the instruction of the Foreign Secretary.

In December 2023 [another five arrest warrants were issued](#) against activists including some based in the UK and the US, again with bounties offered.

The Foreign Secretary, Lord Cameron, [issued a statement in response](#) stating:

I have instructed officials in Hong Kong, Beijing and London to raise this issue as a matter of urgency with the Hong Kong and Chinese authorities.

We will not tolerate any attempt by any foreign power to intimidate, harass or harm individuals or communities in the UK. This is a threat to our democracy and fundamental human rights.²⁸

The Commons Library debate pack: [Future of human rights in Hong Kong](#), 22 January 2024, has further details.

²⁷ [“Hong Kong: Briton accused of jeopardising China's security”](#), BBC News, 14 March 2022.

²⁸ FCDO, Press release: [Hong Kong National Security Law arrest warrants: Foreign Secretary's statement](#), 14 December 2023.

Three men charged under UK National Security Act

On 13 May 2024, the Metropolitan Police announced it had [charged three men under the National Security Act](#) with “assisting the Hong Kong intelligence service and foreign interference”.²⁹

2.7

Parliamentary scrutiny of government policy

There have been several reports by committees of both Houses of Parliament that have explored aspects of the UK Government’s policy towards China in recent years:

- In September 2021, the House of Lords International Relations and Defence Committee [published a report into the UK’s security and trade relationship with China](#).
- In December 2022, the House of Commons Foreign Affairs committee published a report ‘[Refreshing our approach? Updating the integrated review](#)’ (PDF) into the 2021 integrated review ahead of the publication of the refresh.
- In August 2023 the House of Commons Foreign Affairs committee published its report ‘[Tilting horizons: The integrated review and the Indo-Pacific](#)’ (PDF), examining the realignment of Britain’s foreign policy towards the Indo-Pacific region.

The main findings of these reports on Government policy towards China are summarised in the House of Lord’s Library In Focus briefing: [UK: Long-term strategic challenges posed by China](#), 3 October 2023.

Since that briefing was published, the [Government have responded to](#) the August 2023 Foreign Affairs Committee ‘Tilting horizons’ report.

2.8

Calls for a UK Government China strategy and other commentary on UK Government policy

Calls for a UK Government China strategy

Both the House of Lords International Relations and Defence Committee and House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee have called, in the reports

²⁹ “[Three charged with aiding Hong Kong intelligence service](#)”, BBC News, 13 May 2024.

mentioned above, for the UK to articulate a clear strategy towards China and to publish it.

The Foreign Affairs Committee ‘Tilting Horizons’ report states that the FCDO confirmed in its evidence to the Committee it had, “in consultation with other departments, developed a China strategy that the then Foreign Secretary Liz Truss (...) said was not publicly available”.³⁰

The Committee argued that the publication of this strategy, at least in part would benefit the Government and organisations across the UK:

While it is understandable that the Government does not publish a complete policy towards the PRC [People’s Republic of China] because awareness by the CCP [Chinese Communist Party] of some of its military or trade competitor strategies would undermine the effectiveness of the strategy, the failure to outline clear foreign policy, let alone a cross-Government stance towards China, makes it difficult for that strategy to be complied with by both state and non-state actors, including civil servants, academics and businesses.³¹

The Government in its response to the report stated that it had clearly set out its policy towards China and it did not intend to produce an additional China strategy:

HMG clearly set out its approach to China in the Integrated Review Refresh: protecting our national security, aligning with our allies and partners and engaging with China where it is in UK interests to do so. The former Foreign Secretary’s Mansion House Speech in April built on this, making clear that we will always put British national interests and British national security first in our engagement with China. As such, the Government does not intend to publish an additional China Strategy and we have not committed to do so. We will continue to maintain as much transparency as possible and keep Parliament informed of our approach towards China, while recognising it is not in UK interests to make every element of the strategy public.³²

Commentary and further reading

For more on UK policy towards China and the development of a strategy see:

- RUSI, [Six Principles for a More Dynamic and Effective UK–China Strategy](#), Andrew Caïney, 8 November 2023.
- Council on Gestrategy, [The panda in the room – the UK’s China strategy](#), Charles Parton, 1 June 2023.

³⁰ Foreign Affairs Committee, [Tilting horizons: the Integrated Review and the Indo-Pacific](#) (PDF), 18 July 2023, HC 172 2021–22, para 52.

³¹ As above, para 53.

³² [Tilting horizons: the Integrated Review and the Indo-Pacific – Government Response to the Committee’s Eighth Report of Session 2022–23](#), 22 March 2024, para 51.

- UK In a Changing Europe, [ANALYSIS: The Intelligence and Security Committee report on China](#), Professor Kerry Brown, 20 July 2023.
- British Foreign Policy Group, [Where Next on UK-China Engagement?](#), Sophia Gaston and Rana Mitter, 13 September 2021.

3

Press and media articles

The following is a selection of press and media articles relevant to this debate.

Please note: the Library is not responsible for either the views or accuracy of external content.

[China ‘terrorising students in UK and threatening families back home’](#)

The Times
Emma Yeomans
13 May 2024

[China ‘accessed bank details of British military in MoD hack’](#)

The Times
Aubrey Allegretti and Larisa Brown
8 May 2024

[China hits out at US and UK over cyber hack claims](#)

BBC News Online
Simon Fraser
26 March 2023

[US and UK unveil sanctions against Chinese state-backed hackers over alleged ‘malicious’ attacks](#)

The Guardian
Nick Robins-Early
26 March 2024

[Things have changed since ‘golden era’ of China relations, says Cameron](#)

Daily Telegraph
Edward Malnick
23 December 2023

[China-UK relations in the process of normalizing, providing multinationals with assurance: chamber head](#)

Global Times (China)
Li Xuanmin
12 December 2023

[China has changed since David Cameron’s ‘golden era,’ Rishi Sunak says](#)

Politico
Sophie Inge
27 November 2023

[Lord Cameron says UK must engage with China](#)

BBC News Online
James Landale
24 November 2023

[Concerns as China welcomes David Cameron's return as foreign secretary](#)

The Guardian
Amy Hawkins
15 November 2023

[Rishi Sunak urged to conduct 'full audit' of UK-China relations](#)

Financial Times
Lucy Fisher
13 September 2023

[Spy claim prompts call for rethink on UK's China stance](#)

BBC News Online
Nick Eardley
11 September 2023

[Why the UK is talking to China](#)

BBC News Online
Damian Grammaticas
31 August 2023

[China, Britain make tentative steps to repair ties](#)

Reuters
Laurie Chen
30 August 2023

[Disengaging with China not credible, says James Cleverly](#)

BBC News Online
Stephen McDonnell, Kate Whannel and Damian Grammaticas
30 August 2023

[UK quietly shifts China policy as trust between countries erodes](#)

The Guardian
Dan Sabbagh
15 March 2023

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Press releases

[UK Minister for Indo-Pacific's meetings in China and Hong Kong, April 2024](#)

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

24 April 2024

The UK Minister for the Indo-Pacific, Anne-Marie Trevelyan, met with senior representatives from the Chinese government and Hong Kong authorities as part of her 6-day visit to Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin and Hong Kong.

In Beijing, she met with Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Deng Li.

The Minister reiterated to Vice Minister Deng the UK's approach to China, in line with the [Integrated Review Refresh](#) – outlining the protect, align and engage pillars of the UK's China strategy.

They discussed the global issues on which the P5 Security Council need to cooperate. The Minister encouraged China to use its influence positively to avert further escalation in the Middle East; and urge Russia to end its illegal invasion in Ukraine, including through engaging constructively with international efforts to achieve a just peace, and ensuring Chinese companies do not circumvent sanctions by supplying Russia including through dual use goods and components.

The 2 ministers explored mutual opportunities for greater co-operation between the UK and China on issues such as AI safety, trade, development, and climate change.

During the meeting, Minister Trevelyan made UK concerns clear, on human rights, the implementation of National Security legislation and connected cases in Hong Kong, including Jimmy Lai's ongoing trial. The Minister set out concerns against any interference in the UK's democratic institutions, stressing the importance of the UK's parliamentary democracy and that we will always put our national security first. She urged China to lift sanctions on MPs and other British nationals.

Minister Trevelyan then travelled to Hong Kong in the first visit by a UK FCDO minister to the Special Administrative Region since 2018, meeting with Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Christopher Hui.

During the meeting, the Minister emphasised our historic ties to Hong Kong and its people and our support for rights and freedoms set out in the Sino-British Joint Declaration. The Minister raised concerns over the deterioration of rights and freedom in the city precipitated by the 2020 National Security Law, as well as the prosecution of Jimmy Lai and others and the recent passage of legislation under Article 23. She also addressed matters of

concern for the BN(O) community in the UK including the imposition of bounties.

The ministers also discussed important areas for pragmatic cooperation, including issues of global concern like financial stability, tackling illicit finance and leadership on green finance.

Throughout the visit, the Minister reiterated the need for a constructive and open relationship to be able to discuss issues of mutual and global interest as well as areas of disagreement or concern.

Embassy Spokesperson on the UK's wrongful remarks related to China
Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United Kingdom
24 April 2024

Question: According to reports, in his speech in Warsaw on April 23, UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak listed China as an authoritarian state and criticized the China-Russia relationship. What is your comment?

Embassy Spokesperson: We have noted that this British politician is looking for excuses to ramp up British military spending. We strongly condemn his unwarranted accusation and malicious slander against China, and firmly reject his Cold War rhetoric that incites antagonism and confrontation.

China is a peace-loving country, and has all along stood on the side of peace and justice. We have always promoted peace talks and sought peaceful settlement of international conflicts, we have contributed more than one-third of global economic growth for years running, and we are a force for international cooperation and stability in the world. These are indisputable facts.

In contrast, the current UK government seems to be stirring up troubles and heightening tensions around the world. On Ukraine, it has been providing offensive weapons to one side of the conflict, adding fuel to the fire. On the Gaza issue, it has repeatedly opposed resolutions calling for an immediate ceasefire at the United Nations Security Council. It shows no support for Palestine's application for full UN membership and continues to supply weapons to Israel. Now the UK lacks morality and has no sense of responsibility when it comes to matters of international peace and justice.

We urge British politicians to end their belligerent rhetoric, cease wanton accusations against China, stop stoking bloc confrontation, and instead, focus more on domestic economic and social issues, and act in a way that is truly in the interest of world peace and justice.

Embassy Spokesperson on the Six-monthly Report on Hong Kong by the UK Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United Kingdom
15 April 2024

Question: On 15 April, the UK government published its 54th Six-monthly Report on Hong Kong, continuing to use the Sino-British Joint Declaration as an excuse to defame One Country, Two Systems, the National Security Law, and the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance, and making case for Jimmy Lai and other anti-China, Hong Kong destabilisers. What's your comment?

Embassy spokesperson: The UK government's so-called report misrepresents the facts and grossly interferes in Hong Kong affairs, which are China's internal affairs. It also seriously violates basic norms governing international relations. We strongly deplore and firmly reject it, and has made solemn representations to the UK side.

Since the return of Hong Kong, the central government of China has fully, faithfully and firmly implemented the principles of One Country, Two Systems, Hong Kong people administering Hong Kong and a high degree of autonomy. The constitutional order in Hong Kong based on China's Constitution and the Basic Law of the HKSAR has been stable and functioned well. The central government has exercised overall jurisdiction over Hong Kong. The high degree of autonomy has been practiced as it should. The Law on Safeguarding National Security in the HKSAR and Safeguarding National Security Ordinance have been adopted and entered into force. The electoral system has been revised and improved. Hong Kong is now equipped with strong safeguards for national security, which has ensured that Hong Kong is administered by patriots, provided a solid underpinning for Hong Kong's prosperity and stability, and protected Hong Kong residents' various rights and freedoms that they are lawfully entitled to. Hong Kong has restored order and is set to thrive. The practice of One Country, Two Systems is advancing in the right direction in a sound and sustained manner.

Hong Kong is China's Hong Kong and Hong Kong's affairs are purely China's internal affairs. The Sino-British Joint Declaration does not give the UK any right to intervene in Hong Kong affairs. The Chinese government remains firmly resolved in safeguarding China's sovereignty, security and development interests, in implementing One Country, Two Systems, and in opposing any external interference in Hong Kong's affairs.

We urge the UK to respect the reality that Hong Kong has returned to China, respect China's sovereignty and the rule of law in Hong Kong, stop publishing relevant reports, stop interfering in Hong Kong affairs in any way, and stop providing safe haven for criminals or cultivating pawns to disrupt Hong Kong.

UK holds China state-affiliated organisations and individuals responsible for malicious cyber activity

**Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
2 April 2024**

The United Kingdom, supported by allies globally, have today identified that Chinese state-affiliated organisations and individuals were responsible for 2 malicious cyber campaigns targeting democratic institutions and parliamentarians. Partners across the Indo-Pacific and Europe also express solidarity with the UK's efforts to call out malicious cyber activities targeting democratic institutions and electoral processes.

First, the UK can reveal today that the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) – a part of GCHQ – assesses that the UK Electoral Commission systems were highly likely compromised by a Chinese state-affiliated entity between 2021 and 2022.

Second, NCSC assesses it is almost certain that the China state-affiliated Advanced Persistent Threat Group 31 (APT31) conducted reconnaissance activity against UK parliamentarians during a separate campaign in 2021. The majority of those targeted were prominent in calling out the malign activity of China. No parliamentary accounts were successfully compromised.

This is the latest in a clear pattern of malicious cyber activity by Chinese state-affiliated organisations and individuals targeting democratic institutions and parliamentarians in the UK and beyond.

In response, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office has today summoned the Chinese Ambassador to the UK, and sanctioned a front company and 2 individuals who are members of APT31. Concurrently, the United States is designating the same persons and entity for malicious cyber activity. We greatly value our close coordination and cooperation with the US in addressing these threats. This sends a clear message that we will not tolerate malicious cyber activity against democratic institutions and parliamentarians.

Foreign Secretary Lord Cameron said:

It is completely unacceptable that China state-affiliated organisations and individuals have targeted our democratic institutions and political processes. While these attempts to interfere with UK democracy have not been successful, we will remain vigilant and resilient to the threats we face.

I raised this directly with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and we have today sanctioned 2 individuals and one entity involved with the China state-affiliated group responsible for targeting our parliamentarians.

We will always defend ourselves from those who seek to threaten the freedoms that underpin our values and democracy. One of the reasons that it is important to make this statement is that other countries should see the detail of threats that our systems and democracies face.

Deputy Prime Minister Oliver Dowden said:

The UK will not tolerate malicious cyber activity targeting our democratic institutions. It is an absolute priority for the UK government to protect our democratic system and values. The Defending Democracy Taskforce continues to coordinate work to build resilience against these threats.

I hope this statement helps to build wider awareness of how politicians and those involved in our democratic processes around the world are being targeted by state-sponsored cyber operations.

We will continue to call out this activity, holding the Chinese government accountable for its actions.

Home Secretary James Cleverly said:

It is reprehensible that China sought to target our democratic institutions.

China's attempts at espionage did not give them the results they wanted and our new National Security Act has made the UK an even harder target. Our upcoming elections, at local and national level, are robust and secure.

Democracy and the rule of law is paramount to the United Kingdom. Targeting our elected representatives and electoral processes will never go unchallenged.

This statement today sees the international community once again call on the Chinese government to demonstrate its credibility as a responsible cyber actor. The UK will continue to call out malicious cyber activity that infringes on our national security and democracy.

The UK believes these behaviours are part of large-scale espionage campaign. We have been clear that the targeting of democratic institutions is completely unacceptable. To date, cumulative attempts to interfere with UK democracy and politics have not been successful. The UK has bolstered its defences against these types of incidents. The [Defending Democracy Taskforce](#) and the National Security Act 2023 give government, Parliament, the security services, and law enforcement agencies the tools they need to disrupt hostile activity. The [NCSC has also published guidance to help high-risk individuals, including parliamentarians, to bolster their resilience to cyber threats](#), as well as advice to help organisations improve their security.

[FCDO summons Chinese Chargé d'Affaires over malicious cyber activity](#)
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
26 March 2024

A Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) spokesperson said:

Today, on instruction from the Foreign Secretary, the Chargé d'Affaires of the Chinese Embassy in London was summoned to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

The FCDO set out the government's unequivocal condemnation of Chinese state-affiliated organisations and individuals undertaking malicious cyber activity against UK democratic institutions and parliamentarians. The UK government would not tolerate such threatening activity, and would continue to take strong action with partners across the globe to respond.

The summons followed yesterday's announcement in Parliament by the Deputy Prime Minister, that the [UK had imposed tough, targeted sanctions on a front company and 2 individuals involved in China's malicious cyber activity](#) targeting officials, government entities, and parliamentarians around the world.

[Foreign Secretary's meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, February 2024](#)
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
17 February 2024

The Foreign Secretary, Lord Cameron, met with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi at the Munich Security Conference.

In line with the Government's 'protect, align, and engage' approach to China, as set out in the [Integrated Review Refresh](#), the Foreign Secretary raised a number of issues important to the UK national interest.

To support constructive engagement between the UK and China, the Foreign Ministers agreed that the UK and China should continue engagement across a range of areas.

This includes trade links; building on our existing cultural ties and links between our peoples; and working together to tackle climate change.

The Foreign Secretary urged China to use its influence on Iran to pressure the Houthis over their actions in the Red Sea.

He further stressed that Russia's aggression against Ukraine threatens the rules based international system, which is designed to keep us all safe.

The Foreign Secretary also took this opportunity to unambiguously set out the UK's position across a number of areas of disagreement, including on human rights in Xinjiang and Hong Kong. He raised the case of British Parliamentarians sanctioned by China and reiterated his call for the release of British national Jimmy Lai.

45th Universal Periodic Review of human rights: UK statement on China
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
23 January 2024

The UK's Permanent Representative to the WTO and UN, Simon Manley, delivered a statement during China's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) at the Human Rights Council in Geneva:

The UK has four recommendations:

1. cease the persecution and arbitrary detention of Uyghurs and Tibetans, and allow genuine freedom of religion or belief and cultural expression without fear of surveillance, torture, forced labour, or sexual violence, and implement OHCHR recommendations on Xinjiang
2. repeal the Law on Safeguarding National Security in Hong Kong as recommended by the UN and cease prosecutions, including of Jimmy Lai
3. guarantee an impartial judiciary and cease the harassment of lawyers, the use of the death penalty, and 'residential surveillance in a designated location'
4. cease the restriction of civil society and independent media, end forced repatriations, and stop targeting human rights defenders

Thank you Mr. President.

Jimmy Lai's national security trial: Foreign Secretary's statement
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
17 December 2023

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Secretary David Cameron said:

Hong Kong's National Security Law is a clear breach of the Sino-British Joint Declaration. Its continued existence and use is a demonstration of China breaking its international commitments.

It has damaged Hong Kong, with rights and freedoms significantly eroded. Arrests under the law have silenced opposition voices.

I am gravely concerned that anyone is facing prosecution under the National Security Law, and particularly concerned at the politically motivated prosecution of British national Jimmy Lai.

As a prominent and outspoken journalist and publisher, Jimmy Lai has been targeted in a clear attempt to stop the peaceful exercise of his rights to freedom of expression and association.

I urge the Chinese authorities to repeal the National Security Law and end the prosecution of all individuals charged under it.

I call on the Hong Kong authorities to end their prosecution and release Jimmy Lai.

Foreign Secretary's meetings with China's Foreign Minister and Vice President, August 2023

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and The Rt Hon James Cleverly MP

30 August 2023

Foreign Secretary James Cleverly has held bilateral meetings with senior Chinese government figures during [his visit to Beijing](#).

He met Chinese Vice President Han Zheng for the second time, and Chinese Foreign Minister and Director of the Office of the Central Foreign Affairs Commission, Wang Yi, for the third time.

The Foreign Secretary set out the UK's approach to China, in line with his [Mansion House speech](#) and the [Integrated Review Refresh](#) – outlining the protect, align and engage pillars of the UK's China strategy.

The Foreign Secretary was clear about the UK's position on China's malign cyber activity. In detailed discussions on Hong Kong, he stressed the damage caused by the Beijing-imposed National Security Law to rights and freedoms and consequently to China's international reputation and raised the case of Jimmy Lai.

He also emphasised the importance to the international community of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait. And he called for the immediate lifting of sanctions against Parliamentary colleagues. The Foreign Secretary made clear the UK's strength of feeling about the mass incarceration of the Uyghur people in Xinjiang.

The Foreign Secretary agreed with Vice President Han Zheng and Foreign Minister Wang Yi on the importance of direct cooperation between the UK and China on the biggest global challenges, such as climate change.

He made clear the UK position on key geopolitical issues including the conflict in Ukraine, the situation in North Korea and nuclear non-proliferation.

They agreed on the potential of AI to unlock huge opportunities but stressed the need for global coordination to mitigate risks and put protections in place.

The Foreign Secretary stressed the need for open dialogue, as well as the need for constructive engagement, when this is consistent with UK interests.

Hong Kong National Security Law arrest warrants: Foreign Secretary's statement

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

3 July 2023

On 3 July the Hong Kong Police issued arrest warrants under the National Security Law for 8 individuals living outside Hong Kong.

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Secretary James Cleverly said:

We will not tolerate any attempts by China to intimidate and silence individuals in the UK and overseas. The UK will always defend the universal right to freedom of expression and stand up for those who are targeted.

We strongly object to the National Security Law that China imposed on Hong Kong, including its extraterritorial reach, in breach of the legally binding Sino-British Joint Declaration.

We call on Beijing to remove the National Security Law and for the Hong Kong authorities to end their targeting of those who stand up for freedom and democracy.

5

PQs

China: Foreign Relations

04 Mar 2024 | HL2519

Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask His Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of the People's Republic of China, including in discussions between the Foreign Secretary and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi at the Munich Security Conference, regarding that country's behaviour towards Taiwan, including its adjustment of flight routes in the Taiwan Strait.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

We do not support any unilateral attempts to change the status quo in the Taiwan Strait and have underscored the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait alongside partners in previous G7 Foreign and Development Ministers' and Leaders' communiques.

The UK's longstanding policy on Taiwan has not changed. We consider the Taiwan issue one to be settled peacefully by the people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait through constructive dialogue, without the threat or use of force or coercion.

The UK has regular discussions within International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) regarding the importance of communication and coordination in the protection of air safety, especially when it comes to changes to airspace such as this.

China: Foreign Relations

23 Feb 2024 | 14884

Asked by: Neil Coyle

To ask the Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, whether he made representations on (a) repeal of the National Security Law and (b) release of all political prisoners in Hong Kong during his meeting with the Chinese Foreign Minister at the Munich Security Conference.

Answering member: Anne-Marie Trevelyan | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

On 16 February the Foreign Secretary met with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi at the Munich Security Conference. In line with the Government's "protect, align, and engage" approach to China, as set out in the Integrated Review Refresh, the Foreign Secretary raised a number of issues important to the UK

national interest. The Foreign Secretary reiterated his call for the release of British national Jimmy Lai and set out unambiguously the UK's position across a number of areas of disagreement, including on Hong Kong.

China: Foreign Relations

23 Feb 2024 | 14772

Asked by: Tim Loughton

To ask the Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, whether he made representations to his Chinese counterpart on the (a) repeal of the Beijing-imposed National Security Law and (b) the release of (i) Jimmy Lai and (ii) other political prisoners at the Munich Security Conference in February 2024.

Answering member: Anne-Marie Trevelyan | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

On 16 February the Foreign Secretary met with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi at the Munich Security Conference. In line with the Government's "protect, align, and engage" approach to China, as set out in the Integrated Review Refresh, the Foreign Secretary raised a number of issues important to the UK national interest. The Foreign Secretary reiterated his call for the release of British national Jimmy Lai and unambiguously set out the UK's position across a number of areas of disagreement, including on Hong Kong.

China: Foreign Relations

24 Jan 2024 | 9380

Asked by: David Lammy

To ask the Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, how many ministerial there have been to the People's Republic of China in the last twelve months.

Answering member: Anne-Marie Trevelyan | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The former Foreign Secretary James Cleverly visited Beijing in August 2023 and had bilateral meetings with Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Vice President Han Zheng. Lord Johnson, Minister for Investment, DBT, visited Beijing and Shanghai in September 2023. He attended China's International Fair for Investment and Trade where the UK was guest of honour. In her capacity as then-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Thérèse Coffey visited Beijing and Shanghai in November 2023. During her visit, Dr Coffey met Chinese counterparts to discuss UK agri-food exports and global biodiversity ahead of COP28.

National Security: China

21 Nov 2023 | 1626

Asked by: Stewart Malcolm McDonald

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament report entitled China, published on 13 July 2023, what recent steps his Department has taken to mitigate the potential risks highlighted in that report associated with UK-China investment initiatives.

Answering member: Alex Burghart | Cabinet Office

As highlighted in the government's response to the Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament's report on China, the government will not hesitate to use our powers to protect national security where we identify concerns.

The government continues to provide guidance to businesses to protect investments, including the National Protective Security Authority's 'Secure Innovation Campaign'.

The government has powers under the National Security and Investment Act 2021 to scrutinise and, where necessary, intervene in acquisitions of control over entities and assets in or linked to the UK that may pose national security risks. Of the 15 final orders issued during the 2022-2023 financial year, eight involved acquirers associated with China. The government carefully monitors the effect of this system in mitigating risks. This includes seeking frequent feedback, such as through the recent Call for Evidence launched on 13 November 2023.

The steps the government has taken related to the China report recommendations can be found in the Government Response to the Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament Report 'China': <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-response-to-the-isc-china-report>

China: Diplomatic Service

22 Sep 2023 | 199609

Asked by: Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will take steps to review the security of (a) the accommodation and (b) other arrangements for UK diplomatic staff posted to China.

Answering member: Anne-Marie Trevelyan | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

We recognise the importance of keeping security and accommodation requirements for all HMG staff deployed to China under regular review. The

FCDO has established policies and processes in place to conduct regular reviews in relation to the duty of care and security of its people, assets and information in all overseas missions, including China. It also has processes in place to identify and respond to any change in the security situation. These are reviewed on a regular basis.

University of Cambridge: China

18 Sep 2023 | HL9738

Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to review the export control criteria used by the UK Trade and Investment Office following reports that it approved a partnership between the University of Cambridge and a subsidiary of a Chinese state-owned military technology company that does an estimated 60 per cent of its business with the Chinese military, which reportedly involved the appointment of a former Chinese Communist Party politician to the university's partnership programme.

Answering member: Lord Offord of Garvel | Department for Business and Trade

The Export Control Joint Unit (ECJU) is responsible for licensing the export and transfer of controlled goods and technology, including where this occurs through academic collaboration. The ECJU has no record of having granted an export licence for the University of Cambridge with the Beijing Institute of Aerospace Control Devices.

HM Government is committed to maintaining a robust and transparent export control regime. The Strategic Export Licensing Criteria, introduced in 2021, continue to provide a thorough risk assessment framework for assessing all export licence applications, including those relating to academic collaboration.

If the ECJU were presented with credible evidence of a breach of export controls, we would take these allegations seriously. We will not support collaborations which compromise our national security.

China: High-level Talks

22 Jun 2023 | 831 c329

Asked by: Lord Davidson of Glen Clova

What is the current state of play in relation to bilateral dialogue between China and the UK?

Answered by: Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park | Department: Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Dialogue is ongoing. The Foreign Secretary is looking right now at options for a potential visit to Beijing in the coming months—details and dates are not yet confirmed. He spoke to his counterpart, Qin Gang, on 20 February, and met him at the G20 in March. He met the Chinese director of the Office of the Central Commission for Foreign Affairs, Wang Yi, at the Munich Security Conference in February, and met the vice-president, Han Zheng, on 5 May. The nature of our relationship with China is very much set out in the integrated review and involves practical and pragmatic discussions.

Taiwan: Foreign Relations

16 May 2023 | 184308

Asked by: Andrew Rosindell

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to enhance the relationship between the UK and the Republic of China (Taiwan).

Answering member: Anne-Marie Trevelyan | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK has no diplomatic relations with Taiwan but does have a strong, unofficial relationship, based on deep and growing ties in a wide range of areas, and underpinned by shared democratic values. We continue to engage with Taiwan on economic, trade, education and cultural ties. This relationship delivers significant benefits to both the UK and Taiwan and has featured a wide range of exchanges and visits, for example on judicial, health and educational issues.

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Taiwan

16 May 2023 | 184307

Asked by: Andrew Rosindell

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he plans to visit the Republic of China (Taiwan) in the next 12 months.

Answering member: Anne-Marie Trevelyan | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

No visit to Taiwan is planned by the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs. The UK has no diplomatic relations with Taiwan but a strong, unofficial relationship, based on deep and growing ties in a wide range of areas, and underpinned by shared democratic values.

China: Hong Kong

15 May 2023 | HL7567

Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to discuss (1) the imprisonment of 1,400 political prisoners in Hong Kong, (2) the imprisonment of British citizen, Jimmy Lai, and (3) reported breaches of Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human rights relating to media freedom in Hong Kong, with the Vice-President of China, Han Zheng, during his visit to London for the Coronation.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The Foreign Secretary met Chinese Vice President Han Zheng on 5 May and set out the UK's views on Xinjiang, Hong Kong and Taiwan. The Government's approach is to engage constructively with China while steadfastly defending our national security and our values. We will continue to raise human rights issues directly with China. Similarly, we will continue to use our channels with the Chinese and Hong Kong authorities to make clear our strong opposition to the erosion of rights and freedoms in Hong Kong, the deliberate targeting of opposition voices and China's ongoing non-compliance with the Sino-British Joint Declaration. The UK's longstanding position on Taiwan has not changed. We consider the Taiwan issue one to be settled peacefully by the people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait through constructive dialogue, without the threat or use of force or coercion.

Foreign Relations: China

09 May 2023 | HL7371

Asked by: Lord Leong

To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to address Chinese interference in wider UK affairs following violence that occurred at protests outside the Chinese Consulate in Manchester in October 2022.

Answering member: Lord Sharpe of Epsom | Home Office

We continually assess potential threats in the UK, and take protection of individuals' rights, freedoms, and safety in the UK very seriously. Any attempts by foreign Governments to coerce, intimidate, harass, or harm their critics overseas, undermining democracy and the rule of law, are unacceptable.

As the Security Minister stated to the House on 1 November, the Home Office works closely with departments across Whitehall and with devolved administrations to ensure that our national security is protected and that, in particular, those who have chosen to settle here are free to engage in our

democratic society without fear of the regimes that they have tried to leave behind.

Xinjiang: Foreign Relations

24 Feb 2023 | 149605

Asked by: Catherine West

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the debate on the Governor of Xinjiang and a UK Visit, Official Report, 9 February 2023, when Ministers in his Department were first made aware of the potential meeting between his Department officials and the Governor of Xinjiang.

Answering member: Anne-Marie Trevelyan | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK did not invite the Governor of Xinjiang to visit and under no circumstance would he have been offered a Ministerial meeting. The scale and severity of human rights violations in Xinjiang is harrowing and the UK government consistently raises our concerns with Beijing at the highest levels. The Foreign Secretary did so with his Chinese counterpart on 20 February. As Minister Docherty stated in the debate on 9 February, relevant FCDO Ministers were made aware of the possible visit in the usual way, after officials were notified by the Chinese Embassy in January. Ministers agreed that officials should be prepared to offer a meeting to make clear the UK's abhorrence at the treatment of Uyghur people and to reiterate that we will not relent from exposing China's unacceptable human rights violations. No UK official has met Chinese officials sanctioned by the US over the last 12 months.

Democracy and Human Rights: China

06 Feb 2023 | HL4956

Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask His Majesty's Government whether they assess that the threat to freedom and democracy in the UK posed by the government of China is increasing; if so, whether they believe that Confucius Institutes are part of such a threat; and if not, why they have said that they want to reduce influence of Confucius Institutes.

Answering member: Baroness Barran | Department for Education

The government will continue to underline the importance that the UK places on defending human rights, and of speaking out and taking action where there are concerns. We need to evolve our approach to China into one of robust pragmatism, which is recognised and understood by our allies and partners. As my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, has previously said, China poses the greatest long-term security challenge to the UK economy and

more widely, because of the behaviour of the Chinese Communist Party. The government is committed to doing more to adapt to its growing impact and we are constantly monitoring our position.

The government continuously assesses threats posed to the UK. As a matter of longstanding policy we are unable to release information regarding threat assessments on the grounds of National Security.

The Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill will require and empower registered higher education (HE) providers in England to push back on freedom of speech related threats from overseas. It will also require the Office for Students (OfS) to monitor the overseas funding of registered HE providers and their constituent institutions, in order to assess the extent to which it presents a risk to freedom of speech and academic freedom in HE. This includes the reporting of educational or commercial partnerships, and therefore includes arrangements with Confucius Institutes. The Bill will allow the OfS to take appropriate action, including issuing penalties, if there is evidence that an HE provider has breached its freedom of speech duties.

Like all similar bodies, Confucius Institutes should operate transparently and with a full commitment to our values of openness and freedom of expression. Universities have a responsibility to ensure that any partnership with a Confucius Institute is managed appropriately, and the right due diligence is in place. The department would encourage any providers with concerns to contact the government.

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: China

01 Feb 2023 | 133761

Asked by: Catherine West

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 25 January 2023 to Question 117752 on Asia-Pacific Region: Foreign Relations, how many staff in his Department are assigned to the China Department.

Answering member: David Rutley | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The publication of the Integrated Review in March 2021 affirmed the UK's increased focus and long-term commitment to the Indo-Pacific. The Indo-Pacific tilt is a whole of UK Government effort with staff focused on delivering UK objectives across the region, including to strengthen defence, security and trade partnerships, and to uphold and promote the international rules based system.

A significant and increasing number of FCDO roles in the UK and across the global network involve an element of China policy. This shift in focus and

resource has been underway for a number of years. The FCDO dedicated an additional £3 million in 2020/21 and a further £3 million in 2022/23 to increase our capability on China, including a significantly expanded China Department and new China-related roles in the overseas network.

The UK also opened the UK Mission to ASEAN in 2019 to strengthen UK-ASEAN engagement. Since achieving ASEAN Dialogue Partner Status, the UK Mission to ASEAN has expanded with further roles planned by March 2023.

China: Diplomatic Service

09 Jan 2023 | HL3519

Asked by: Lord Rogan

To ask His Majesty's Government how many diplomats from China are based in the UK; and in which locations.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office publishes details of foreign embassies, high commissions and consular posts in the UK on gov.uk, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/foreign-embassies-in-the-uk>. This page includes the London Diplomatic List which contains the addresses and contact details of all embassies and high commissions, as well as the names of heads of mission and other diplomatic agents appointed in accordance with the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations 1961. The entry for the People's Republic of China, as of December 2022, lists 127 diplomatic agents in the locations set out below. In addition, consular officials are appointed to the Consulates General of the People's Republic of China in Edinburgh, Manchester and Belfast.

Embassy of the People's Republic of China
49-51 Portland Place W1B 1JL

Consular Section
31 Portland Place W1B 1QD

Defence Section
25 Lyndhurst Road NW3 5PA

Economic and Commercial Office
16 Lancaster Gate W2 3LH

Cultural Section
11 West Heath Road NW3 7UX

Education Section

50 Portland Place W1B 1NQ

Science & Technology Section
10 Greville Place NW6 5JN

China: Foreign Relations

15 Dec 2022 | 105349

Asked by: Jim Shannon

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of China abiding to the terms of the Sino-British Joint Declaration.

Answering member: Anne-Marie Trevelyan | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

We have declared four breaches of the Sino-British Joint Declaration to date, three of which have occurred since 2020. These breaches include China's imposition of the National Security Law and changes to Hong Kong's electoral rules and system.

Reflecting the size and scale of developments in Hong Kong, on 13 March the UK declared China to be in a state of ongoing non-compliance with the Sino-British Joint Declaration - a demonstration of the growing gulf between Beijing's promises and its actions.

China: Intelligence Services

30 Nov 2022 | 92131

Asked by: Andrew Rosindell

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 10 November 2022 to Question 77322 on China: Intelligence Services, what estimate her Department has made of the (a) number of undeclared police stations in the UK and (b) support offered to them by the Chinese Government.

Answering member: Tom Tugendhat | Home Office

As I said to the House in my statement on 1 November, reports of undeclared 'police stations' in the UK are of course very concerning and are taken extremely seriously. Any foreign country operating on UK soil must abide by UK law.

Home Office officials are in regular contact with the police. They are investigating allegations of unlawful activity. It would be inappropriate for me to comment further on operational matters.

As I said to the House on 1 November, I will provide an update on the work relating to transnational repression in due course.

China: Foreign Relations

28 Oct 2022 | 71124

Asked by: Stewart Malcolm McDonald

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Government is committed to publishing a China strategy.

Answering member: Leo Docherty | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Our approach to China is coordinated across Government. The FCDO is at the heart of the cross-Whitehall strategic approach to China, in line with the Integrated Review. It remains the case that we do not publish National Security strategies on China or other issues.

We continue to implement a comprehensive and coordinated approach to China in support of UK national interests, engaging our like-minded international partners as we do so.

6

Debates

Taiwan Strait

25 Mar 2024 | House of Commons | 747 cc1362-1370

Motion lapsed. Motion made and question put that this House do now adjourn. Agreed to on question.

Human Rights in Hong Kong

23 Jan 2024 | House of Commons | 744 cc60-84WH

Motion that this House has considered the future of human rights in Hong Kong. Motion lapsed.

Long-Term Strategic Challenges Posed by China

19 Oct 2023 | House of Lords | 833 cc337-379

Lords motion to take note of His Majesty's Government's position on the long-term strategic challenges posed by China. Agreed to on question.

China

06 Jul 2023 | House of Lords | 831 cc201-217GC

Lords question for short debate on what assessment they have made of Sino-British relations following the anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre on 4 June, and the recent suppression of peaceful demonstrations in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong National Security Law Anniversary

28 Jun 2023 | House of Commons | 735 cc133-157WH

Motion that this House has considered the anniversary of the Hong Kong National Security Law. Motion lapsed.

Relations with China: Xi Jinping Presidency

16 Mar 2023 | House of Commons | 729 cc410-399WH

Motion that this House has considered the matter of relations with China during the presidency of Xi Jinping. Agreed to on question.

Human Rights: China

17 Nov 2022 | House of Lords | 825 cc204-218GC

Lords question for short debate on what assessment they have made of allegations of human rights abuses in China.

China

14 Jul 2022 | House of Lords | 823 cc1622-1635

Lords question for short debate on what steps they will take to respond to the long-term security challenges posed by China.

7

Statements

Hong Kong Six-monthly Report

15 Apr 2024 | HLWS396

Lord Cameron of Chipping Norton (Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs): The latest Six-monthly Report on the implementation of the Sino-British Joint Declaration on Hong Kong was published today, and is attached. It covers the period from 1 July – 31 December 2023. The report has been placed in the Libraries of both Houses. A copy is also available on the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office website <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/six-monthly-reports-on-hong-kong>. I commend the report to the House.

Cyber-security and UK Democracy

25 Mar 2024 | 747 cc1261-1279

Oliver Dowden (Deputy Prime Minister): With permission, I will make a statement about malicious cyber-activity targeting the United Kingdom by actors that we assess are affiliated to the Chinese state. I want to update the House on our assessment of this activity and to reassure it on the steps that the Government have taken to shore up our resilience and hold those actors to account.

I know that right hon. and hon. Members on both sides of the Chamber will recognise the seriousness of this issue, particularly in a year when so many democratic elections will be taking place around the world. Members will want to be reassured that the Government are taking steps to address the associated threat.

I can confirm today that Chinese state-affiliated actors were responsible for two malicious cyber-campaigns targeting both our democratic institutions and parliamentarians by, first, compromising the United Kingdom's Electoral Commission between 2021 and 2022, as was announced last summer, and secondly, by attempting reconnaissance activity against UK parliamentary accounts in a separate campaign in 2021.

Later today, a number of our international partners, including the United States, will issue similar statements to expose this activity and to hold China to account for the ongoing patterns of hostile activity targeting our collective democracies. Mr Speaker, you and parliamentary security have already been briefed on this activity. We want now to be as open as possible with the House and with the British public, because part of our defence is in calling out this behaviour.

This is the latest in a clear pattern of hostile activity originating in China, including the targeting of democratic institutions and parliamentarians in the United Kingdom and beyond. We have seen this in China's continued disregard for universal human rights and international commitments in Xinjiang, in China's erasure of dissenting voices and stifling of the opposition under the new national security law in Hong Kong, and in the disturbing reports of Chinese intimidation and aggressive behaviour in the South China sea. That is why this Government have investigated and called out so-called Chinese overseas police service stations and instructed the Chinese embassy to close them.

However, China's cumulative attempts to interfere with the UK's democracy have not succeeded. Last summer, the Electoral Commission stated that it had been a victim of a complex cyber-attack between 2021 and 2022. That was the work of Chinese state-affiliated actors who gained access to the Electoral Commission's email and file-sharing systems, which contain copies of the electoral register. As the Electoral Commission stated in 2023, when that attack was first made public, the compromise has "not affected" the security of elections. It will not impact how people register, vote or otherwise participate in democratic processes. I want to reassure people that the compromise of that information, although obviously concerning, typically does not create a risk to those affected. I want to further reassure the House that the commission has worked with security specialists to investigate the incident and remove the threat from its systems, and has since taken further steps to increase the resilience of its systems.

In addition, the National Cyber Security Centre assesses that it is almost certain that the Chinese state-affiliated cyber-actor known as APT31 attempted to conduct reconnaissance activity against UK parliamentary accounts during a separate campaign in 2021. Hon. Members may recall that APT31 was one of several cyber-actors attributed to the Chinese Ministry of State Security by the UK and its allies in July 2021. That email campaign by APT31 was blocked by Parliament's cyber-security measures; in this case, it was entirely unsuccessful. However, any targeting of Members of this House by foreign state actors is completely unacceptable.

Taken together, the UK judges that those actions demonstrate a clear and persistent pattern of behaviour that signals hostile intent from China. That is why the UK has today sanctioned two individuals and one entity associated with the Chinese state-affiliated APT31 group for involvement in malicious cyber-activity targeting officials, Government entities and parliamentarians around the world. We are today acting to warn of the breadth of targeting emanating from Chinese state-affiliated actors such as APT31, to sanction those actors who attempt to threaten our democratic institutions, and to deter both China and all those who seek to do the same.

Last week, at the summit for democracy in Seoul, I said that we would call out malicious attempts to undermine our democracy wherever we find them. This is an important tool in our armoury and today we are doing just that. The UK does not accept that China's relationship with the UK is set on a predetermined course, but that depends on the choices China makes. That is why the Foreign Office will be summoning the Chinese ambassador to account for China's conduct in these incidents. The UK's policy towards China is anchored in our core national interests. We will engage with the Chinese Government where it is consistent with those interests, but we will not hesitate to take swift and robust actions wherever the Chinese Government threaten the UK's interests—we have done so today and previously. This Government will continue to hold China and other state actors accountable for their actions.

We will also take serious action to prevent this behaviour from affecting our security. The steps we have taken in recent years have made the UK a harder operating environment for foreign state actors seeking to target our values and our institutions. Through the National Security Act 2023, we now have, for the first time, a specific offence of foreign interference. That new offence will allow law enforcement to disrupt state-linked efforts to undermine our institutions, rights or political system.

Our National Security and Investment Act 2021 has overhauled our scrutiny of investment into the United Kingdom by giving the Government powers to block, unwind or put conditions on investments that could create national security risks. We have significantly reduced China's involvement in the UK's civil nuclear sector, taking ownership of the CGN stake in the Sizewell C nuclear power project and ensuring Chinese state-owned nuclear energy corporations will have no further role in the project.

We have put in place measures to prevent hostile infiltration of our universities, including protecting campuses from interference through the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023. The Procurement Act 2023 includes national security devolvement provisions that allow us to act where we see malicious influence in our public procurement. I have taken steps to reduce the Government's exposure to Chinese operators, banning Hikvision and TikTok from Government buildings and devices. Through the national cyber-security strategy, we are investing £2.6 billion to increase the cyber-resilience of our critical national infrastructure by 2025, making the most important parts of our digital environment a harder target for state and non-state actors.

The Government are continuing to build the tools, expertise and knowledge to respond to the systemic challenge that China poses to the United Kingdom's security and its values. The integrated review refresh in 2023 took steps toward this, doubling funding for a Government-wide programme, including

investment in Mandarin language training and deepening diplomatic expertise.

We must be clear that this is not a problem for the Government to solve alone. That is why we created the National Protective Security Authority within MI5 to help businesses and institutions play their part in protecting our security and prosperity. The NPSA will help organisations in the UK's most sensitive fields, including critical national infrastructure operators and world-leading science and tech sectors, to protect themselves against state threats. I set up the economic security public-private forum to ensure businesses and business leaders in crucial sectors understand the threat to the UK and what they can do to defeat it.

In Parliament, the National Cyber Security Centre has launched an opt-in service for Members of both Houses. This allows the NCSC to alert high-risk individuals if they identify evidence of malicious activity on their personal devices or account, and swiftly advise them on steps to take to protect their information. Today, the NCSC has published new guidance for political organisations, including political parties and think-tanks, which will help these organisations take effective action to protect their systems and their data. The NCSC is also working with all political parties to increase the uptake of their active cyber-defence services in the lead up to a general election. A key component of increasing our resilience is supporting the NCSC and parliamentary authorities by taking up that cyber-security offer. I urge all Members of this House to do so. I will be writing to colleagues later today, setting out again the steps that they can take.

At the summit for democracy, I was struck by the powerful strength of our collective voices when we work together to defend our democratic freedoms. The summit provided the United Kingdom Government with a platform to build international agreements on a new global Government compact on countering deceptive use of AI by foreign states in elections. It is important and welcome that our partners across the Five Eyes, as well as those in Europe and the Indo-Pacific, are standing in solidarity with our efforts to call out malicious cyber-activity. I pay tribute to the dedicated public servants, whose painstaking work has continued to expose the reality of the threat we face.

Our political processes and institutions have not been harmed by these attacks. The Government will continue to call out and condemn this kind of activity in the strongest terms. We will continue to work with our allies to ensure that Chinese state-affiliated actors suffer the consequences of their behaviour. We will take preventive action to ensure these attempts do not succeed. The cyber-threat posed by China-affiliated actors is real and serious, but it is more than equalled by our determination and resolve to resist it. That is how we defend ourselves and our precious democracy, and I commend this statement to the House.

Response to the Intelligence and Security Committee's China Report

14 Sep 2023 | HCWS1026

Rishi Sunak (Prime Minister): On 13 July 2023, the Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament published its report on China. We are grateful to the committee for devoting time and attention to the subject.

Today, the government is publishing its response to this report. This response sets out the government's overall approach to China, which is closely aligned with our allies, and provides significant detail on the measures and legislation we have put in place to support it. The government has already taken actions that are in line with many of the committee's recommendations and will consider further action where necessary.

The government published the Integrated Review (IR) of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy in 2021, and its subsequent IR Refresh in 2023. Recognising the epoch-defining and systemic challenge that China represents, these reviews considerably strengthened the United Kingdom's position on China, set out as a comprehensive approach comprising three integrated themes to Protect, Align and Engage. The IR Refresh recognised China's size and significance on almost every global issue and, in close alignment with all G7 partners, outlined the UK's preference for a relationship in which there was room for cooperation, understanding, predictability and stability. Equally, it was clear on the need to increase our protections and do more in concert with close partners to ensure that our vital interests and values are protected.

I am particularly conscious that many of the issues detailed in the committee's report, and wider concerns about foreign interference, highlight the necessity for a robust approach to any and all state threat activity. It remains an absolute priority for the government to take all necessary steps to protect the United Kingdom from any foreign state activity which seeks to undermine our national security, prosperity and democratic values. I am clear-eyed about that challenge and will call out unacceptable behaviour directly just as I did last weekend with Premier Li at the G20 Summit in New Delhi.

We recognise that the report identifies areas where we can do better and welcome these insights and recommendations as we further develop our approach. Earlier this year, the government passed the National Security Act which overhauled legislation applicable to espionage, sabotage and any persons acting on behalf of foreign powers against the safety and interest of the United Kingdom. We also passed the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act to further protect our campuses from threats to lawful freedom of speech, whether those relate to China or any other source. Measures in these Acts will enable our law enforcement and intelligence agencies to deter,

detect, and disrupt the full range of modern-day threats, including from China.

I am acutely aware of the particular threat to our open and democratic way of life. In 2022, the government established the Defending Democracy Taskforce. Chaired by the Security Minister, the Taskforce coordinates cross-government activity to protect the integrity of our democracy from the threats of foreign interference. It works with government, Parliament, the UK's intelligence community and the devolved governments on a range of threats including electoral security. The Taskforce established a new Joint Election Security & Preparedness (JESP) Unit to lead on work to ensure the security of the next election and beyond. The Taskforce is also undertaking a review to understand how diaspora communities in the United Kingdom are threatened by foreign states and make recommendations to address this harm to our society and communities. The Taskforce is working with Parliament and National Cyber Security Centre to develop an enhanced cybersecurity offer for elected officials, including MPs, and their teams to help better protect them from the cyber-attacks that threaten them personally and our national security. Finally, the Taskforce is working with the government's partners to better understand and mitigate the threats of AI and is developing new means for tackling mis- and disinformation during elections, both of which have the potential to harm our democracy and the people of the United Kingdom.

Copies of the government response have been laid before both Houses.

[Hong Kong Update](#)

13 Jul 2023 | 736 cc534-542

Anne-Marie Trevelyan (Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office): With permission Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like to update the House on recent developments in Hong Kong.

Last week, I came to the House to speak on the egregious arrest warrants and bounties issued by the Hong Kong police against eight individuals for exercising their right to freedom of expression. Some of those individuals now reside in the UK. As I said at the time, that is completely unacceptable. Since then, the authorities in Hong Kong have taken further steps to silence and intimidate those individuals by targeting their families and alleged associates who remain in Hong Kong.

Last week, five individuals were arrested by the Hong Kong police. On Monday, family members of one of the named individuals, Nathan Law, were detained for questioning by the Hong Kong police, and have since been released. That is a very worrying development. It is a campaign of fear intended to intimidate and silence those who seek to speak out peacefully

against oppression and the erosion of rights and freedoms. It is a choice that the Hong Kong authorities have taken, no doubt emboldened by the Chinese Government's imposition of the national security law. It will only further damage Hong Kong's international reputation and standing.

The UK declared the national security law a breach of the Sino-British joint declaration, and brought together the international community to condemn its imposition. We introduced the bespoke visa route for British nationals overseas. Hongkongers have since made the UK their home and are making a valuable contribution to our communities. We suspended the UK-Hong Kong extradition treaty immediately and indefinitely. We also announced the extension to Hong Kong of the arms embargo that has applied to mainland China since 1989, as updated in 1998.

I would like to make it exceptionally clear that we will not tolerate attempts by the Chinese or Hong Kong authorities to intimidate or silence any individuals in the UK. Any attempt by any foreign power to intimidate, harass or harm individuals or communities in the UK will not be tolerated. That is an insidious threat to our democracy and fundamental human rights.

On 3 July, the Foreign Secretary called on the Hong Kong authorities to end their targeting of those who stand up for freedom and democracy. They have not heeded that call. At the instruction of the Foreign Secretary, his senior official will formally protest recent actions by the Hong Kong authorities with the Chinese ambassador. We have consistently made clear our objections to the Beijing-imposed national security law with the Chinese Government, and will continue to do so. It has stifled opposition and criminalised dissent. The authorities claim that it has brought stability to Hong Kong, but what it has really done is stifle the unique character of the city, diminishing its pluralism and vibrancy. If that course of action continues, it will alienate business and the city's international financial status will be at risk.

The Hong Kong and Chinese authorities repeatedly condemn comments in this House and by the Government as interfering in their internal affairs. As a co-signatory to the joint declaration, we have the right to make clear our position. We will not be deterred from doing that. We will also make it clear that, as a co-signatory to that declaration, China is breaching agreements that it signed up to uphold. The national security law should never have been imposed in 2020, and should be removed. The independent UN Human Rights Council concurred with that in its report on Hong Kong last year, as have many of our partners in the international community. No one living in the UK should feel inhibited by that law in any way. We will always stand up for the right of freedom of expression.

This is not what the UK wants for Hong Kong's future. Hong Kong's way of life, prosperity and stability rely on respect for fundamental freedoms, an independent judiciary and the rule of law. We will continue to stand up for the

people of Hong Kong, to call out violations of their rights and freedoms, and to hold China to its international obligations. I commend this statement to the House.

Publication of the Intelligence and Security Committee's report on China
13 Jul 2023 | HCWS938

Rishi Sunak (Prime Minister): The Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament (ISC) has today laid before Parliament a report examining the threat posed by the Chinese authorities and the United Kingdom's response. I welcome the report and thank the committee for its efforts.

China poses an epoch-defining challenge to the international order. Under the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) it is becoming more authoritarian at home and more assertive overseas. We have been clear that our approach to China must therefore be rooted in our national interest and coordinated with like-minded partners.

The committee's inquiry began in 2019 and took the bulk of its evidence in 2020, predating both the Integrated Review 2021 and the Integrated Review Refresh 2023. These are both comprehensive national security and international policy reviews that considerably strengthen our position on China. The government has already taken actions that are in line with many of the committee's recommendations.

The Integrated Review 2021 articulated the United Kingdom's robust stance towards China. It highlighted China's increasing international assertiveness and identified it as the biggest state-based comprehensive threat to the United Kingdom's economic security. It placed greater emphasis on defending our interests and values while preserving the potential for cooperation on shared interests.

The Integrated Review Refresh 2023 went further still, responding to subsequent changes in the strategic environment. In the IRR, the government recognised China as a systemic challenge with implications for almost every area of government policy and the everyday lives of the British people. The IRR also recognised China's size and significance on almost every global issue, and set out the UK's preference for better cooperation, understanding, predictability and stability with China.

Responding to this systemic challenge, the Government committed to:

- greater national security protections to safeguard the United Kingdom's people, prosperity and security, including to communities now at home in Britain;

- deeper cooperation and closer alignment with allies and partners to push back against behaviours that undermine international law, violate human rights and seek to coerce other sovereign nations; and
- engagement with China bilaterally and in international fora to preserve and strengthen open, constructive, predictable, and stable relations.

We are improving our understanding of interference in our society and our values and taking action to address it, whatever its source.

- We have passed the National Security Act 2023, which, in addition to helping us meet several of the committee's recommendations on China, fulfils a number of commitments we made following publication of the committee's 2020 Russia Report. The Act constitutes the most significant overhaul of our national security law in more than a century. It will put us ahead of many of our partners in enabling our law enforcement agencies and the security and intelligence services to deter, detect and disrupt the full range of modern day threats, including from China. In addition to modernising the offence of espionage, it introduces a range of new offences for foreign interference, assisting a foreign intelligence service, sabotage and theft of trade secrets, creates modernised and extended "acts preparatory" offences and creates enhanced investigatory powers.
- The foreign interference offence created by the National Security Act will be added to the list of priority offences in the Online Safety Bill. This means social media platforms, search engines and other apps and websites allowing people to post their own content will have a legal duty to take proactive, preventative action to identify and minimise people's exposure to state-sponsored or state-linked disinformation aimed at interfering with the United Kingdom, including from China.
- We set up the Defending Democracy Taskforce in 2022 to lead work across government to secure the integrity of our democracy. This includes coordinating work to ensure the safety and security of our elections; tackling disinformation, working with Parliament on enhanced cyber security measures for parliamentarians; and leading a review into how we can protect diaspora communities in the United Kingdom from foreign attempts at control (so-called transnational repression).
- We passed the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023 to further protect our campuses from threats to lawful freedom of speech, whether those relate to China or any other source. We have already appointed the first Director for Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom at the Office for Students. The remit of this new role is to promote the importance of freedom of speech and academic freedom on campus and to have responsibility for investigating infringements of freedom of speech duties in higher education, with new sanctions or options for individual redress. We are also removing all government funding from Confucius Institutes in the United Kingdom.

We have protected against threats to our economic security, wherever they come from. This includes taking steps to reduce reliance on Chinese technology and secure our critical national infrastructure against interference and evolving cyber threats.

- We have tightened our scrutiny of foreign investment in the United Kingdom, through the creation and use of new powers under the National Security and Investment Act (NSIA) 2021, allowing us to take a broader approach than many other countries. Our Annual Report shows that in 2022–23 we received 866 notifications and issued 15 final orders blocking, unwinding or attaching conditions to deals, of which eight had an acquirer linked to China.
- We have banned Huawei from the nation's 5G network, creating one of the toughest telecoms security regimes in the world.
- We have reduced Chinese involvement in the civil nuclear sector, including taking ownership of the stake in the Sizewell C nuclear power project previously held by the Chinese state-owned company CGN.
- We are committed to removing surveillance technology from sensitive areas of the government estate.
- We have created the National Protective Security Authority to help British start-ups, academia and other organisations defend themselves against national security threats, by providing training and advice on how to harden their defences against threats posed by states, including theft of international property, exploiting academic research and deceptive use of professional networking sites to acquire sensitive information.
- We signed a bilateral agreement setting out acceptable behaviour in cyberspace with China in 2015. As a responsible cyber power, we will continue to hold China accountable. This includes in July 2021, joining with international partners to publicly confirm that Chinese state-backed actors were responsible for the Microsoft Exchange servers attack that took place in early 2021, as well as other malicious cyber activity.
- Our National Cyber Security Centre has shared regular technical advisories, drafted in close partnership with our international partners, to identify and provide the technical insight to detect and remediate specific state-sponsored malicious cyber activity. This includes working with agencies in the United States, Australia, Canada and New Zealand to issue a technical advisory in May 2023 to help organisations detect Chinese state-sponsored activity against critical national infrastructure networks.

We have protected our academic and research sectors and addressed the risk of sensitive technology transfer.

- We have led the international community by tightening our export controls regime and adding China to the list of destinations subject to military end-use controls.
- We launched the Trusted Research initiative to secure the integrity of international research collaboration, which is vital to the nation's research and innovation sector.
- We have established the Research Collaboration Advice Team (RCAT) to provide tailored advice to researchers and institutions on how to manage national security risks in international collaborations. Since its launch in March 2022, RCAT has engaged over 130 research institutions and addressed over 350 specific queries, resulting in targeted mitigations of national security concerns.
- We have expanded the Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) to include new areas of sensitive technology and to cover both researchers and post-graduate students. This allows us to tighten the screening of academics and researchers in sensitive fields and avoid transfer of sensitive material and knowledge.

We continue to act in concert with our international partners, including to highlight and address human rights issues.

- We have continued to raise concerns about China's human rights violations, including leading international condemnation of China over Hong Kong with G7 and Five Eyes partners, securing joint statements on Xinjiang at the UN and sanctioning Chinese government officials for violations against Uyghurs and other minorities.
- We also introduced a bespoke immigration route for British National (Overseas) status holders from Hong Kong. As of 31 March 2023, we had approved 166,420 applications from BN(O) status holders to live in the United Kingdom. We also have suspended our extradition treaty with Hong Kong and extended our arms embargo on China to include Hong Kong.

To support all this, we have increased investment in the capabilities that help us to understand and adapt to China—doubling funding for these across government. We have made particular efforts to align our approach with our closest allies and partners, including those in the United States, Europe, Australia, Canada and Japan.

We are grateful for the tireless work of our security and intelligence services to protect national security at home and abroad.

We are not complacent and we are keenly aware that there is more to do.

Wherever China's actions or intent threaten the national interest, we will continue to take swift action. We welcome the committee and Parliament's scrutiny and the proposals for further action. They are rightly challenging. We are alive to the need to make effective use of the new legislation and powers that we have introduced and to continue adapting our approach and actions to meet the challenge that China presents. In concert with our international partners we will continue to engage with China to preserve and create space for open, constructive, predictable and stable relations that reflect China's significance in world affairs and to ensure our interests and those of our allies are best advanced.

The Government will consider the committee's recommendations and conclusions with care to assess where further action should be taken. We will publish a full response in due course and in the usual manner.

8

Urgent Questions

Hong Kong Security Legislation

20 Mar 2024 | 747 cc943-950

Sir Iain Duncan Smith: To ask the Foreign Secretary if he will make a statement on the security and human rights implications of Article 23 in Hong Kong.

Andrew Mitchell (Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office): I thank my right hon. Friend for his urgent question. Yesterday, Hong Kong's Legislative Council passed new national security legislation unanimously under article 23 of the Basic Law. The Bill, which rushed through the legislative process, and is likely incompatible with international human rights law, will come into force on Saturday. Since 2020, we have seen Hongkongers' rights and freedoms deliberately eroded as a result of the Beijing-imposed national security law, and this law continues that pattern.

Yesterday, His Majesty's Government made it clear that the law's overall impact will be to further damage the rights and freedoms enjoyed throughout Hong Kong. It will enable the authorities to continue their clampdown on freedoms, including freedom of speech, assembly and the media. It will further entrench the culture of self-censorship dominating Hong Kong's social and political landscape. It fails to provide certainty for international organisations, including diplomatic missions, operating there. Broad definitions will negatively affect those who live, work and do business there.

Although Britain recognises the right of all jurisdictions to implement national security legislation, Hong Kong is also required to ensure that laws align with international standards, rights and norms as set out in UN treaties, the Sino-British joint declaration and its Basic Law. Hong Kong is an international city. Respect for the rule of law, its high degree of autonomy and the independence of its well-respected institutions have always been critical to its success. The British Government have urged the Hong Kong authorities to respect rights and freedoms, uphold Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy and the rule of law, and act in accordance with its international commitments and legal obligations.

Let me conclude by welcoming the contribution our growing Hong Kong diaspora make to life in the UK; they are safe to live here, and exercise the rights and freedoms that all other British residents enjoy. We will not tolerate any attempt by any foreign power to intimidate, harass or harm individuals or communities in the UK. This law has no effect in the UK, and we have no active extradition treaty with Hong Kong.

[Trial of Jimmy Lai](#)

18 Dec 2023 | 742 cc1125-1134

Sir Iain Duncan Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs what steps he is taking to support Jimmy Lai during his trial and if he will call for his immediate and unconditional release.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan (Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office): The Foreign Secretary has called on the Hong Kong authorities to end their prosecution of Jimmy Lai and release him. He also urged the Chinese authorities to repeal the national security law and end the prosecution of all individuals charged under it. The Foreign Secretary and I welcomed the opportunity to meet Mr Lai's son, Sebastien, again last week and to listen to his concerns as the trial approached.

As the Foreign Secretary has made clear, Mr Lai's prosecution is politically motivated. He has faced multiple charges to discredit and silence him. As an outspoken journalist and publisher, he has been targeted in a clear attempt to stop the peaceful exercise of his rights to freedom of expression and association. The Foreign Secretary raised Mr Lai's prosecution with Foreign Minister Wang Yi on 5 December, as his predecessor did in Beijing on 30 August. We will continue to press for Mr Lai's release with the Hong Kong and Chinese authorities.

Diplomats from our consulate general attended court today as a visible sign of the UK's support, and they will continue to do so. We will continue to press for consular access to Mr Lai, which the Hong Kong prison authorities have repeatedly refused. China considers anyone of Chinese heritage born in China to be a Chinese national. It does not recognise other nationalities and therefore considers Mr Lai to be exclusively Chinese.

More broadly, we have made it clear that the national security law has damaged Hong Kong and its way of life. Rights and freedoms have been significantly eroded and arrests under the law have silenced opposition voices. It is a clear breach of the Sino-British joint declaration, the legally binding UN-registered treaty that China willingly entered into. Its continued existence and use is a demonstration of China breaking its international commitments. We will continue to stand up for the people of Hong Kong, to call out violations of their rights and freedoms, and to hold China to its international obligations.

Chinese Police Stations in UK

19 Apr 2023 | 731 cc247-257

Yvette Cooper: To ask the Home Secretary if she will make a statement on secret police stations operated in the UK by the Chinese Communist party.

Chris Philp (Minister for Crime, Policing and Fire): Ordinarily, the Minister for Security, my right hon. Friend the Member for Tonbridge and Malling (Tom Tugendhat) would have responded to this urgent question, because it sits within his portfolio. He is in Northern Ireland today, so I have been asked to respond in his place.

The latest reporting in The Times on the so-called overseas police stations are of course of great concern. As my right hon. Friend the Minister for Security said in his previous statement on the matter in November last year, investigations by the law enforcement community are ongoing, which limits what I can say in the House about a live investigation into a sensitive matter. As Members will appreciate, I do not want to say anything that would jeopardise any operational investigations or indeed any potential future prosecutions.

I will, however, take this opportunity to reassure the House of the Government's resolve to protect every community in this country from transnational repression. Protecting the people of the United Kingdom is of the utmost importance. Any attempt to coerce, intimidate or illegally repatriate any individual will not be tolerated. That egregious activity is part of a wider train of authoritarian Governments—not just China, but others—perpetrating transnational repression in an effort to silence their critics overseas, undermine democracy and the rule of law, and further their own narrow geopolitical interests.

Through our police forces and the intelligence agencies that work with them, we take a proactive approach to protecting individuals and communities from threats. Where we identify individuals who may be at heightened risk we are front-footed in deploying security measures and guidance where necessary.

The upcoming National Security Bill will strengthen our powers to deal with transnational repression and with agents of foreign states more generally. Coercion, harassment or intimidation linked to a foreign power will be criminalised under the new foreign interference offence in that Bill. Existing criminal offences against a person, such as assault, will in future command higher sentences where they are undertaken at the behest of a foreign power through the state threats aggravating factor in that Bill.

The National Security Bill will also introduce a new foreign influence registration scheme, and we will not hesitate to use those new powers to bear

down on the activities of foreign entities of concern. The Bill will return to this House in early May and I call on all hon. Members to support it when it does.

It is clear, however, that we can and must do more. That is why the Prime Minister asked my right hon. Friend the Minister for Security to lead a new defending democracy taskforce, a key priority of which is to enhance our response to transnational repression. That work is ongoing and he will provide an update to the House in due course. It builds on the work done by his ministerial predecessor, my right hon. Friend the Member for East Hampshire (Damian Hinds), who I see is in his place. I am clear, as is the rest of Government, that the repression of communities in the UK will not be tolerated and must be stopped.

9

Early Day Motions

British-Hong Kong Armed Forces veterans

EDM 1517 (session 2022-23)

19 July 2023

Andrew Rosindell

That this House acknowledges the successful outcome of the campaign for the right of abode for former British-Hong Kong Armed Forces, with the establishment of a new British-Hong Kong Armed Forces Veterans Settlement route allowing British-Hong Kong ex-servicemen the right to live and work in the UK; believes that those ex-servicemen who did not receive a UK passport following the handover of Hong Kong to the People's Republic of China in 1997 should now be offered that choice under this new settlement route; recognises that these men have gallantly served the British Crown in South-East Asia, as well as standing shoulder-to-shoulder with Britain in two World Wars, campaigns in France, Burma, Korea, Malaya, Singapore, Hong Kong, China and with the United Nations, serving King, Queen and Country; further recognises that this new settlement route corrects the unjust decision which forced servicemen to transfer from British-Hong Kong to Hong Kong-Chinese, preventing them from attaining British citizenship; acknowledges the rightful decision in 2019 to recognise the Hong Kong Military Service Corps as regular army corps, as opposed to locally employed personnel; and commends the sincere dedication of Peter Vorberg and Russ Banks, assisted by Alain Lau, Joe Lee, Roger Ching, Huw Matthews, Stella Thornton, Brigadier Norman Allen CBE, Victor Ho, all British Army veterans and all members of the Parliamentary Support Group, who fought to bring about this just outcome for all those who served with honour and distinction in the former British Crown Colony of Hong Kong.

Anniversary of Tiananmen Square

EDM 1267 (session 2022-23)

6 June 2023

Jim Shannon

That this House notes that 4 June 2023 marks the 34th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre; remembers those who died at the hands of the Chinese Communist Party as well as those who continue to face oppression by that Party; recognises the bravery and courage of those who protested in Tiananmen Square on this date in 1989; expresses concern that Hong Kong was the final place in China that commemorated the massacre in a yearly vigil until it was banned in 2020; and urges the Government to hold China to account for its continued blatant disregard for basic human rights and democratic principles which protesters stood for in the Tiananmen Square protests.

25th anniversary of the handover of Hong Kong

EDM 243 (session 2022-23)

4 July 2022

John Nicolson

That this House recognises today as the 25th anniversary of the handover of Hong Kong to China; laments that Hong Kongers are suffering from the collapse of the rule of law, an unchecked government, repression, erosion of freedoms, and destruction of civil society, despite their hope for continued peace, prosperity and freedom; recalls that, as part of the handover in 1997, the Chinese government promised the people of Hong Kong universal suffrage, a high degree of autonomy, and a commitment that their way of life would remain unchanged for fifty years; regrets that these promises—enshrined in the 1984 Sino-British Agreement and the subsequent Basic Law—have been repeatedly broken by the Chinese Communist Party; expresses grave concern that the freedoms of the press in Hong Kong have been greatly diminished; and calls on the UK Government to support the people of Hong Kong, since the safety and freedoms of Hong Kongers—here in the UK, in Hong Kong, and around the world—must be protected, as must democracy.

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