

**Minutes of the
Wilton Park Advisory Council (WPAC) Summer Meeting**

9th July 2009, Wiston House

Present

WILTON PARK ADVISORY COUNCIL:

Chairman Dr Farhan Nizami
Ms Rachel Briggs
Mr Dominic Brett
Mr Janusz Heath
Mr Rupert Robson
Prof Myles Wickstead
Lord Skidelsky
Ms Mary Jo Jacobi
Rt Hon Barones Joyce Quin
Sir Stephen Wall
Dr Ray Cunningham

FCO:

Mr Ian Hargreave,
Mr David Frost,
Ms Holly Tett, Head, Public Diplomacy Group
Mr Gary Truman, Public Diplomacy External Relations Team

WILTON PARK:

Donald Lamont (Chief Executive)
Nick Hopkinson
Robin Hart
Isobelle Jaques
Adela Gooch
Robert Grant
Stephen Pullinger
Julia Purcell
Mark Smith
Roger Williamson
Iain Ferguson

Regrets: Sir Patrick Cormack, Mr Nik Gowing, Mr David Heath, Ms S Lambert, Mr Michael Leigh, Sir Rodric Braithwaite, Professor Anand Menon, Professor Shamit Saggat, Prof Philippe Sands, Camilla Fenning (WP),

The Chairman said this would be his last meeting and also for the Chief Executive, Donald Lamont. Dr Nizami expressed his thanks to Donald and welcomed Ian Hargreaves and David Frost to the meeting. Dr Nizami noted that Steve Pullinger was moving on shortly and wished him every success for the future. Dr Nizami also welcomed the new Chairman Iain Ferguson to the meeting.

Iain Ferguson said he was delighted to be here at the Advisory Council, he was honoured to have been asked to Chair the Council and already new that the work the council does is of tremendous value. He is looking forward to hearing the discussion today and meeting you individually and discussing your views on how the work of the Council can be developed into the future.

The Chairman was sorry to hear of the sad passing of Michael Quinlan who was a valued member of the Council. He was a great help and wisdom to Wilton Park and other forums.

1. Apologies

See above.

2. Minutes of last meeting – agreed

Matters arising – none

3. Chief Executive Report

The Chief Executive provided an oral report. The organisation is in good health, impact of the outcome of the review is very positive going forward. Very positive appointment of Independent Chairman changes the dynamic. Predictable funding and learning how to employ the funding changes PD tactics and potential relationships with other government departments. New appointment of CE will be good news. DL had said he would move aside in late 2009 if the review was positive. The FCO panel have been conducting the interviews today.

Discussed three conferences which have stood out recently:-

Affordable housing were BBC World Service held a TV debate during the conference which is due to be screened on the 1st August.

Robust Peacekeeping – large UN Team presence and they were able to meet in secure surroundings.

Malaria which Exxonmobil supported the conference with \$200,000.

Mark Smith has received an email regarding Nuclear Non Proliferation volunteering speakers and participants for this conference which is due to take place in December.

Ian Hargreaves – Thanked the Chairman and members for their contribution and value to WP. Ian also thanked Donald Lamont for the enormous contribution he has made to Wilton Park. Also the support he provided to the FCO team and Ian Hargreaves during the review.

Now in the transitional period of rearranging the governance around Wilton Park. Pleased Iain Ferguson has agreed to be chair of the Advisory Council and Board, he will bring a wisdom and calm to Wilton Park. Ian confirmed the panel had just finished

interviewing candidates for the Chief Executive position and it will be announced next week.

Ian Hargreaves – said he did not want to set out the WP vision he felt this was for the new CE and Chairman to do. However, WP will continue to be a global leader in addressing Foreign office policies and challenges and a lot has happened since December. WP is not an expensive asset. The new CE will start in September by then we will have a completed reshaped board and a reshaped Advisory Council by the December meeting.

David Frost – Thanked Farhan for Chairing the Council and to Donald for his commitment to WP that has been fantastic. The strength of WP in soft power struck a high number of people he met who have been to WP conferences and who have kept up links with WP. Brand is strong out in the world and we should value it.

David Frost – The Advisory Council members should have received letters in the last few days thanking them for their contribution to the WPAC and explaining that the Council was to be reformed in time for the December meeting. During the review process Council's role was re-evaluated and it was not seen to have a clear enough mandate.

David Frost – Terms of office have expired in November and July. The process of reforming the Council will be a public one and will kick off soon. It is hoped that some existing members will rejoin the Council.

Robert Skidelsky – Would selection be on a public advertisement and did the FCO think anyone would apply to be a member.

David Frost – Not decided yet. Iain Ferguson and CE need to reflect on what expertise they require and yes it will be open to the public. He also thought they would get candidates applying.

6. Priorities for UK Foreign Policy

David Frost – there certainly will be a general election within the year and this could affect UK and European Policy what needs to be factored in but there is uncertainty. Middle East process, Iraq, Iran and India the problems are linked, but could be dealt with corporately. Election of President Obama will be able to move on with the Middle East process. That set of problems are major and require a lot of the time. Reliability being built in China, India, Russia and US Administration. Watching with US and Russia talks.

David Frost – 3rd Priority is next six months climate and run up to CAP summit in December. The mood has changed in the last 6 months, the US have been very positive and the Chinese may not be able to get away without commitment at summit.

David Frost – Europe phase awaiting the Lisbon Treaty. Europe looking for a mission and hit harder by the economic crises. Hope is if we get Lisbon Treaty this will signal new time of progress but the backdrop is uncertain.

David Frost – International reform and G8 – possible replacement of G20 and possibility a smaller and more mixed group. For counter terrorism looking at Pakistani issues and will be added to the agenda

David Frost said that the FCO had released three documents:-
International Security Policy
DFID White Paper
Government announcement strategic defence review

Myes Wickstead – Commented on the White Paper the conservatives will be issuing a green paper. Development is being shared across the parties.

Roger Williamson – DFID white paper emphasis on Fragile States and WP held a conference here in March which helped the White Paper.

Joyce Quinn – Pick upon conservative attitude on developments how successful in involving people in other issues have found it hard to get conservative involvement.

Donald Lamont – David Cameron's Chief of Staff at a conference next week. DL also had a productive meeting with Andrew Mitchell about 3 months ago.

Conference Programme – Proposals for 2010

Donald Lamont the Programme Directors were responding at shorter notice. The proposed 2010 programme provided no dates which reflects real change.

Each Programme Director went through their 2010 conferences.

7. Any Other Business

Dr Nizami thanked the members of the Council who have made meetings both very enjoyable and rewarding. He thanked colleagues of the FCO and Programme Directors. He concluded by thanking the Chief Executive who had arrived at a difficult time and could take satisfaction from the changes that had emerged following the FCO Review.

The Chief Executive thanked the Chairman for his expression of good wishes and made a small presentation on behalf of staff at Wilton Park. He had been grateful for his personal advice and support. He was grateful to all members of the Council for their commitment to ensuring Wilton Park's continuing success and for their advice.

Dr Nizami then handed over to Iain Ferguson who would be chairing the next meeting.

Iain Ferguson – the process of forming the new Council will take place over the next couple of months. The Chair and CE will need help from existing members and want to build on what has happened in the past.

8. Date of next meeting

8th December 2009 at 10.30 at the FCO offices.