Revised transcript of evidence taken before

The Select Committee on the Arctic

Inquiry on

THE ARCTIC

Evidence Session No. 1  Heard in Public  Questions 1 - 15

WEDNESDAY 9 JULY 2014

10.40 am

Witnesses: Jane Rumble, Henry Burgess, Martin Malloy and Debbie Brothers
Members present

Lord Teverson (Chairman)
Lord Addington
Lord Ashton of Hyde
Baroness Browning
Lord Hannay of Chiswick
Viscount Hanworth
Lord Moynihan
Lord Oxburgh
Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean
Lord Tugendhat

Examination of Witnesses

Jane Rumble, Head of Polar Regions Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Henry Burgess, Deputy Head of Polar Regions Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Martin Molloy, Senior Executive Officer, United Nations, OSCE and Arctic Policy, Ministry of Defence, and Debbie Brothers, Deputy Head of Bilateral Relations, NATO and Europe Policy, Ministry of Defence

Q1 The Chairman: I welcome you to the first evidence session of the Arctic Select Committee. I am very pleased to welcome members of the Foreign Office who are giving evidence today. We are being broadcast and a transcript is being made. I am sure you have a good idea of the sort of questions that will be asked. Before we start off, could you briefly introduce yourselves to the Committee and to anybody who is listening to the broadcast, in whichever order you wish to go?

Henry Burgess: My name is Henry Burgess. I am the deputy head of the polar regions department in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Jane Rumble: I am Jane Rumble. I am head of the polar regions department in the Foreign Office.
Martin Molloy: I am Martin Molloy. I am the UN, OSCE and Arctic policy desk lead in the MoD.

Debbie Brothers: I am Debbie Brothers. I am the deputy head of bilateral relations, NATO and European policy team in the Ministry of Defence.

The Chairman: Can I just say one thing, which is probably obvious? We are not expecting all of you to answer all the questions. Those who relate particularly to those subjects can take part, although if someone wants to put in a particularly important point, please do so. I need to declare my own interest in that I am a non-executive director of the Marine Management Organization. Perhaps we could move on to the UK’s role in the Arctic. I would like to start by asking what role the United Kingdom is seeking to play in the Arctic and what the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Defence see as priorities for UK interests in the Arctic.

Jane Rumble: In terms of our interests in the Arctic, we published an Arctic policy framework in October last year, and this set out the broad interests that we have as the nearest neighbour to the Arctic region. Our main role is to promote our interests, which extend right across the spectrum from the security and safety of the Arctic region to the protection of the Arctic environment, to the commercial interests that the Arctic offers, of which there are several. The UK is particularly interested in terms of energy security, shipping, access and tourism. We also have a role in supporting the Arctic states in their stewardship of the Arctic.

The Chairman: Perhaps I could follow up one area. The Foreign Office has quite a strong mission in terms of human rights. Does the UK have a view about indigenous peoples in the Arctic, in terms of its broader human rights policy?

Jane Rumble: The Arctic Council is made up of the eight Arctic states. It has six bodies that represent the indigenous peoples, and so our role as a state observer is to very much
support the right of the indigenous peoples to have their voices heard in that forum, and not to do anything that would diminish the status of the permanent participants.

**The Chairman:** What are the MoD’s interests in the polar regions?

**Debbie Brothers:** I suppose it really falls out of the expedition. We want to maintain security and stability in the region; the bilateral security relationships we have, particularly with NATO partners who are in the Arctic Council, are also very important to us. Freedom of navigation is of interest to the Ministry of Defence as they are to anybody who has ships. It is a fairly straightforward aspiration.

**The Chairman:** Just give me an idea of where it is in priorities. I am pleased to see that clearly it has its own desk officer or head of arctic policy. Where does it fit in the broader context of British foreign policy? Is it on the rise or the decline?

**Jane Rumble:** I would say it is probably on the rise, mainly because of the increasing interest in the Arctic region. The Arctic Council itself is a relatively young body—it was only formed in 1996—and the rapid changes in the Arctic have prompted a rise in interest. You will know that the Arctic sea ice is retreating at a considerable rate—faster than originally predicted—which is causing rapid change in the region. For that reason, I think it is on the increase; there is certainly a broader interest in the Arctic than there was 10 years ago, for example.

**The Chairman:** As a last question on that point, do we ever have ministerial visits to the Arctic Council or Arctic Council meetings as part of our observer status, or is it purely officials?

**Jane Rumble:** It is mainly officials, because of the role that the UK plays as a state observer. We are not sitting front and centre in the decision-making forum, so to have a Minister sit at the back while Ministers of the Arctic states speak would not be the best use of time. But Ministers are focused on the issue. Our Minister has spoken at Arctic events recently in the
UK; he also raises the issue of the Arctic bilaterally when he meets various Ministers of the Arctic states or others with an Arctic interest. It is an active area of the ministerial profile. The Arctic Council itself and Ministers of the Arctic states meet every other year for the end of the respective chairmanship, which lasts two years, but Ministers from non-Arctic states do not attend.

**The Chairman:** Could you just tell us, for the record, who the Minister is?

**Jane Rumble:** Yes, it is Mark Simmonds, for the Foreign Office.

**Q2 Lord Addington:** Why have the Government chosen to have an Arctic policy framework rather than a strategy? How did you devise it and what is its effect on those Arctic states? Secondly, what has been the response to the publication, both domestically and internationally?

**Jane Rumble:** The UK Arctic policy has been developing over the past decade, particularly following the publication of the Arctic climate impact assessment, which gave the Arctic a greater focus because of the description of all the climatic changes. Each of the Arctic states has also been developing its broader interests across the Arctic. They were developing Arctic strategies from around 2008—so the articulation of an Arctic strategy by the Arctic states themselves has been quite recent. Each of the Arctic states has produced an Arctic strategy. For the UK, we wanted to articulate our Arctic interests. Some of the Arctic states felt that a “strategy” is connected to something over which you have direct control and has objectives and deliverables, and felt that it might be going a bit far for a non-Arctic state to suggest that it was in control of various elements of Arctic policy. Some of the other Arctic states were not quite so sensitive, but to walk that particular tightrope, we decided not to call it a strategy but to set out our Arctic policy interests in a framework, so that we could be clear
what the UK’s main interests were. I am sorry, I have forgotten the second part of the question.

**Lord Addington:** What has the response been to the publication, both here and aboard?

**Jane Rumble:** As we understand it, each of the Arctic states welcomed the policy framework as a clear and transparent articulation of the UK’s interests across the board. We have certainly had very explicit good feedback from some of the Arctic states. Norway and Denmark in particular have recently commented to our Minister that they very much welcome the publication of the Arctic policy framework.

**Lord Addington:** One supplementary question comes to mind immediately. Which states are you referring to, and why do you think they are being that sensitive about this use of language? It would be quite helpful to hear that.

**Jane Rumble:** I suppose the different interests come from the different states’ position in the Arctic. The largest countries in the Arctic, with the broadest interest, Russia and Canada, have very broad Arctic policies because it is a large part of their entire territory. They were possibly the most interested in ensuring that the Arctic states had a very clear remit compared to the other Arctic states. There was then a difference in terms of the northern European engagement with the UK, as a European partner.

**Lord Addington:** So it is straightforwardly a case of, “It is our backyard, or most of it, so please be very polite when you are stepping in it”?.

**Jane Rumble:** Yes, although I probably would not put it quite like that.

**The Chairman:** What about domestically? There are NGOs that have an interest and there are quite strong campaigners in this country on polar issues, the Arctic, climate change and all those sorts of things. There is also British industry. Was there any reaction from those UK stakeholders across that broad spectrum?
**Jane Rumble:** Yes. When we were drafting the policy framework, we had various meetings, including with the Arctic states’ representation in London, as well as with some of the larger UK commercial operators in the Arctic and the NGOs. In fact we had one discussion involving both those players at the same time, to try to tease out some of the difference of views. There are different perspectives across the NGO spectrum, I think. You will probably hear directly from them, but there are some that are quite pragmatic in terms of wanting to engage with industry to ensure higher standards and best practice, while others feel that certain activities should not take place in the Arctic region, such as hydrocarbon drilling. There are views across the spectrum. There are also different views within the hydrocarbons industry: one company said it would not look at the Arctic at this time, while other companies are looking at it.

**Lord Addington:** You talked about Russia and Canada. Is it becoming apparent that there is a co-ordinated approach on this between the two of them or is it just two versions of the same thing? Is there quite clearly a conversation and a co-ordinated approach?

**Jane Rumble:** I think you would have to ask them that. I do not see it. Within the Arctic Council, there is a lively debate, as you would expect in any multilateral forum in which different views are expressed. Collectively, they have welcomed the state observers, the Arctic policy framework and the UK’s interest.

**Q3 Viscount Hanworth:** I would ask one of the witnesses to clarify the UK’s observer status in the Arctic Council. Is that an ad hoc status that requires an invitation at each meeting, as I believe is the case for the European Union, or does it have a greater permanency? Beyond that, do Her Majesty’s Government believe that the Arctic Council represents an appropriate forum in which to promote the interests of the UK? Finally, do you believe that the Arctic
Council will be capable of playing a satisfactory role in future in the governance of the Arctic region?

*Jane Rumble:* Yes. In terms of the status, all of the states which are state observers to the Arctic Council are full state observers. The EU is the only—

*Viscount Hanworth:* Ad hoc?

*Jane Rumble:* Yes. It is the only regional collection of states that has that ad hoc status at this time. I think it is an appropriate forum, where the issue is relevant to the work of the Arctic Council. At the moment, the Arctic Council does not necessarily cover, or have on its agenda, everything that we might be interested in. For example, it does not look at fishing, although it might in the future; it does not look at whaling, although it might in the future; and it does not look at security, as there are separate forums for that. Where it is addressing an issue that is of interest to us, it is an appropriate forum. It is the regional body, and we support it as the organisation looking at co-operation, but it does not cover everything that we have interests in. For example, the polar shipping code is being discussed within the International Maritime Organization, although the Arctic Council might then have additional issues to discuss in respect of shipping. The UK is active in different forums that have an Arctic element to them. In terms of it being satisfactory into the future, all the evidence is that it is growing in its influence and ambition and that it is beginning to agree binding treaties. I think it looks like it should be, at least.

*Viscount Hanworth:* On another tack, might I ask whether Her Majesty’s Government are fully satisfied with and supportive of the provisions of UNCLOS—the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea? Might they not feel that the convention accords excessive territorial rights to certain Arctic nations? As a rider, are you willing and prepared to comment on the seeming unwillingness of the United States to ratify the convention?
The Chairman: Could we come back to that as a supplementary? I will bring you in again on the fifth question, which I think Baroness Symons wants to ask. Perhaps we could bring it in there as a supplementary to that and I could come back to you.

Lord Hannay of Chiswick: I wanted to ask a supplementary to the question that you have just replied to. Let us assume that the Arctic Council moves towards reaching some legally binding rules among its own members on a particular sectoral issue, and that we have interests that are affected by that. Perhaps we do not like the detailed way in which it is proposing to deal with it. How do we set about handling that, given that we have no decision-making rights? As far as I can see, we do not even have the right to speak at meetings of the council. Perhaps you could explain how we would set about doing it, other than by lobbying in the Arctic Council capitals, which goes without saying.

The Chairman: I am sorry but I think that also really comes in on the fifth question about governance structures. Rather than wandering through it, perhaps Lord Hannay I could bring you in on the defence side and then come back to both of you in terms of supplementaries in the governance area. Perhaps that would be the best way to do it.

Lord Oxburgh: Could I ask a quick one? In your experience, does the Arctic Council frequently take votes?

Jane Rumble: No, it is a consensus body so the articulation of the positions makes it clear whether consensus has been reached or not.

The Chairman: I promise members of the Committee that we will come back to governance in a minute. Lord Tugendhat.

Lord Tugendhat: With your experience of international organisations, does the level of representation at the Arctic Council vary significantly between countries? Do some countries
send more important people and some less important people? On that basis, which countries would appear to attach the most importance to it?

**Jane Rumble:** I do not think I know enough about the grade structures in each of the foreign ministries to answer that exactly, but will say that each of the Arctic states takes it very seriously. The Foreign Ministers of those Arctic states are the formal members of the Arctic Council and each of the Arctic states has nominated a senior official, all of whom, I would say, are at ambassador level. I do not know exactly whether there are subtle differences but there is certainly no question but that they are able to speak their mind. There is nothing obvious within the forum that indicates that one country is just in listening mode and others are all actively engaged; they are all actively involved.

**The Chairman:** We are going to come on to how the Arctic Council is governed, when we can perhaps have a number of supplementaries and discuss that in greater detail. Perhaps we should move on to security and defence for the mean time.

**Q4 Lord Hannay of Chiswick:** As this is my first statement, I declare my interests as a member of the advisory board for the Centre for European Reform, a member of the Forum for the Future of Europe and a member of the council of the University of Kent. First, the Arctic policy framework, which the Foreign Office sponsored, states when considering stability in the region that “the role of NATO will remain central”. What does that actually mean? What role do the Government see NATO, the European Union’s common security and defence policy or, indeed, our own Armed Forces having in the region? To what extent is that view shared by at least the NATO members—presumably not the Russians—of the Arctic Council? The second question is quite different and not to do with NATO. Could you explain to us what relevance, if any, the fact that all the members of the Arctic Council are members of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe has to their dealings
with each other? Indeed, what relevance does the Paris charter, which has been signed by all those countries including all the other members of the OSCE, have? It deals with many issues such as minorities and respect for territorial integrity, sovereignty and so on. Perhaps you could answer both the NATO and the OSCE points.

Jane Rumble: I should just start by saying that the Arctic policy framework is a cross-government document, cleared across all of HMG not just the FCO. You asked about NATO and the OSCE, and I will invite the MoD to take that one.

Debbie Brothers: I am happy to take NATO but I am afraid I cannot really respond on the OSCE, because we have not got the expertise here today.

The Chairman: Sorry, my hearing is not brilliant.

Debbie Brothers: I was saying that I am happy to pick the NATO point up but OSCE probably needs to be taken back to the FCO policy leads on the OSCE to answer.

Lord Hannay of Chiswick: I thought the OSCE was included in the titles that you gave earlier.

Debbie Brothers: The MoD supports the policy but we do not own it. The ambassador to the OSCE is a Foreign Office official, so the FCO drives the policy there, although we are deliverers of that policy when appropriate, if that makes sense. Is that right Martin?

Martin Molloy: Yes.

Debbie Brothers: Thank you. I just had to check with the OSCE expert in the MoD. NATO really is central for our relationship with those members of the Arctic Council that are also in NATO and on the Arctic Security Forces Roundtable—which are the United States, Canada, Iceland, Norway and Denmark, with the latter of course including Greenland, which is part of that country. For the UK, NATO remains the primary route through which we talk about security and defence relationships with these states. I know that within the Arctic Council views are split about the role that NATO should have in terms of involvement with the
council. Within NATO itself, there is not necessarily a common view about its roles in the Arctic. You might find it helpful to know that, back in May last year, the Secretary-General did state that NATO has no intention at this time of raising its presence and activities in the “high north”, for which you can effectively read the Arctic. In terms of the MoD’s role, we see the role of our forces as supporting capability development and maintenance. We do this through cold-weather training for our Armed Forces in Norway and engaging in Norwegian-led Arctic-based NATO exercises.

**Lord Hannay of Chiswick:** Did you want to complete the answer?

**Jane Rumble:** I was just going to comment on the OSCE point, having had it batted back. I am not the expert on this, but as we understand it, the OSCE looks at peace and stability in the parts of Europe that might need it. So I think our general view would be that to request its engagement in the Arctic might be perceived as suggesting that there might be an area of tension—which there is not. Equally, it has a very broad membership, so the Arctic states would again be a bit concerned about having that much broader involvement in some of the issues that the Arctic Council is itself working on. It would be potentially duplicative, but the main perception would be that it suggested there was some kind of tension when there was not.

**Lord Hannay of Chiswick:** I was not suggesting that there was any tension at all. I was merely asking you to explain the relevance of the OSCE, which all members of the Arctic Council are members of, and the relevance of its charter, which relates to many issues which come up in the Arctic Council, such as minorities—or indigenous peoples in the Arctic context—respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, and so on. What relevance does that have to the Arctic Council? I think I interpret your answer as saying that none of you has ever thought about it.
Jane Rumble: It is probably fair to say that it is not something that we have looked at, because the OSCE would have to agree collectively that it wanted to look at the Arctic. I cannot imagine—

Lord Hannay of Chiswick: But it is part of the territorial area of the OSCE, is it not? These countries we are talking about are members of it.

Jane Rumble: Yes, but it does not mean—

Lord Hannay of Chiswick: They do not have to agree anything.

Jane Rumble: But that does not necessarily mean that they want to have a focus in that region.

Lord Hannay of Chiswick: I was not talking about focus, frankly, I just asked what the relevance of it was—which appears to be zero.

Jane Rumble: Yes.

Martin Molloy: Trying to get to the nub of your point, all the nations of the Arctic Council abide by their OSCE obligations, and that includes in the Arctic area as well. However, the OSCE agreement and the Arctic remit are kept quite separate in their dealings. So, although they all maintain their security and reporting obligations under the OSCE, it does not seem to impact greatly on the work of the Arctic Council, apart from the fact that they all maintain that level or standard.

Lord Hannay of Chiswick: Thank you, I think I understand that. What you are saying is that there is a potential involvement there, but it is not a practical one at the moment because there are not the sort of issues that would bring the OSCE into action in the way it has been in eastern Ukraine. But potentially, there are a set of binding obligations on all the members of the Arctic Council.

Debbie Brothers: Yes.
Martin Molloy: Yes.

Jane Rumble: Yes.

Lord Hannay of Chiswick: Thank you very much. Could you just say, on the NATO point, that the NATO secretariat and the NATO Secretary-General therefore have no contact at all with the Arctic Council—they are not represented as observers, they are not consulted?

Jane Rumble: No. Not all the members of the Arctic Council are in NATO.

Lord Hannay of Chiswick: Not all members of the Arctic Council are in the EU, but the EU plays a role.

Q5 Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean: I should declare a pretty tentative interest as I am a consultant to CCC, which has interests in oil and gas in the Middle East region. It has no interests in the Arctic region. The clerks put round a very interesting piece from the *Alaska Dispatch*, which says that, at the beginning of this month, “Canada surprised the Arctic Council by replacing its chair”, halfway through the chairman’s tenure. The chairman who Canada has just put into the Arctic Council has a very strong military background, specialising particularly in Afghanistan, as luck would have it. Clearly, the *Alaska Dispatch* thinks that it is significant to have put in a military man halfway through his predecessor’s tenure. Have you read anything into this? Are the Canadians thinking, “Actually, we really do need somebody with a stronger defence background chairing the council”?

Jane Rumble: No, we have not seen anything explicitly. You would need to ask Canada if there was any reason for this. As far as we are aware, the role of the chair of the senior Arctic officials has not changed at all—the job description is the same, as is the role and function. I do not know why they changed their official.

Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean: Do you not think it might be quite a good idea to ask? We are there as observers, because we have interests and are acknowledged as having
interests. It does seem to have caused a bit of interest locally in the Arctic region. To change a chairman halfway through a tenure is a pretty significant thing to do, particularly when you are seemingly putting in someone with a very different background. I just wonder whether that is not something worth raising.

*Jane Rumble:* We will raise it. It is quite a recent occurrence.

*Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean:* Absolutely.

*Jane Rumble:* The churn of diplomatic posts does not necessarily mean anything, but we will be checking that, yes.

*The Chairman:* Viscount Hanworth, do you want to pursue the area about the Arctic Council itself? A number of people have supplementaries on that but we will get on to other broader governance issues in the next question.

*Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean:* That was defence related.

**Q6 Viscount Hanworth:** I wanted to ask a question about UNCLOS, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. In particular, are Her Majesty’s Government fully satisfied with, and supportive of, the provisions of the convention or might they not feel that the treaty accords excessive territorial rights to certain Arctic nations? As a rider to that question, are you prepared to comment on the seeming unwillingness of the United States to ratify UNCLOS?

*Jane Rumble:* The UK is a full member of UNCLOS and abides by its provisions and within its framework.

*Viscount Hanworth:* With enthusiasm?

*Jane Rumble:* Yes. The US has stated that it would like to and intends to ratify UNCLOS. It views UNCLOS to be what it terms customary international law, which means that the US does abide by its provisions. As for the Arctic, each of the Arctic coastal states signed an
agreement in Greenland a few years ago, called the Ilulissat declaration, in which they all committed to abide by the rules of UNCLOS in respect of Arctic governance, including the US. So they are politically committed to operating within the UNCLOS framework.

**Viscount Hanworth:** You have no sense that the framework accords excessive territorial rights to certain nations?

**Jane Rumble:** Not territorial rights. There are some disagreements over the interpretation of the rights under UNCLOS—for example, as you will no doubt be aware, about whether the Northwest Passage forms an international strait or territorial waters. But that is an interpretation of the provisions of UNCLOS rather than a question about whether UNCLOS itself gives an unlevel playing field to those sorts of issues.

**Viscount Hanworth:** If not territorial rights, are rights to mineral extraction a contentious issue?

**Jane Rumble:** No, there is full agreement globally. If you can demonstrate that you have an extended continental shelf under UNCLOS, then you have rights over the seabed there. How big your continental shelf happens to be is a fact of geology. The Arctic continental shelf is yet to be delimited by the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, and the different Arctic states are putting in their proposals. Russia has put its proposals in and was asked to submit more information. That is all under consideration but it will be a fact of geography whether they have an extended continental shelf or not.

**Viscount Hanworth:** Everybody is prepared to accept the consequences of that?

**Jane Rumble:** Yes. There is a two-stage process. The UN will preside over the agreement as to where the outer limits of the continental shelf are and, if it is not clear who is the coastal state, there will then be separate negotiations between states with interests as to who is
actually sovereign over those bits of continental shelf. That would be a separate—bilateral, trilateral or whatever—debate.

**Viscount Hanworth:** So it is not merely hydrography—a political process will ensue afterwards.

**Jane Rumble:** Yes, the geography is about whether the continental shelf exists or not. If you have two neighbouring states, they still have to agree their boundary and who would be sovereign over which bit.

**The Chairman:** Can I just ask when how long you think this process—the territorial negotiations and decisions—is likely to take?

**Jane Rumble:** It can take a long time. It depends on what the drivers are for coming to a resolution. The Norwegians and the Russians recently agreed their delimited maritime boundary in the Barents Sea. They were negotiating for a long time, but as more information came out about the potential resource interest in that region, there was more of an impetus to make greater progress on it. There are boundaries that still need to be agreed between some of the other states, such as between Canada and America, but that is not in an area which anybody is necessarily that interested in at this stage, so they have not prioritised those negotiations. It can vary depending on what the drivers are for getting agreement.

**Lord Hannay of Chiswick:** Do we think that the Russians planting a flag on the North Pole—under the water, if I understand it correctly—was consistent with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea?

**Jane Rumble:** I would suggest that the planting of the flag on the North Pole was a spectacular piece of PR—it did not have any legal status. Doing it or not doing was not an illegal act; nor was it an act that has any bearing in law whatsoever. It was simply symbolic, and a suggestion by Russia that it has interests in the North Pole.
Lord Hannay of Chiswick: That is the view of the Russians, too?

Jane Rumble: Yes, Russia accepts that. They did not put the flag on the North Pole and then exert claims over it except through the normal UNCLOS way, in which they are suggesting that their continental shelf extends to the North Pole.

The Chairman: Earlier on, Lord Hannay, you wanted to ask a question about what would happen if the Arctic Council agreed something and we disagreed with it.

Lord Hannay of Chiswick: If this is the appropriate moment.

The Chairman: Yes, I think this is the appropriate moment to do that.

Q7 Lord Hannay of Chiswick: Going back to an area we were on before, I wanted to ask you a question about when the Arctic Council is moving towards making an agreement. I take it that it reaches agreement by consensus because it requires unanimity to take decisions. If it is moving towards doing something about a subject or a sectoral issue that we are interested in, and we thought that the direction in which it was proposing to go and establish law—which would apply to us—was against our interest or not exactly as we would want it, what recourse do we have, given that we apparently cannot speak at the Arctic Council and are not part of the decision-making process, other than the normal bilateral contacts in capitals, which of course we would have even if we were not an observer at the Arctic Council?

Jane Rumble: Since we are back on the Arctic Council, I just wanted to clarify the discussion that we had about the Canadian chair of the senior Arctic officials. The Canadian chair of the Arctic Council itself remains their Minister, Minister Aglukkaq: it is the chair of the senior Arctic officials who has changed. On the question, the UK’s relationship with the Arctic states is pretty strong and multilayered. When it comes to discussions that they might have about binding agreements, you say that all we can do is maybe discuss things in post, but that is actually quite powerful. I know the senior Arctic official for Norway very well, and my
opposite number in Washington, and they have been extremely generous and open in
discussing the sort of agreements that they are making. They are very keen for it not to
prejudice their relationship with other states. They do not have any interest in closing the
door to some of these things. They have been very clear, for example, that they would not
want to see the discussions on enhancing scientific co-operation as a closed Arctic shop.
They know that scientific excellence comes from having a much broader range of countries,
so they have a similar remit in mind. Engaging bilaterally before the issues go into
negotiations is quite a powerful tool to have. It is the same anywhere in the world: if a
collection of states decide they want to get together to agree something and exclude other
states, that is the same challenge. The only thing that we can do is to try to influence the
states in question and make our case, which we can do multilaterally. It is not that we
cannot speak at the Arctic Council—it is not particularly welcome sometimes, if there is a
very busy agenda, but if we had something that we particularly needed to get across, we
would be able to raise our flag at the council.

**Lord Hannay of Chiswick:** You would?

**Jane Rumble:** Yes, we have spoken at the Arctic Council on some occasions. It is just that
they do not want to go through every single state observer. That is understandable—if all 12
of them spoke for 10 minutes it would take a long time—but if there is something very
pertinent, you can indicate to the chair that you wish to comment, and there has never been
an occasion when they have said, “No, you cannot make that point”.

**Lord Oxburgh:** I want to go back to shelf and area jurisdiction, which we were on a moment
ago, and ask a slightly technical question. The impression I get, which may be quite wrong, is
that the extended Russian claims depend on interpreting the relatively shallower water over
the Lomonosov Ridge as forming part of their shelf. Physiologically, in terms of topography,
they might just have a case, but of course geologically it is quite different. Has anyone taken a view on this?

_Jane Rumble_: That is exactly what the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf is looking at. It has built up a certain level of case history. For example, in the UK, it has agreed an extended continental shelf in the south-west approaches towards Cornwall. As I understand it, we did not get agreement for a proposal for an extended continental shelf around Ascension Island. It is going through the process of identifying in order to apply it consistently across the globe. I do not know the answer to your question, because it has not yet been decided.

_Lord Oxburgh_: But that is presumably the basis of the Russian claim.

_Jane Rumble_: Yes.

_The Chairman_: On the particular question of how it operates at the moment, there has been quite an influx recently of other observers, particularly from Asia. I am interested in the dynamics of that. Do the observers get together? Is there an observer caucus—an Asian observer caucus or a European observer caucus? How does the politics work, or does everybody play it straight as individual observer nation-states?

_Jane Rumble_: It is evolving. When the Arctic Council was first set up in 1996, there were five state observers, which were all European states. There was a caucus of those state observers. Then Spain joined and there were six. On a couple of occasions, the state observers agreed a statement that we read out to the council, but that was when we were all European states and had every similar interests. Now, the diversity of the state observers is such that it is not necessarily the case that our greatest interests as the UK lie with all of those different state observers—our interests are actually very closely aligned to the European countries that are Arctic Council members. Equally, we have very good links with
Canada and America, as well as some interests in line with Russia. The dynamics of getting all 12 together are complex, so it is not really a formal forum. There have been a few ad hoc meetings with the state observers—Poland co-ordinated a meeting a few years ago, and the then senior Arctic official chair from Sweden came to the discussion, but it is not a formal body. We would be cautious about being seen as a sort of group of state observers, because then you have 12 state observers and the eight Arctic states. It is not a “them and us” dynamic and we would not want it to be perceived as such.

Q8 Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean: The Arctic Council was set up in 1996, which is 18 years ago now. We have talked about the changes there have been in the observer states, but I wonder whether the Arctic Council is able, in its current form, to deal with the sorts of changes that we have seen since 1996. A very interesting WEF paper circulated to the Select Committee makes the point that economic pressures have really come forward in the past few years. There is also the issue of natural resources and the growing viability of seasonal shipping. Then there are the whole range of issues about collaborative activity in relation to investment in the region and the need for better science in the region. What is your assessment? We have talked about the changes, but have they led to sufficient flexibility to deal with the real change on the ground in environmental issues, the growing mineral wealth and the sorts of growing interests that everybody has in part of the world that is said to have a quarter of the world’s minerals in its territory?

Jane Rumble: I should say that the Arctic Council was established by ministerial declaration of the eight Arctic states to co-operate and collaborate where there is mutual interest. For some of the issues you are talking about, there will be potentially different challenges, depending on which Arctic country you are talking about. There could be very different challenges for northern Canada—most of the multiyear ice that is left tends to be on the
Canadian border rather than in Norway, where the consequences of global warming are such that Norway is becoming increasingly ice-free. You now have to go north of Svalbard as a tourist to find the ice and the polar bears. There are different challenges that countries might look at on a state basis. They are all developed independent states with their own jurisdictions, their own rights over their minerals and their own decision-making about how they wish to develop the Arctic. The Arctic Council looks at the issues on which they all have a collective interest and on which they want to co-operate. The Arctic Council may not be the right forum to look at individual investment in individual mining projects, as that would just be a decision for the state.

Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean: What about the waterways in particular? That is obviously an area where there will be a lot of interest in rights to different waterways. There is a China News piece about the Chinese setting off in two days’ time with really an extraordinary expedition—65 scientists have all gone off and are spending 76 days there. Does that raise questions about use of the waterways? Are our Government happy with how the access to waterways is working at the moment?

Jane Rumble: Again, the Arctic Council is this collection of states looking at areas of interest. There are many other international agreements that have an Arctic component, which sit above that, if you like, as they are legally binding treaties. UNCLOS, which we have mentioned, is the international agreement that would govern the rights to shipping and waterways et cetera. In that respect, it is very clear that each of the Arctic states has jurisdiction over its territorial sea, its exclusive economic zone and potentially its seabed under UNCLOS. The UK role would be through UNCLOS and the International Maritime Organization, where we are a full player, to look at the Arctic in the same way that you
would look at any other region of the world. There is not an obvious concern about it at this stage.

**The Chairman:** You mentioned the international aspect. We are obviously aware of UNCLOS and of the IMO as an organisation, but what others are there? What else is on the list? I do not think we have ever asked or thought about that.

**Jane Rumble:** This will not be a completely full list, but the ones that we particularly look at would be UNCLOS and the International Maritime Organization. Then, in respect of the UN, you would look at the establishment of regional fisheries management organisations, were there to be one for the Arctic—there is one for the Pacific, one for the north-east Atlantic and one for the north Atlantic, so they are bordering up on to the Arctic. The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change obviously has a significant Arctic focus and interest. There is the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants—the Arctic is a sink for pollutants, so there is a big issue, and that has been a particularly significant treaty in looking at pollutants in the Arctic. There is the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Whaling Commission—

**The Chairman:** I apologise, I am putting you on the spot and making you go through a list. Perhaps it would be useful if you could provide a list from the FCO of the international agreements that are particularly pertinent to the Arctic.

**Jane Rumble:** We will do that, yes.

**Lord Oxburgh:** A summary of what they cover.

**The Chairman:** That would be extremely useful: a summary of what they deal with, if it is not obvious from the title.

**Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean:** Including the signatories.

**Jane Rumble:** Okay.
Q9 Baroness Browning: I should declare that I am a member of the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments. Could I ask you about the EU and its effectiveness? We are rather assuming that some of the difficulties the EU has had in its applications to the Arctic Council, and its current ad hoc observer status, are down to one EU regulation, 1007/2009, which relates to seal products. How damaging is that? Has the EU made any attempt to lobby on this regulation? In other words, does it recognise that there might be movement one way if it was to move another way on this regulation? Are any of the other documents that it has issued, particularly some of the policy documents it has issued in respect of the Arctic Circle, matters of concern, or does the Arctic Council accept what the EU has said on policy?

Jane Rumble: I will take that the other way round. The EU has articulated its policy on its interest in the Arctic in a number of Council conclusions over recent years. It has matured those positions in broad consultation with the Arctic states so that they are now, we get the general impression, not of great concern to the Arctic states. They are very much in line with the UK’s policy, so they have highlighted some of the issues which we highlighted in our Arctic policy framework.

The issue that caused some consternation in terms of the EU’s status on the Arctic Council is, as you mentioned, the seal trade issue. The EU perspective is fairly clear that the regulation provides for indigenous peoples to trade seal products; the regulation states that an indigenous seal harvesting practice can have an exemption from the regulation. You can have a certificate and then trade within the EU. Indigenous peoples in various bits of Greenland and Sweden have signed up to this. It is Canada’s view that the broad prohibition on sealing products and trade in them has a knock-on effect on the markets that indigenous peoples might be able to trade into, so the fact that it prohibits commercial sealing is
damaging their indigenous trade. They have not therefore sought the exemptions that you would be able to get under the EU seal regulation. That is the position they are in. There has been a case at the WTO looking at this, whose outcome Canada is still considering. The EU feels that it has stated the case, and has invited Canada to apply; Canada feels that it still has concerns about the regulations, so it is ongoing.

**Baroness Browning:** Has it been really damaging to Canada and Greenland?

**Jane Rumble:** You would have to ask Canada for their assessment of that. They say that it has been damaging.

**Baroness Browning:** What about the UK’s position? Do the UK Government support the EU having full observer status? We are actually signatories, are we not, to this regulation that is causing all the problems?

**Jane Rumble:** We are, yes. This is a Defra policy area, if you want the detail on sealing, but as I understand it, there is no appetite in the UK to go back to a commercial seal trade. There is no market, as far as we can see, as people do not want to buy seal products derived from commercial hunting and exploitation. We support the EU’s observer status: the Council conclusions that the EU should seek observer status on the Arctic Council were agreed. There are many areas in which it could be very beneficial to engage with the Arctic Council, so it has this ad hoc observer status. This issue with Canada is obviously very political, and Canada wanted to make a very public statement about it.

**The Chairman:** Does the fact that there has recently been a fairly big trade agreement between Canada and the EU not help move this agenda forward?

**Jane Rumble:** I would think so. I am not the expert on sealing or trade, or on the agreement between the EU and Canada, but yes, there is quite a lot of optimism in the EU and within the other Arctic Council states that this issue can be resolved.
Q10  **Lord Tugendhat:** How is UK policy towards the Arctic co-ordinated across various government departments that have an interest in it? Would you judge that the salience of Arctic issues has risen significantly in the past three to five years and where does it stand now? I am struck by the fact that Mark Simmonds is responsible for Africa, for many of the UK’s overseas territories and for the Caribbean, too, I think. It does not seem to be a natural fit to have the Arctic—it looks a bit of an add-on and would suggest that the Arctic does not, as yet, loom very large in your salience list, as it were.

**Henry Burgess:** I will take that one. The Foreign Office co-ordinates discussions with the various departments on a bilateral basis as we need to, for example with DECC or Defra if it is an environment or energy issue. We also chair a cross-Whitehall Arctic network, which meets with representatives from other government departments such as DECC, Defra, Business, Innovation and Skills, the MoD, the Department for Transport, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency—I could go on. That usually meets twice a year, and last met during the process of agreeing the Arctic policy framework, which itself was formally agreed by a Cabinet Committee through the usual processes. We will be hosting another meeting of that group relatively shortly. There is very good co-ordination and working between the Foreign Office and the other departments. You also mentioned Ministers. Mark Simmonds is the Polar Regions Minister. It is true that he has a large portfolio, but that also includes issues such as climate change and energy security policy, and there is a natural fit there between his responsibilities for the Arctic and those other issues. He is also the Minister, as you said, for the overseas territories, or at least for many of them, which include the British Antarctic Territory—there is a natural fit there between the southern hemisphere and the north.

**Lord Tugendhat:** On my point about salience, do you think that Arctic issues have a greater salience than perhaps they did three to five years ago?
**Henry Burgess:** They have certainly not got a lower profile. I would not want to give the impression that the Arctic was not important to the UK five years ago but I think you can tell from the number of conferences that Ministers appear at, their statements on these issues and the amount of interest that there is generally in these issues that there is a sensitivity to Arctic issues within the system, which was perhaps not quite as obvious shortly before that.

**Lord Addington:** As you were talking there, I was just wondering about the areas in which you have found other government departments coming into your daily practice and influencing what is going on, possibly with the exception of the Ministry of Defence. Is there an example of how things have changed with something coming across? We politicians will all tell you stories about cross-government working not happening—indeed, it is probably the one story that all Members of both Houses of Parliament can tell. Do you have a good example of where one of the other departments has come in and changed your working practices?

**Henry Burgess:** One good example is probably the discussions that we have been having with the Maritime and Coastguard Agency on the polar code being produced by the International Maritime Organization. We have taken very close advice from the Maritime and Coastguard Agency about how the polar code should apply to UK shipping and what the priorities should be. That is an area where the Maritime and Coastguard Agency lead the discussions; but the close working means that the policy from the FCO side in terms of a strategic approach marries with the maritime policy on the technical side. That has been a successful way for both parties to work together.

**Lord Addington:** Would this be a model that you are quite happy with? Have there been major complaints about this? This is an interesting point about what actually happens here. What tends to happen from our perspective is that you ask any department—not yours
particularly—a question and a look of panic comes across the face of the Minister or official. You then get an answer coming back that is usually dripping with ignorance of the subject. I wondered what your process is. Running down the list of people you are responding to in various ways, there are clearly going to be problems here. I wondered whether you had a more formalised process or whether you gather in.

**Jane Rumble:** Shall I take that? Yes, it would be fair to say that it is challenging. The Arctic, if you take the ice away, is like any other region of the world. The ice makes it more challenging in some ways because it is changing so rapidly, but the issues that the Arctic faces are very similar in some ways to the issues that face other areas. So it can be incredibly broad, and you can ask us about anything—indeed, the questions you have given us have been incredibly broad. It is a challenge to make sure that we have a broad overview of the different issues. Our role is quite a lot about facilitating, so what we do through the cross-government network and through the Arctic meetings that we have in government is precisely to try to tease out some of those areas where there may be a perceived inconsistency. A lot of stakeholders and NGOs tell us that there are perceived areas of inconsistency in government policy, which is why we have been trying to get different players together. You are right that having different departments responsible for different things makes life challenging, but it would not really make sense to take Arctic shipping out from the expertise around global shipping. The Arctic is so broadly connected to global policy that it is just one element of many different policies that we need to try to bring together.

**Lord Addington:** So, often, it is a case of you feeding into them rather than them feeding into you.

**Jane Rumble:** It depends on the issue. Increasingly it can change.
**Lord Addington:** Will general shipping now be tough enough to handle ice? Should it be a general requirement if you are going to go further north and it is going to come into our waters as opposed to saying, “Oh what do we do about sending a ship north?” Should it be a normal requirement sort of thing?

**Jane Rumble:** Before the polar code discussions, there were guidelines on shipping in the Arctic. If you had a global certificate to use your ship, you would be able to operate it to 70 degrees north and south.

The IMO noticed the increasing diversity and amount of shipping in the polar regions and agreed that there needed to be stronger rules. In fact, it was the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting that asked the IMO to revisit what were originally Arctic guidelines to include Antarctica. There was agreement that there needed to be a binding code, but it is a bit chicken and egg as to which one drives the other. The idea of the cross-government network is that we can try to identify issues that might have an Arctic element in the future, or issues that are very clearly Arctic which might have a bearing on another element of Arctic policy.

**Q11 Lord Ashton of Hyde:** I, too, declare an interest in that I am a director of a Lloyd’s managing agency which underwrites marine business, among other things. Can we turn to the commercial aspects of the Arctic, which is one of the three dimensions, as I think they are called, in the Arctic framework? It says that the UK will facilitate “responsible business activity” in the region by UK companies. What are the Government doing to support business activity in the Arctic by UK companies? What are the major economic opportunities for UK businesses that they should be looking to exploit?

**Jane Rumble:** In terms of supporting business, there is a clear objective in every diplomatic post everywhere in the world to support UK trade and investment. That is exactly the case,
too, in the Arctic states. The British posts in each of the capitals and the consulates across Canada and Russia have a very clear remit to support British business where appropriate. UK Trade & Investment takes a very active role: it has supported a conference on Arctic mining earlier this year and sponsored an Arctic event at the International Festival for Business that took place in Liverpool in June—where we spoke—as well as various prosperity events across the Arctic. There is quite an active forum of support, as there would be for businesses wanting to operate anywhere in the world. In terms of the economic opportunities, I guess the headline ones are mining and hydrocarbons—at least those are the areas that get a lot of headlines, because of the retreating ice. But there are also the financial sector interests including significant interests in insurance around any kind of activity in potentially risky environments, infrastructure development, technology, shipping and, obviously, tourism—so quite broad.

**Lord Ashton of Hyde:** I was really trying to get at what is specific to the Arctic. As you say, the remit for the Foreign Office diplomats is the same all over the world. That is a general point but I was really trying to look at the Arctic in particular. You mentioned mining, which is one thing. What timescale do the Government think these opportunities will emerge in? Does this depend on the rate of climate change or on other factors?

**Jane Rumble:** I suppose climate change is the underlying driver, but that is not the whole picture. Whether it is available now depends on the different states. As I mentioned, Norway, which is pretty much ice-free, has a very developed and active hydrocarbon industry in which there are already significant British interests. The Prime Minister of Greenland spoke at an event in March sponsored by the *Economist*, which I mentioned earlier, promising that Greenland is open for business. They are at the beginning stages of trying to get investment, and the infrastructure in Greenland does not exist yet.
Lord Ashton of Hyde: As far as the UK is concerned, is this urgent? Do we need to get our act together quickly?

Jane Rumble: There is no perceived race to the Arctic. Several companies have been looking at the Arctic for some time and, indeed, mining has been taking place for many decades, as has onshore hydrocarbon activity. So some have been involved for a long time while others are now perceiving the new opportunities coming up. It depends on where you are in terms of that interest whether you perceive it as a race. All the Arctic states say that there is no particular race, and it is really Greenland that seems like the new opportunity, although it does not quite have the infrastructure in place to facilitate some of this.

Lord Ashton of Hyde: Lastly, we have heard the range of views in the NGO community about commercial exploitation. Do the Government feel that the indigenous peoples welcome enhanced commercial activity?

Jane Rumble: The indigenous peoples have different perspectives depending on where they are and on their traditional activities. It seems that there are as many people who Greenpeace can find saying that they do not want any hydrocarbon activity, any investment or any infrastructure in the Arctic against just as many who would like to see this development come soon because they would like jobs and diversity of employment opportunities so that they can stay where they live. It would be impossible to say that the indigenous peoples have a single view on this. It depends very much on where they are and who they are.

Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean: Can I ask about the “there is no race” point? Are you sure that you are not being a little complacent about there being no race? Let us go back to the point about China. The Chinese have sent six major expeditions in the last 12 years or so. They say that, with the ice melt and their ice-breaking capacity, they are going to be sending
expeditions every year from next year onwards. The Americans are saying that the ice melt is
taking place much faster than they had thought and that from 2016, in two years’ time,
there may not be any summer ice. The Chinese are very clear—of course they know that
there are all sorts of environmental issues—in what they say about wanting their share of
the mineral wealth, which is very considerable, in that part of the world. They make the
point that Russia is making claims, so why not China too? You say that there is no race, but
when we read some of the things that are being put out by other countries, it sounds as
though some of them think that they are engaged in a race not only for the mineral wealth
that is there, but also for the northern sea passage—going back to the point about shipping.
It just seems to me a bit uncomfortable to say that there is no race because it sounds as
though some people think there is.

*Jane Rumble*: In terms of access to the mineral resources, China is also a member of UNCLOS
so it cannot make a claim to the Arctic seabed or the resources within the auspices of that
convention. Virtually all the expected development in the Arctic, certainly in the medium
term, is anticipated to be undertaken within the areas of national jurisdiction. It is for the
Arctic states to control the speed at which they release licensing blocs or encourage mining
activities. The Canadians would say that there is no race. I have heard the Canadian High
Commissioner in London make that comment. However, there may be scientific races. China
is very keen, as are many other countries, to understand the changing environment in the
Arctic, so there is now a desire to make sure that we do understand it because it will have
such global consequences. But in terms of the commercial activity, we are not seeing a
Klondike-type race. It will be controlled because the Arctic states have jurisdiction over who
does what.
Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean: China engages in mineral races throughout the Middle East and throughout Africa, so I fear that, while there are all sorts of ways of saying that this development can be controlled through licensing or whatever—and nobody is suggesting that the Chinese are just going to come along and make a claim to something—they do use their financial leverage very considerably in the races that they engage in across the world. I would just throw that in for what it is worth.

Jane Rumble: In terms of business competition, I am not sure whether we would call it a race, but yes, obviously there are competitive business interests in respect of security of energy supplies and so on.

The Chairman: I am sure that that is something we will pursue. You are right to say that in Africa and South America, it has not exactly got in the way.

Q12 Lord Moynihan: I will come in at this point, not least because I need to make a declaration of interests. I have been a director of Rowan Companies plc for over 10 years. It is an international oil and gas drilling company with a fleet of jack-up rigs and ultra deepwater drill ships which provide contract drilling services and rigs to oil and gas operators. In its 90-year history, Rowan has developed the expertise and technology to operate drilling rigs in extremely cold environments, such as land rigs on the north-eastern side of Alaska and jack-up rigs on the Grand Banks of eastern Canada and the Cook Inlet of Alaska. The company’s land drilling has operated north of the Arctic Circle. However, the company has divested that division and the company’s sole focus is now on offshore, and it has never operated offshore rigs inside the Arctic Circle.

First, if I may, I would like to pick up on Baroness Symons’ point. Is it the case that the race to which she alluded is a recognition by countries such as China of the opportunity now, as a matter of commercial urgency, to park there with highly prospective deals with the Arctic
states in, for example, the hydrocarbon area? That has been evidenced by their relationship with a growing number of Arctic states—and, indeed, the US has taken a not dissimilar view within the hydrocarbon sector. I would be grateful if you could first comment on that as a supplementary to the last question. Then, perhaps I may come on to a related issue to the question put by Lord Tugendhat. It is not so much on the NGO side, but how receptive you believe the UK public have been to the notion of further economic development in the Arctic. Are you getting a growing postbag and is there increasing interest among the British public, including the NGOs, about activity and Government support for, for example, mining and shipping access for tourism, and for energy security? Is this an area that is taxing your department more than it did in the past or less? Can you give us a flavour of the level of interest that you are encountering from the UK public in the Arctic as a whole? Is it mainly on the commercial side or is there now growing interest in climate change?

**Jane Rumble**: In respect of the first comment about highly prospective deals, I think that it is the case. As I have mentioned, the Prime Minister of Greenland has repeatedly said that Greenland is open for business. To do business in Greenland, which is undoubtedly going to have mineral wealth—there are mineral deposits which are already known about—it must be accepted that it does not necessarily have the infrastructure that would make it an easy proposition. If you have lots of money and a very long-term vision, you can start that process now. Whether or not British businesses want to do so is up to them. The opportunities are out there, although some of them are extremely challenging. In terms of global competition, those that wish to invest in speculative, long-term developments will do so. There are British companies which have bought the rights to licensing blocs in and around Greenland going up quite far north and they are looking at what that might mean for them, but there is a long
way to go before they will actually make money out of that—having put the infrastructure
and so on in place.

In terms of public interest in the Arctic, it depends how you define “public”. In general
terms, there are so many Arctic conferences that we cannot cover them all. At the moment,
we get invited to many, looking at very different issues from commercial activity to scientific
interests. In terms of the sectors that we expect to be interested in the Arctic, interest within
the UK is growing. There is much more focus in those areas. The NGOs are taking an
increasing interest. They have raised the issues around hydrocarbon activity. You may recall
that Greenpeace took a mechanical polar bear through London to raise the issues around
the Arctic. We do not have a big postbag from members of the public writing to us about the
Arctic. That may be because the Foreign Office role is mainly on the strategic UK interests
and the Government’s engagement. I am sure that if you asked Defra whether it has people
writing in about the plight of the polar bear and potential changes in the Arctic, or asked
DECC how many letters it gets about hydrocarbon activity in the Arctic, there would be a
great deal of interest. In terms of some of the sectors you mentioned, yes, tourism is a
growing interest, and we work very closely with our posts in the Arctic states around issues
such as search and rescue, being in very remote areas, and the availability of hydrographic
charting which is still quite sparse in the Arctic. We also work with the Association of Arctic
Expedition Cruise Operators, AECO, which represents many of the operators that work in
Norway, Greenland, Iceland, northern Europe and now increasingly Canada to try to foster
co-operation among cruise ships taking passengers into remote areas a long way from
search and rescue. We have learnt over many years that wherever there is a cruise ship in
the world it almost certainly has a British national on board. That is very much true in the
Arctic and Antarctic. There is a lot of interest, which also underlies our great focus with the
Maritime and Coastguard Agency on the polar shipping code to try to ensure that those ships are adequately provisioned for that kind of activity. Does that answer your question?

**Lord Moynihan:** Have we led any trade missions? Are we giving any expertise to businesses that express an interest in prospectivity inside the Arctic circle?

**Jane Rumble:** I do not know the answer to that. I would have to check and come back to you whether there has been an explicit trade mission to the Arctic. I do not think so but I can check. There have certainly been trade missions to Arctic states, which will have an element of businesses in the high north.

**The Chairman:** Just on this area again, in terms of environmental protection, do the Government feel that the level of environmental protection and the rules and regulations in the high north are sufficient? I presume that they are a matter of individual sovereign-state legislation or is there an Arctic Council consensus or agreement on what those levels should be in terms of environmental protection? Can you just take us quickly through that?

**Jane Rumble:** There are both. Each of the Arctic states will have their own agreements on environmental protection standards but the Arctic Council does look and has actively looked at standards for oil and gas trans-shipment practices etc. Other organisations are looking at raising standards of tourism. Environmental protection is one of those issues where you can never rest on your laurels. Technology is always improving. Our understanding of the impact that different activities have on the fragile Arctic environment is always expanding. It is an area where we are constantly striving to promote as far as we can the best practice but the best practice is always increasing. The hydrocarbon companies that we talk to are also very keen to demonstrate that they are making the best environmental impact and also gathering data as their activities proceed. It is an area of focus of the Arctic Council to try to ensure that those standards are raised across the board.
Lord Hannay of Chiswick: If, as a result of the melting of the sea ice, it becomes practicable to mine or drill for hydrocarbons in areas that are not under national jurisdiction, what rules will cover those activities? I assume that there are none at the moment.

Jane Rumble: It falls to the International Seabed Authority to take proposals for deep-sea mining or activities in areas beyond national jurisdiction. It would come under that organisation. There would not be a vacuum.

Lord Hannay of Chiswick: Right. But there are not any mines at the moment.

Jane Rumble: Not in the Arctic, no.

Q13 Lord Oxburgh: I need to declare my interests. I am the director of two small companies which have renewable energy interests, 2OC and Green Energy Options. I am a fellow or member of a range of organisations that have stated policies on climate change, namely the American Geophysical Union, the Geological Society, the Geological Society of America, the Royal Society, the US and Australian Academies of Sciences and the Royal Academy of Engineering. The UK is among a handful of countries that have a very successful history of exploration and research in the Arctic over the last hundred years or so. The level of UK activity in the Arctic has steadily increased, particularly in recent decades. To what extent do you feel that our research and exploration record in the Arctic strengthens our locus in the Arctic Council?

Jane Rumble: It is very significant in terms of the UK’s contribution to Arctic science. A Danish report quite recently put the UK as having the third largest share of articles on the Arctic and also a high citation index. I think we were second on Antarctica, too, so we have a considerable body of polar expertise in the UK. It is certainly one of the things that the Arctic states are particularly keen to tap into and get engagement from. Our scientists are
extremely active in a whole range of Arctic issues, including the International Arctic Scientific Committee, IASC. Yes, there is a lot of UK engagement.

Lord Oxburgh: Is there no feeling that we are doing science in other people’s back gardens?

Jane Rumble: No. Science does not tend to get that reputation because there is a great deal of recognition that it provides you with a building block on which you then make policy. Science is just gathering facts so it is not going in and telling people how to run their back gardens; it is an understanding of the collective environment. The UK partners with the Arctic states. It is also very clear that we have resources that we share freely with people. The Hadley Centre has one of the best Arctic ice models. There is the European Cryosat looking at ice thickness. All that information is made available so it is not perceived that that is the case.

Lord Oxburgh: The recent document from the World Economic Forum put great emphasis on the importance of scientific research in the Arctic, particularly because the Arctic was going to be “more used” in all sorts of ways and that if you really want to know the danger spots and where the vulnerabilities lie you need really good background information that involves a much closer network of observations of a whole variety of kinds than we have at present. Does the Arctic Council take that on board? Does it promote or initiate, if you like, survey studies of this kind? Good science can come from it but it is not science itself; it is laying a whole range of background quantities. Does anything like that happen?

Jane Rumble: Yes. In fact the Arctic Council has built a lot of its success on doing Arctic assessments. It spent many years doing that, to the envy of a lot of other regional bodies. It started with the Arctic climate impact assessment back in the mid-2000s, which was a seminal document that set out the 10 big things that were happening in the Arctic and really put the Arctic on the front page, including in the UK. It has also done biodiversity and marine
pollution assessments. It does a lot of work bringing together information to paint that picture. There are gaps in that information. There is a huge body of things that we do not know that scientists still need to look at. But there is also concern that they do not necessarily have as much information as they would like from the Russian Arctic, and they want to get greater access. The Arctic Council is now looking at how they might facilitate easier scientific co-operation within the Arctic. As we understand it, that is going to be an agreement among the Arctic states but it is something that we are particularly active on to make sure that it does not prejudice our interests. There is no desire to keep British scientists out. They want more British scientists in.

**Lord Oxburgh:** Does the Arctic Council have money that it can spend on research?

**Jane Rumble:** It does not necessarily have funding for science per se but if the Arctic states agree that there is a particular desire to do such science then they can put money into project funds and working groups. One of the desires behind having an agreement is that the Arctic States can then turn to their bodies that fund science and say, “This is really quite important now so could you put a bit more priority on the Arctic?” The Arctic Council does not direct funding into particular science. Science is funded in a separate way to keep it away from foreign ministries but it collectively can have the impact of saying that these are questions that need to be answered.

**Lord Oxburgh:** So to summarise, you see UK Arctic science as an important arm of UK Arctic policy?

**Jane Rumble:** Absolutely, yes.

**Viscount Hanworth:** Are we all, including the Russians, signed up for co-operation in the Arctic region?
Jane Rumble: The scientists are very keen for it to be easier for them to facilitate access and engage with science. Russian scientists are very keen to agree the broader science access agreement with the Arctic Council because they say that this will help to lever greater funding from within Russia to prioritise it. They have the challenge of getting the funding together that they need. From a scientific perspective, they are very keen to engage on cross-Arctic studies.

The Chairman: Lord Moynihan, did you wish to come in on this one?

Lord Moynihan: Not on this one. I have a completely separate question for the MoD officials, at the end.

The Chairman: I think we are there actually. I have a couple of tie-up questions, but please go first.

Q14 Lord Moynihan: I have a very brief question. Given the announcement today and the emphasis on the fact that NATO has no intention of raising its presence and activities in the high north, why do the Government continue to place a significant emphasis on training British troops in Arctic conditions in Norway? I am happy if you want to write to us on that.

Martin Molloy: NATO has mandated that a certain number of its troops are trained in cold-weather capability. It wants a cold-weather capability within its structure, so each sending nation is expected to train a certain number of troops to a certain level. Because of the Antarctic issue and others, we train 3 Commando Brigade down to minus 20. It is not Arctic temperatures, but it is cold-weather training. We do the same thing for our helicopters. That is a NATO request more generally rather than focusing on the Arctic.

Lord Ashton of Hyde: Because of our presence in Afghanistan, is it true that we have cut back our Arctic training in recent years?
**Martin Molloy:** I will need to come back to you on that one, I think. We have reduced our Antarctic helicopter capability in recent years. It was an SDSR decision.

**Lord Ashton of Hyde:** I was thinking particularly of the Marines.

**Martin Molloy:** In terms of the Marines, I am not aware. I will need to come back to you on that.

**The Chairman:** Following that up, do our surface ships visit the Arctic?

**Martin Molloy:** They do go to the high north, but they do not go into northern Arctic waters. The whole capability is not there, but we do go to the high north: the Bering Sea, Norway, Finland, Sweden and so forth. So we do make high north trips but we do not go into far north waters.

**The Chairman:** Perhaps we could tie up a couple of loose ends. One thing that is often said, and I suppose one of the lessons from the literature, is that if you look at the Arctic as a region the first thing you have to do is not apply any lessons you have learnt from the Antarctic, because it is completely different. Given that we have an important presence in the Antarctic, is that statement true or are there any points that we should take note of from our Antarctic experience?

**Jane Rumble:** Yes, probably quite a few. The Antarctic in governance terms is completely different, because one is a continent on which there is a treaty to suspend territorial claims, the other is body of water that is surrounded by countries with full jurisdiction. So in governance terms, they are chalk and cheese. But in terms of the climate change challenges, the rapid warming, there are a lot of similarities in the challenges to shipping, challenges to tourism activities and in terms of science and understanding the planet. But then, the Arctic has 4 million people who live and work there and undertake mining and hydrocarbon activity, and the Antarctic has no indigenous population and a prohibition on mineral-related
activity except for science. Whether you cannot learn anything, or whether they are actually quite closely coupled, depends on the subject.

Q15 The Chairman: That is a good list. Lastly, in terms of geopolitics, we have had the recent fallout between the Russian Federation and much of the western world over Crimea and the G8 becoming the G7 again. How insulated is the Arctic Council from these wider global frictions? Does it just carry on regardless or do they affect the way that Arctic co-operation works?

Jane Rumble: In terms of what is actually happening, the Arctic Council’s senior Arctic officials have met since the Ukraine crisis, and they met as normal and undertook normal business. There have been a number of meetings since then, in fact at least two that were hosted by Russia in Moscow, which the US and Canada, as Arctic states, did not attend because of the crisis. In terms of the senior Arctic officials level, the desire is to continue Arctic co-operation. In terms of the working groups, there has been some knock-on. We have not had a full Arctic Council ministerial meeting since the crisis, so I guess there will be an assessment nearer that time as to whether or not there will be an impact. But there has not been a significant impact at this stage.

The Chairman: Thank you very much indeed. That brings to an end the formal evidence session. Thank you all very much indeed for participating in that. It is a good start to our process. From the Committee’s point of view, I guess very much like the Government, we are not looking to actively interfere in the Arctic but to find a way that we can help that region, as a near-Arctic state, as you say. I thank members of the public for attending as well. Perhaps I can bring this public session to a close and ask members of the public to leave at this stage, but thank you for attending.