1. What are the main issues arising from recent and expected changes in the Arctic region? How will these changes impact upon the Arctic, and what is the impact for the UK?

The opening of the Northern Sea Route is bringing the UK and Japan closer, at a time when bilateral security and defence relations are gaining traction, with a number of agreements having been signed in recent years. Arctic navigation adds another dimension to Anglo-Japanese relations, with the two countries sharing an interest in the Northern Sea Route’s availability, safety, and security. It may be advisable to bear this in mind and ensure, among others, a continued exchange of views and information, joint Royal Navy – MSDF (Maritime Self-Defense Forces) / Japanese Coast Guard drills, and the presence of an Arctic expert at the British Embassy in Tokyo.

2. Will changes in the Arctic lead to new economic and commercial opportunities? What are these opportunities, and how might they be delivered? What should be the role of the UK Government, of British businesses and of other sections of civil society?

The UK Government must ensure that the Armed Forces retain and develop the means and expertise to operate in Arctic and near-Arctic environments. This is an essential foundation of economic diplomacy, since only countries with those capabilities are likely to become serious players in the region. Given some geographical similarities with the Falklands, South Georgia, and the British Antarctic Territory, the development of these capabilities also has a positive impact on deterrence in the South Atlantic.

3. How should economic development be balanced with environmental protection in the Arctic? Are appropriate systems in place to ensure the correct balance is found and maintained? How should the UK be involved in establishing this balance?

The Falklands Islands have been moving cautiously yet decisively in recent years to ensure that economic development, in particular oil exploration and production together with tourism, is sustainable, safe, and compatible with the highest standards of environmental protection. It may be advisable for the UK Government, in conjunction with the Falkland Islands Government, to highlight these policies and ensure that they are widely known in the Arctic region. In addition to amounting to a significant contribution to the economic development and environmental protection of the Arctic, this would serve the purpose of boosting British and Falklands soft power. The contrast with revisionist powers in the South Atlantic with a rather poor economic and environmental record would clearly illustrate the practical advantages of traditional British values and liberties.

7. Are current international governance and security arrangements appropriate for dealing with anticipated challenges in the Arctic? How should the UK support the Arctic states in their stewardship of the region?

The UK should retain and increase existing levels of military cooperation and joint training with Canada and Norway. These should be expanded to include Japan.

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