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HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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<i>Minister</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>
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Earl Howe	Minister of State, Ministry of Defence and Deputy Leader of the House of Lords
Lord Agnew of Oulton	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education
Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon	Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Lord Ashton of Hyde	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
Lord Bates	Minister of State, Department for International Development
Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Wales Office
Baroness Buscombe	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions
Lord Callanan	Minister of State, Department for Exiting the European Union
Baroness Chisholm of Owlpen	Whip
Earl of Courtown	Deputy Chief Whip
Lord Duncan of Springbank	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Northern Ireland Office and Scotland Office
Baroness Fairhead	Minister of State, Department for International Trade
Lord Gardiner of Kimble	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Baroness Goldie	Whip
Lord Henley	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
Lord Keen of Elie	Advocate-General for Scotland and Ministry of Justice Spokesperson
Lord O'Shaughnessy	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care
Baroness Stedman-Scott	Whip
Baroness Sugg	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport, Whip
Lord Taylor of Holbeach	Chief Whip
Baroness Vere of Norbiton	Whip
Baroness Williams of Trafford	Minister of State, Home Office
Lord Young of Cookham	Whip
Viscount Younger of Leckie	Whip

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Written Statements

Thursday, 11 January 2018

25-year Environment Plan

[HLWS392]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: My Right Hon Friend the Secretary of State (Michael Gove) has today made the following statement.

It is this Government's ambition to leave our environment in a better state than we found it. We have made significant progress but there is much more to be done. The 25 Year Environment Plan that we have published today outlines the steps we propose to take to achieve our ambition.

Environment is – at its roots – another word for nature, for the planet that sustains us, the life on earth that inspires wonder and reverence, the places dear to us we wish to protect and preserve. We value those landscapes and coastlines as goods in themselves, places of beauty which nurture and support all forms of wildlife.

Respecting nature's intrinsic value, and the value of all life, is critical to our mission. For this reason we safeguard cherished landscapes from economic exploitation, protect the welfare of sentient animals and strive to preserve endangered woodland and plant life, not to mention the greening of our urban environments.

But we also draw from the planet all the raw materials we need to live – food, water, air and energy for growth. So protecting and enhancing the environment, as this Plan lays out, is about more than respecting nature. It is critical if the next generation is to flourish, with abundant natural resources to draw on, that we look after our and their inheritance wisely. We need to replenish depleted soil, plant trees, support wetlands and peatlands, rid seas and rivers of rubbish, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, cleanse the air of pollutants, develop cleaner, sustainable energy and protect threatened species and habitats.

Previous Governments, here and in other nations, have made welcome strides and driven environmental improvement. Yet as this 25 Year Plan makes clear, there is much more still to do. We must tread more lightly on our planet, using resources more wisely and radically reducing the waste we generate. Waste is choking our oceans and despoiling our landscapes as well as contributing to greenhouse gas emissions and scarring habitats. The success of the 5p plastic bag charge in reducing the use of carrier bags by 85% shows the difference which government action can make, and demonstrates that protecting our environment is a job for each one of us. The Plan outlines ways to reduce the use of plastics that contribute to pollution, and broader steps to encourage recycling and the more thoughtful use of resources. Over the lifetime of this Plan, we want to eliminate all avoidable plastic waste.

The Government's Clean Growth Strategy – the sister document to this Environment Plan – sets out how we

will deliver the clean, green growth needed to combat global warming. We will do what is necessary to adapt to the effects of a changing climate, improving the resilience of our infrastructure, housing and natural environment.

Population growth and economic development will mean more demand for housing and this Government is committed to building many more homes. However, we will ensure that we support development and the environment by embedding the principle that new development should result in net environmental gain – with neglected or degraded land returned to health and habitats for wildlife restored or created.

Most of our land is used, however, for agriculture not housing. The new system of support that we will bring in for farmers – true friends of the earth, who recognise that a care for land is crucial to future rural prosperity – will have environmental enhancement at its heart.

We will support farmers to turn over fields to meadows rich in herbs and wildflowers, plant more trees, restore habitats for endangered species, recover soil fertility and attract wildlife back. We will ensure broader landscapes are transformed by connecting habitats into larger corridors for wildlife, as recommended by Sir John Lawton in his official review. Our plan for a new Northern Forest, to which we're contributing more than £5 million, will be accompanied by a new review of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Planting more trees provides not just new habitats for wildlife – it also helps reduce carbon dioxide levels and can reduce flood risk. We will work with nature to protect communities from flooding, slowing rivers and creating and sustaining more wetlands to reduce flood risk and offer valuable habitats.

Beyond our coastlines, we must do more to protect the seas around us and marine wildlife. Leaving the EU means taking back control of the waters around these islands. We will develop a fishing policy that ensures seas return to health and fish stocks are replenished. We will also extend the marine protected areas around our coasts so that these stretches of environmentally precious maritime heritage have the best possible protection.

Internationally, we will lead the fight against climate change, invest to prevent wildlife crime, pursue a ban on sales of ivory, and strengthen partnerships to tackle illegal wildlife trade beyond borders, including investigating the feasibility of an anti-poaching taskforce.

We will underpin all this action with a comprehensive set of environmental principles. To ensure strong governance, we will consult on plans to set up a world-leading environmental watchdog, an independent, statutory body, to hold Government to account for upholding environmental standards. We will regularly update this Plan to reflect the changing nature of the environment.

While this 25 Year Environment Plan relates only to areas for which HMG is responsible, we will continue to work with the devolved administrations on our shared goal of protecting our natural heritage.

These actions will, we hope, ensure that this country is recognised as the leading global champion of a greener, healthier, more sustainable future for the next generation.

Energy Policy

[HLWS391]

Lord Henley: My Rt Hon Friend, the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industry Strategy (Greg Clark), has made the following written ministerial statement:

The UK has benefited from its membership of the European Atomic Energy Community since joining the EU and Euratom in 1973. The Government's ambition is to maintain as many of these benefits as possible through a close and effective association with Euratom in the future, after the UK withdraws from Euratom, at the same time as withdrawing from the EU, on 29 March 2019. Our plans are designed to be robust so as to be prepared for a number of different scenarios including the unlikely outcome that there is no future agreement at all. Our number one priority is continuity for the nuclear sector.

Since the 1950s, when the UK launched the world's first nuclear power station, this country has been a leading civil nuclear country on the international stage, with deep nuclear research and nuclear decommissioning expertise, and with nuclear power playing a vital part in our electricity generation mix. It is vitally important that our departure from the EU does not jeopardise this success, and it is in the interests of both the EU and the UK that our relationship should continue to be as close as possible. We recognise and understand the concerns that the nuclear industry has raised. We agree it is essential that projects and investment are not adversely affected by the UK's withdrawal from the EU, and can continue to operate with certainty.

To achieve this outcome, the Government's strategy is twofold: through negotiations with the European Commission we will seek a close association with Euratom and to include Euratom in any implementation period negotiated as part of our wider exit discussions; and at the same time, to put in place all the necessary measures to ensure that the UK could operate as an independent and responsible nuclear state from day one.

Our strategy is therefore based on the following principles:

- to aim for continuity with current relevant Euratom arrangements;
- to ensure that the UK maintains its leading role in European nuclear research;
- to ensure the nuclear industry in the UK has the necessary skilled workforce covering decommissioning, ongoing operation of existing facilities and new build projects; and
- to ensure that on 29 March 2019 the UK has the necessary measures in place to ensure that the nuclear industry can continue to operate.

The Government has made good progress on separation issues in the last few months as part of Phase One of

negotiations with the EU. Negotiations have covered a set of legal and technical issues related to nuclear material and waste, and safeguards obligations and equipment. The next phase of discussions will focus on the UK's future relationship with Euratom. We believe that it is of mutual benefit for both the UK and the EU to have a close association with Euratom and to ensure a future safeguards regime that will be equivalent in effectiveness and coverage as that currently provided by Euratom, including consideration of any potential role for Euratom in helping to establish the UK's own domestic safeguards regime.

The UK's specific objectives in respect of the future relationship are to seek:

- a close association with the Euratom Research and Training Programme, including the Joint European Torus (JET) and the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) projects;
- continuity of open trade arrangements for nuclear goods and products to ensure the nuclear industry is able to continue to trade across EU borders without disruption; and
- maintaining close and effective cooperation with Euratom on nuclear safety.

We understand the importance to businesses and communities, including those in the nuclear sector, of being able to access the workforce they need. Proposals for our future immigration system will be set out shortly and we will ensure that those businesses and communities, and Parliament have the opportunity to contribute their views before making any decisions about the future system.

Whatever the outcome of the negotiations with the EU, it is vital that Government pursues all options for providing certainty for the civil nuclear industry that it will be able to continue its operations, including that the UK has a safeguards regime that meets international standards by the end of March 2019 and that necessary international agreements are in place. Such elements are not dependent on the EU negotiations and the UK Government is well advanced in delivering this plan.

The UK is: establishing a legislative and regulatory framework for a domestic safeguards regime – the Nuclear Safeguards Bill will, subject to the will of Parliament, provide legal powers for the Secretary of State to establish a domestic regime which the Office for Nuclear Regulation will regulate; negotiating bilateral safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency; and putting in place bilateral Nuclear Cooperation Agreements with key third countries.

As set out by the Prime Minister, the UK Government is proposing a time-limited implementation period where we continue to have access to one another's markets on current terms and take part in existing security measures. This implementation period would cover Euratom too. The exact nature of the period will be subject to forthcoming negotiations including on the issues outlined in this statement.

As discussions with the EU move onto the important issue of the future relationship, I shall report back every three months about overall progress on Euratom, covering the EU negotiations and other important matters covered in this statement, by way of further Written Statements to keep Parliament updated.

UK-India Joint Economic and Trade Committee

[HLWS393]

Baroness Fairhead: My Rt hon Friend the Secretary of State for the Department for International Trade and President of the Board of Trade (Dr Liam Fox MP) has today made the following statement.

I am pleased to inform the House that I will be co-chairing the twelfth meeting of the UK-India Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO) in London on Thursday 11 January with Shri. Suresh Prabhu, Minister for Commerce and Industry.

The UK-India JETCO was established on 13 January 2005 to further develop the India-UK strategic economic partnership further. India and the UK already enjoy a strong bilateral relationship, and both sides take a mutual interest in enhancing the competitiveness of the two economies. Bilateral trade between the UK and India has grown over the last ten years and was £15.4bn in 2016. We also have strong investment links; the UK has been

the largest G20 investor in India over the last ten years and Indian companies operating in the UK account for around 110,000 jobs. At the last UK-India JETCO, in November 2016, I agreed with my co-chair to establish a Joint Trade Review, a collaborative analytical project, that will evaluate the range of ways we can strengthen the UK-India trade relationship and remove barriers, both at present and as we leave the EU.

The twelfth meeting of the JETCO will be a key opportunity to further strengthen our relationship with an important and close trade and investment partner. The meeting will be supported by business working groups on smart cities and technology, advanced manufacturing and engineering, and will receive an update on the UK - India Joint Trade Review from my officials and the Indian Ministry of Commerce and Industry. We will also welcome increased support from the UK's official export credit agency, UK Export Finance, for trade with India, of up to £4.5 billion. This will provide an additional £2.75 billion in support for UK companies exporting to India and for Indian buyers of UK goods and services, and be available in Indian Rupees. The meeting will also be an important milestone towards the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in April, from which we expect to give greater impetus to intra-Commonwealth trade. A Joint Statement will be released on Thursday 11 January to report on the outcomes of the JETCO.

Written Answers

Thursday, 11 January 2018

Brexit

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the comments by the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union on 10 December that the agreement reached with the EU on 8 December was a "statement of intent", whether they consider that agreement to be binding. [[HL4159](#)]

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government following the comments by the Secretary of State for Exiting the EU on the Andrew Marr Show on 10 December that the Brussels undertaking was "more of a statement of intent than (it was) a legally enforceable thing", whether those comments represent their official policy. [[HL4216](#)]

Lord Callanan: Both the UK and the EU have been clear that nothing is agreed until everything is agreed. We are clear that we want to honour the agreements set out in the joint report.

As the Secretary of State clarified on Thursday 14 December in Parliament, 'the Withdrawal Agreement will be a treaty, and treaties are binding on this country.' Therefore, the agreement will be captured in the Withdrawal Agreement, which will be legally enforceable.

Military Aircraft

Asked by Lord Campbell of Pittenweem

To ask Her Majesty's Government on how many occasions in 2017 it was necessary to scramble Quick Reaction Alert aircraft; and, in each case, for what purposes those aircraft were scrambled. [[HL4460](#)]

Earl Howe: Quick Reaction Alert (QRA) Typhoon aircraft from RAF Lossiemouth and RAF Coningsby launched to intercept on 6 days in 2017.

I am withholding further details as deterrence is a principal function of QRA, which is in turn an integral part of the air defence of the UK. The disclosure of information that might compromise the QRA deterrent capability would, or would be likely to, prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of the Armed Forces.

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