

Parliamentary Interventions / "ATTACHMENTS" to J Corbyn's Monthly report covering the latter half of October to and including 18 November 09 (Any questions included here from earlier periods may have only just been answered)

In order of most recent first:

EDM = parliamentary motion / statement or official title: Early Day Motion

EDM 18/11/09: This house recognises that the **Whittington Hospital** is a valuable asset to healthcare in North London and has recently undergone a major rebuilding programme; the Whittington receives into its Accident and Emergency department alone approximately 80,000 patients annually and offers accessible services including maternity, neo-natal, cancer, day surgery and more; is very concerned to hear of ongoing talks of a threat or merger (with the Royal Free Hospital) to any of the Whittington's major services thereby reducing the viability of the hospital's continued existence as a separate institution, and of its services to local people in Islington, Haringey and Camden; and calls upon NHS London to ensure the continued existence of the Whittington Hospital inclusive of its major services.

Written Parliamentary Question (WPQ)

Date of Answer:	12.11.2009
Column References:	499 c922W
Member Tabling Question:	Corbyn, Jeremy
Topic:	Asylum: Iraq
Question:	To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many unsuccessful asylum seekers have (a) been granted a right to remain in the UK, (b) been deported to Iraq and (c) been taken into detention after a refusal to travel to Iraq in (i) each of the last three years and (ii) 2009 to date.
Answering Department:	Home Office
Member Answering Question:	Woolas, Phil
Answer:	It has not been possible to respond to my hon. Friend in the time available before Prorogation.
Question Number:	299800
Date Tabled:	09.11.2009
Date for Answer:	12.11.2009

Written Parliamentary Question (WPQ)

Date of Answer:	12.11.2009
Column References:	499 c815W
Member Tabling Question:	Corbyn, Jeremy
Topic:	Israel: Foreign Visits
Question:	To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what facilities his Department offered Ehud Barak during his visit to the UK in September 2009; and what meetings took place between Mr. Barak and representatives of the Government.
Answering Department:	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Member Answering Question:	Lewis, Ivan
Answer:	[holding answer 10 November 2009]: We adhere to our international legal obligations to implement appropriate security measures for all visits by foreign dignitaries to the UK to ensure their safety and

	dignity are not compromised, but we do not discuss the details of any protection arrangements that may be provided for public figures as to do so may compromise their safety. Mr. Barak met my right hon. Friends the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary and the Defence Secretary.
Question Number:	299217
Date Tabled:	05.11.2009
Date for Answer:	10.11.2009
Legislature:	House of Commons (HoC)
Chamber/Committee:	Commons Chamber

Written Parliamentary Question
(WPQ)

Date of Answer:	12.11.2009
Column References:	499 c639-40W
Member Tabling Question:	Corbyn, Jeremy
Topic:	Travel: Concessions
Question:	To ask the Minister of State, Department for Transport what representations he has received on the future of the Freedom Pass in London, and from whom; how much was spent on the scheme in London in each of the last three years; how much is projected to be spent in (a) 2009-10 and (b) 2010-11; and if he will make a statement.
Answering Department:	Dept for Transport
Member Answering Question:	Khan, Sadiq
Answer:	[holding answer 10 November 2009]: The right to free travel for older and disabled people is enshrined in Primary Legislation. The Freedom Pass scheme is operated by London Councils on behalf of all 33 London boroughs. The cost of the Freedom Pass is a matter for negotiation between London Councils and Transport for London. London boroughs have been obliged to offer London-wide travel to their eligible residents since the introduction of the GLA Act in 1999. Therefore the only increase in costs London faced as a result of the improved England-wide bus concession—which was introduced in 2008—was for the cost of non-London residents who are aged over 60 or eligible disabled now travelling free on the London bus network at off-peak times. It was expected that a sizeable grant would be needed to meet the cost of these non-London resident travellers. However, there have been far fewer of these trips than anticipated. I have met with London Councils to discuss the special grant funding that has been made available by Government to fund the additional costs of the improved statutory minimum bus concession from April 2008. I have also received letters from a number of London MPs, members of the House of Lords and Councillors of London Boroughs about the special grant funding. Many of these representations were based on misunderstandings over the purpose of the special grant funding. The purpose of the Special Grant has only ever been to fund the change in the concession referred to above. The majority of funding for concessionary travel continues to be provided through formula grant. London boroughs report their spending on concessionary travel to the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) as part of their annual local government spending returns. The London Boroughs reported concessionary travel spending of £203 million in 2006-07 and £222 million in 2007-08. The outturn figures for 2008-09 are not due to be published by CLG until later this month, however the Boroughs' reported concessionary travel budget for 2008-09 was £220 million. For 2009-10 the Boroughs' reported concessionary travel budget is £189 million. 2010-11 budget figures are not due to be published until next year. London Councils reported in the minutes of their Transport and Environment Committee meeting of 11 December 2008 that the additional costs of the national bus concession were forecast to be £5.1 million in 2008-09. This compares to special grant funding provided to London Councils of £55.4 million in 2008-09. The projection of special grant funding required in 2010-11 is based on the additional costs that authorities have actually incurred following the change to the statutory minimum bus concession. Although the new special grant distribution that is currently being consulted on

	would reduce London's grant, it would leave the London boroughs with significantly more funding than the actual burden that has been imposed by the change in the statutory minimum concession.
Question Number:	299216
Date Tabled:	05.11.2009
Date for Answer:	10.11.2009

Written Parliamentary Question (WPQ)

Date of Answer:	12.11.2009
Column References:	499 c627W
Member Tabling Question:	Corbyn, Jeremy
Topic:	Bus Services: Concessions
Question:	To ask the Minister of State, Department for Transport what his most recent estimate is of the cost to (a) his Department and (b) London local authorities of the Freedom Pass in each of the last three years.
Answering Department:	Dept for Transport
Member Answering Question:	Khan, Sadiq
Answer:	The freedom pass scheme is the name of the concessionary travel scheme that is operated in London. It incorporates the England-wide bus concession that was introduced in 2008. Before April 2008, funding for the mandatory bus concession was provided exclusively through the formula grant system administered by CLG. Formula grant is an unhyphenated block grant, that is, recipient local authorities may use it on any service they wish, providing statutory duties are met. This freedom means that CLG are not able to calculate how much grant has been provided for any particular service (such as concessionary travel). In 2008-09, the Department for Transport provided an extra £212 million to fund the extension of the concessionary travel scheme to cover England-wide travel, of which, £55.4 million was provided to London Councils. London Councils reported in the minutes of their Transport and Environment Committee meeting of 11 December that the additional costs of the national bus concession were forecast to be £5.1 million in 2008-09. The total reported concessionary travel spending of all London boroughs was £203 million in 2006-07, £222 million in 2007-08 and the budgeted spend for 2008-09 was £220 million.
Question Number:	299816
Date Tabled:	10.11.2009
Date for Answer:	12.11.2009

Written Parliamentary Question (WPQ)

Date of Answer:	12.11.2009
Column References:	499 c626-7W
Member Tabling Question:	Corbyn, Jeremy
Topic:	Bus Services: Concessions
Question:	To ask the Minister of State, Department for Transport what his estimate is of the level of take-up of the Freedom Pass in Islington; and what estimate he has made of the cost of the pass to (i) Islington Borough Council, (ii) London-wide funding bodies and (iii) his Department in each of the last three years.
Answering Department:	Dept for Transport
Member Answering Question:	Khan, Sadiq
Answer:	London freedom passes are administered by London Councils. The Department for Transport does not hold figures for the number of freedom passes issued by individual London boroughs. However, as part of a planned reissue, London Councils reported to the Department that as of April 2009, an estimated 1.188 million concessionary passes were in circulation in London. (i) Islington borough council's budgeted spend on concessionary travel, as reported to the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) was £5.2 million for 2006-07, £5.5 million for 2007-08 and £5.8 million for 2008-09. (ii) The total reported concessionary travel spending of all London boroughs was £203 million in 2006-07; £222 million in 2007-08 and the budgeted spend for 2008-09 was £220 million.

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Question Number:	299804
Date Tabled:	09.11.2009
Date for Answer:	12.11.2009
Legislature:	House of Commons (HoC)
Chamber/Committee:	Commons Chamber

11/11/09: Nuclear Non Proliferation Debate

Jeremy Corbyn: I welcome today's debate, and I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Central (Tony Lloyd) for securing it and for introducing it as he did. My hon. Friend the Member for Keighley (Mrs. Cryer) summarised the situation in her intervention; any country that goes down the road of possessing or developing nuclear weapons brings on itself enormous costs and thereby denies opportunities to many other people. India and Pakistan both have an enormous number of poor people, and the obvious calculation is that money spent on developing weapons of mass destruction aimed at each other inevitably denies education, health and clean water to much of their populations. We should be fully aware of that, and not afraid to say it.

I declare an interest in that I have been a member of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament all my life, and have no plans to leave it. I am a national vice-chair, and chair of its parliamentary group. On its behalf, I attended the preparatory committee for the NPT review in New York earlier this year. That review was very different from previous ones that I attended in Vienna and elsewhere. They were almost desultory, in that the five declared nuclear weapons states turned up, restated their position on the non-proliferation treaty and then proceeded to state the exact opposite—that they had no intention whatever of fulfilling their obligations under the treaty to begin steps towards disarmament. People often went away from those events in a frustrated frame of mind.

Two PrepComs have made a difference: the one in 2000 and the last one in New York. The one in New York was so different because of the completely different approach by the United States. The US ambassador, Mrs. Gottemoeller, made her position clear on behalf of President Obama, and read out a lengthy letter. In addition, this year President Obama in his Prague speech envisaged—as far as I can recall, for the first time by a US President—a world free of nuclear weapons. Sadly, he went on to say that it would not happen in his lifetime, and as he is such a young man, that is deeply depressing. Nevertheless, he was prepared to take that step and suggest that there could be a significant difference.

The New York review was fascinating, interesting and hopeful. The previous year's review in Vienna had been a series of ritual condemnations of Iran, and each speaker tried to outdo the others in the rituality of those condemnations. This time, there was a much more serious approach towards dialogue, understanding and developing the non-proliferation treaty.

There are problems with the NPT, which I will come to, but also opportunities. It was an amazing document of its time. It was amazing to achieve a commitment from the five declared nuclear weapons states in 1970 that they would take steps towards eventual disarmament, and that all the other signatory nations would not seek to develop or possess nuclear weapons. It has been effective in a number of ways, and some countries deserve particular praise. I am thinking mainly of South Africa, and its denial of a nuclear weapons programme following the election of President Mandela, and its total disavowal of nuclear weapons, so that Africa can become a nuclear weapons-free zone. A similar process happened in Argentina, and other countries, which deserve particular credit, such as Ukraine, have moved away from the nuclear route. We should recognise that some countries have made a fundamental step towards nuclear disarmament.

However, there are problems with the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. Its membership is restricted to the five declared nuclear weapons states, and to the majority of the rest of the world's states who do not possess nuclear weapons and are not attempting to acquire them. Those who have nuclear weapons outside the nuclear non-proliferation treaty are denied membership, and that category clearly includes India, Pakistan and Israel.

I deeply regret the fact that India and Pakistan have developed nuclear weapons. With the current instability, particularly in Pakistan, there is serious cause for concern about the safety of those nuclear weapons. As my hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Central said, they have been an enormous economic burden on both countries. However, the issue is a south Asian one in that both countries developed those weapons because of animosity towards each other, and they are targeted at each other and not at anyone else. It would be unbelievably crazy to use them because if one side fired a nuclear weapon at Lahore or Delhi, the people who died would not have known which weapon killed them because the effect would be the same on everyone. One hopes that there can be a continuing good relationship between India and Pakistan, de-escalation, and eventually agreement on mutual disarmament. We should support and encourage that.

The situation in Israel is slightly more complicated because it is not a signatory to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, and has never sought to be. My hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Central pointed out that Israel's possession of nuclear weapons makes the concept of a nuclear-free weapons zone in the middle east extremely difficult. There are also problems with many of the neighbouring countries, which believe, understandably, that if Israel has nuclear weapons and the west cannot persuade it to disarm, they may feel pressure perhaps to develop them one day. I had a similar conversation to that of my hon. Friend, with ambassadors from a number of countries, particularly Egypt.

There are some interesting signs, and I want to quote from a document that may be of some interest. The Paris summit of Mediterranean countries was held on 13 July 2008, under the co-presidency of the French Republic and the Arab Republic of Egypt and in the presence of Israel, which was represented by its then Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert. It discussed the issue of peace within the region, and said that it was in favour of

“regional security by acting in favour of nuclear, chemical and biological non-proliferation through adherence to and compliance with a combination of international and regional nonproliferation regimes and arms control and disarmament agreements such as NPT,”

the chemical weapons convention, the biological weapons convention, the comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty, and so on.

The document goes on to say:

“The parties shall pursue a mutually and effectively verifiable Middle East Zone free of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear, chemical and biological, and their delivery systems. Furthermore the parties will consider practical steps to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons as well as excessive accumulation of conventional arms; refrain from developing military capacity beyond their legitimate defence requirements, at the same time reaffirming their resolve to achieve the same degree of security and mutual confidence with the lowest possible levels of troops and weaponry and adherence to CCW”—

the convention on certain conventional weapons—

“promote conditions likely to develop good-neighbourly relations among themselves and support processes aimed at stability, security”

and so on.

The reason why I quote from that document is that at that conference, which was hosted by France and attended by Britain, there was participation by Israel that appeared to envisage a process towards some degree of nuclear disarmament or adherence to some kind of international convention. We should seize on that and try to encourage Israel in that direction, because the implications of not achieving nuclear disarmament by Israel are that the pressure is then on in other countries, from the military, from industries and from lots of super-nationalist people, for those countries—be it Egypt, Iran or anywhere else—to develop their own nuclear weapons. No one wants that; no one wants that armament happening.

The problem of the lack of capability of the NPT to bring about disarmament must be dealt with. Therefore, I strongly advocate that the Government recognise what President Obama is doing in calling together the nuclear weapons states—I assume, and perhaps my hon. Friend the Minister will confirm whether I am correct, that that would involve all the countries that possess nuclear weapons outside the NPT—in the pursuit of a nuclear weapons convention. That has been strongly supported by the

Canberra commission, by Australia and others. The idea would be that a weapons convention involves all states and has a series of phases for the elimination of the weapons.

The convention would outline a series of five phases for the elimination of nuclear weapons: first, taking nuclear weapons off alert; secondly, removing weapons from deployment; thirdly, removing nuclear warheads from their delivery vehicles; fourthly, disabling the warheads and removing and disfiguring the “pits”; and fifthly, placing the fissile material under international control. It seems to me that the way forward, towards nuclear disarmament, must be a combination of next year’s NPT review and what can be achieved from that and the participation by the five declared states and all the others, and of promotion of and support for the concept of a nuclear weapons convention that can help to achieve that degree of disarmament.

Bob Spink: The hon. Gentleman is making quite a bit of sense—we do not always agree—but he is speaking generally. May I press him to be specific? Does he, like me, believe that Britain’s rush towards replacing Trident is inconsistent with the NPT, which we signed in 1970?

Jeremy Corbyn: I was coming to that anyway, but I agree with what the hon. Gentleman says in that respect. I therefore ask the question: what contribution is Britain making? Britain is not the biggest holder of nuclear weapons anywhere in the world; it does not have the largest number of warheads. It is, on one level, secondary to the big holders of nuclear weapons, which are primarily Russia and the United States. Nevertheless, we hold nuclear weapons; we are one of the five Security Council members; we are one of the five declared nuclear weapons states. The Minister will be well aware of the strength of parliamentary feeling concerning nuclear weapons and the strength of feeling in our own party, but also of the strength of feeling concerning the whole programme of Trident replacement, the vote that took place in the House on replacement of the submarine system, the initial gate decision that has to be taken and the final decisions, which I assume will be taken in the next Parliament.

I hope that, as part of our contribution towards the NPT review conference next May, we shall do a number of things. One is to say that we are not proceeding with the incredibly expensive replacement of Trident. Greenpeace and others estimate the cost to be £76 billion upwards over its 25-year lifespan, which is £3 billion a year. I am thinking of the message that that gives the rest of the world when perhaps we are on the threshold of nuclear disarmament—that is the atmosphere and the opportunity. Therefore, not to proceed with replacing Trident would be a very good thing.

I recognise the taking of submarines off patrol. I recognise the reduction in the number of warheads. I recognise the Government’s willingness to develop an arms reduction laboratory and to take part in a number of serious discussions and conversations about a nuclear-free world. That is welcome and a change, but we must take a significant step ourselves. The NPT review starts on 3 May next year, when I suspect that everyone in this Room will be busy doing other things. I would love it if whoever the British Government send to the NPT review were prepared to say that we are not proceeding with Trident, that we are prepared to take part in a nuclear weapons convention and that we recognise the importance of achieving a nuclear-free world.

The implications of not doing so are very serious. We should never forget just how evil and immoral nuclear weapons are. They are a weapon of mass destruction. They cannot be targeted at an individual military establishment or a specific bridge or whatever. A nuclear weapon is, by its very nature, blind to who it kills and what it destroys, because it is so huge. The nuclear weapons used in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which were tiny compared with today's weapons, killed several hundred thousand people in the first few hours and many more in the years to come through the fallout and the results of that explosion. The weapons available today could wipe out this planet several times over. Is it a good idea to have them? Obviously not. Is it a good idea to disarm? Obviously, yes. Is there a process available to do that? Yes, there is. The process is the NPT; the process is the nuclear weapons convention, but above all, it requires a sign and a commitment from the five declared nuclear weapons states that they are prepared to move towards disarmament and to envisage a nuclear-free world.

None of the threats that are around, of instability and all those issues, can be solved by the possession of nuclear weapons, but the more we have big, powerful nuclear weapons, the more others are encouraged to develop them. I am not in favour of any country developing its own nuclear weapons, be it North Korea, India, Pakistan, Israel or Iran. I am therefore in favour of an inspection regime that inspects all civil nuclear power facilities, and above all I am in favour of an openness about and the inspection of fissile material, so that there is no production of fissile material that can then be converted into weapons-grade plutonium. It is very important to achieve those things, and we achieve them through dialogue, inclusion and a nuclear weapons convention.

I hope that the Minister can give us some optimistic news, that Britain will play its full part in the run-up to the NPT review conference and that there will be a further parliamentary debate on this issue in the early part of next year, so that we can have some parliamentary input into that. Members of Parliament have a role to play; we have an important part in the debate and the message that we give out can be very important.

I hope above all that this country does not go down the road of replacing Trident and creating a new generation of nuclear missiles, but says yes, we are prepared to take the step necessary to take away the threat of a nuclear holocaust around the world, because that is the direction in which we should go. If we miss the opportunity at the NPT review conference next year, rearmament around the world and proliferation of nuclear weapons could—I hope that it does not—follow, so this debate is timely and important and I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Central for securing it and for what he said today.

Written Parliamentary Question (WPQ)

Date of Answer:	11.11.2009
Column References:	499 c423-5W
Member Tabling Question:	Corbyn, Jeremy
Topic:	Counter-Terrorism
Question:	To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have received assistance from the Channel project for vulnerable individuals at risk of extremism since 1 January 2009; how many such people were under (a) 16 years and (b) 12 years old; how many such people were not Muslim; what evaluation of

	the outcomes of the programme has been undertaken; what proportion of people assisted by the Channel project were found to have been at risk of becoming violent extremists; and on what grounds such findings were made.
Answering Department:	Home Office
Member Answering Question:	Hanson, David
Answer:	[holding answer 2 November 2009]: We hold the following data on Channel which covers the period April 2007-December 2008: "Between April 2007-December 2008: 228 referrals were made to the Channel Project." "The known age range of those referred to Channel as potentially vulnerable to violent extremism and in need of multi-agency support was seven-50 years." "The majority of referrals were aged between 15-24 years;" "Of those referred to Channel as potentially vulnerable to violent extremism and in need of multi-agency support 93 per cent. were male." "We will be publishing, shortly, a guidance document on Channel for partnerships. This document will include and reflect feedback and the implementation lessons learned from some of the longest running sites. There is no single profile of a violent extremist. There are a range of factors and vulnerabilities that may facilitate the process of radicalisation. Delivering the Prevent Strategy: An Updated Guide for Local Partners includes a description of the factors that might make a person more susceptible to exploitation by violent extremists. These include: open support for violent extremist causes; possession of violent extremist material and behavioural change. Local partners work together and use their professional judgement to assess an individual's vulnerability to being drawn in to violent extremism. Referrals are made on the basis of this assessment.
Question Number:	296635
Date Tabled:	26.10.2009
Date for Answer:	02.11.2009
Legislature:	House of Commons (HoC)
Chamber/Committee:	Commons Chamber

Written Parliamentary Question (WPQ)

Date of Answer:	10.11.2009															
Column References:	499 c207-8W															
Member Tabling Question:	Corbyn, Jeremy															
Topic:	Syria: Overseas Aid															
Question:	To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assistance his Department has provided to Syria (a) directly and (b) through multi-lateral agencies for assistance to Palestinian refugees in each year since 2002.															
Answering Department:	Dept for International Development															
Member Answering Question:	Foster, Michael John															
Answer:	<p>Department for International Development (DFID) support to Palestinian refugees in Syria is through the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) who assist more than 450,000 refugees providing them with education, health care, social support and microfinance opportunities. Most of our assistance is core funding to UNRWA's budget of which approximately 8.5 per cent. is spent in Syria. An annual breakdown is in the following table. In 2007 the UK committed £100 million over five years in core funding to UNRWA.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>UK funding to UNRWA general fund (calendar year)</th> <th>Estimated UNRWA spend in Syria (per calendar year)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2002</td> <td>13</td> <td>1.10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2003</td> <td>15.5</td> <td>1.31</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2004</td> <td>8.5</td> <td>0.72</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2005</td> <td>13</td> <td>1.10</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		UK funding to UNRWA general fund (calendar year)	Estimated UNRWA spend in Syria (per calendar year)	2002	13	1.10	2003	15.5	1.31	2004	8.5	0.72	2005	13	1.10
	UK funding to UNRWA general fund (calendar year)	Estimated UNRWA spend in Syria (per calendar year)														
2002	13	1.10														
2003	15.5	1.31														
2004	8.5	0.72														
2005	13	1.10														

	2006	16.2	1.37
	2007	15.6	1.33
	2008	19	1.61
	2009	20	1.70
	In addition to this funding, the Department for International Development provided a total of £2.6 million between 2001 and 2006 to help develop UNRWA's education system by strengthening management from headquarter to school level. This support helped improve the education provided to all Palestinian refugee children across the region, including in Syria.		
Question Number:	299219		
Date Tabled:	05.11.2009		
Date for Answer:	10.11.2009		
Legislature:	House of Commons (HoC)		
Chamber/Committee:	Commons Chamber		
Status:	Answered		
Session:	08-09		

Written Parliamentary Question (WPQ)

Date of Answer:	10.11.2009
Column References:	499 c207W
Member Tabling Question:	Corbyn, Jeremy
Topic:	Sri Lanka
Question:	To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many visits members of his Department have made to the camps for internally-displaced Tamils in Sri Lanka since May 2009; and how many requests to visit such camps have been refused by the Sri Lankan authorities.
Answering Department:	Dept for International Development
Member Answering Question:	Foster, Michael John
Answer:	Since May 2009, our Humanitarian Adviser, based at the High Commission in Colombo, has visited the internally displaced persons (IDP) camps in Vavuniya at least once a month to assess the humanitarian situation and monitor the progress of Department for International Development (DFID) funded projects. In September she also visited the IDP camps in Jaffna. Officials from London have accompanied her on various occasions.No requests to visit the camps have been refused by the Sri Lankan authorities.
Question Number:	299218
Date Tabled:	05.11.2009
Date for Answer:	10.11.2009
Legislature:	House of Commons (HoC)
Chamber/Committee:	Commons Chamber
Status:	Answered

Written Parliamentary Question (WPQ)

Date of Answer:	05.11.2009
Column References:	498 c1124-5W
Member Tabling Question:	Corbyn, Jeremy
Topic:	Tenants Rights
Question:	To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government what research his Department is undertaking into the security of tenure of residents of privately-rented accommodation; and whether he plans to bring forward proposals to amend security of tenure provisions in relation to such residents.
Answering Department:	Dept for Communities and Local Government
Member Answering Question:	Austin, Ian
Answer:	The English Housing Survey (which is a unified successor to the English Housing Condition Survey and the Survey of English Housing) contains questions directed at private tenants about their length of

	tenure and reasons for ending a tenancy. Further questions will be directed to landlords as part of the related Landlords Survey. Drawing on this research Julie Rugg's independent review of the private rented sector found that, in spite of the standard assured shorthold tenancy only having a minimum fixed period of six months, the majority of tenancies last considerably longer. The review found that 55 per cent. of tenants had been at their current address for over one year and over 21 per cent. for over five years and that only 6 per cent. of tenancies are ended early by landlords mostly because of non-payment of rent. So this research and the status of the sector as a flexible form of tenure for both tenants and landlords, would suggest there does not appear to be the need to change the legislation governing the security of tenure in the private rented sector.
Question Number:	297227
Date Tabled:	28.10.2009
Date for Answer:	02.11.2009
Legislature:	House of Commons (HoC)
Chamber/Committee:	Commons Chamber
Status:	Answered

05/11/09: Arms Export Control

Jeremy Corbyn: I welcome this debate. The issue was ignored for many years and we should give credit to Parliament for, in the past 10 years or so, developing the Quadripartite Committee's parliamentary examination of exports and having proper debates on the subject once a year. That is to be welcomed and shows that pressure from the people concerned about the effects of arms exports and the long-term economic issues that accompany them are being taken seriously. I welcome the Committee's report and the huge amount of detailed work that has gone into it.

In view of the news that has just come out of Guinea concerning the release of somebody who was involved in a coup there and the issue of human rights abuses, one has to start asking very serious questions about what at first sight might appear to be fairly low levels of arms exports of often quite low technology equipment that can become lethal further down the line. I know this is not the subject of the debate, but I ask for there to be a serious examination of the whole philosophy behind promoting, developing and encouraging arms exports, and the development of an arms-based industry in this country.

Indeed, if we are concerned about abuses of human rights, loss of life, illegal wars and the rest of it, we need to recognise that somewhere along the line somebody has bought those weapons and that a great deal of money has been made from their manufacture. It is not good enough just to say that we are concerned about human rights around the world if we do not do something about controlling or reducing the number of arms that get into the hands of people who would do wrong to others.

We also need to consider the philosophy behind the development of that industry. There was a time when my party proudly seriously discussed an arms conversion strategy. One does not hear such words often these days, but I have a feeling they will be coming back. As more and more people view with horror the outcomes of Gaza, Iraq, Afghanistan, the Congo, Colombia, Guinea and so many other places, they might begin to think more about these issues.

My hon. Friend the Member for Kingswood (Roger Berry) outlined the report's specific recommendations, which I absolutely welcome: the extra-territorial controls, the absolute necessity for a register of arms brokers—such people make phenomenal sums of money in trading weaponry from one dodgy source to another, which ends up killing an awful lot of innocent people and causing mayhem and misery for many others—and the attempt at the non-re-export of weapons. Indeed, my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Richard Burden) talked about what is actually a fairly minor part of the whole picture. The head-up display systems that were re-exported through the United States to Israel are just one example of that particular problem. I thank him for drawing our attention to that.

There are many recommendations in the report, but I particularly want to draw attention to the concerns about anti-corruption elements and an anti-corruption strategy. This country prides itself on being firm on corruption and on dealing with any public officials or politicians who are involved with corrupt activities. It is absolutely right that we do so, and we have signed up to the OECD's and many other guidelines on anti-corruption activities. However, our moral status in the world is seriously damaged by the decision of the former Prime Minister to halt the Serious Fraud Office's investigation into the al-Yamamah arms deal and the huge amount of money that that involved for BAE Systems and other companies. That deal has reduced our ability to talk learnedly about the subject.

I draw hon. Members' attention to the Saferworld memorandum that has helpfully been reprinted in the report. The memorandum outlines Saferworld's serious concerns about human rights abuses in Saudi Arabia. Although I welcome the ban on arms exports to China because of its behaviour in Tibet—I would welcome such a ban in a number of other places—it seems that we have a blind eye when it comes to Saudi Arabia, because it has vast amounts of oil and it has bought vast numbers of planes from BAE Systems. We cannot have it both ways all the time, as that would be too simple and convenient. We must be prepared to face up to that.

The other points I briefly want to make concern a number of the countries that have been mentioned. I endorse the good points that my hon. Friend the Member for Ilford, South (Mike Gapes) made about Sri Lanka and the current treatment of the Tamil people. Although we might not now be exporting arms to Sri Lanka—I hope that we are not—the reality is that the ill treatment of the Tamil people and the method of conduct of the war in Sri Lanka is not new. The abuses of human rights there are not new; they are just more intense at the present time and subject to much more international scrutiny. I hope that the Minister will be able to address the point that if countries are undertaking some kind of internal conflict—civil war—we must ask ourselves why we are exporting arms to them. I recall meeting the late Robin Cook when he was Foreign Secretary to discuss arms exports to Indonesia at that time, because we had concerns about what was happening in East Timor—and for that matter in Aceh and other parts of the country. There are concerns that have to be recorded.

My hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Northfield spoke passionately and quite correctly about the situation in Israel. I repeat what I said in an intervention on him: concerns about the treatment of the Palestinian people are not in any sense new. That country has become the world's fourth-largest arms exporter, never mind a substantial

importer as well, so, although we are not necessarily directly into re-export, we are certainly into the re-export of technology and the import of technology by Israel. I think we should consider having a complete embargo on all arms trade of any sort with Israel while it continues the policy of illegal settlements in the west bank and the imprisonment of the people of Gaza, and while it flouts the rest of the world's international law on the development of nuclear weapons. I say that even though it is not a signatory to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. I wish it were a signatory to that treaty, or at least to a nuclear weapons convention.

Submissions have been made to the Committee by many organisations, including the UK Working Group on Arms, which is made up of Amnesty International, Landmine Action, Omega Research Foundation, Oxfam and Saferworld. The group made some very good points about torture and the ultimate destination of weapons. I do not for one moment suggest that the British Government intend to allow their equipment to be used to torture people or to violate international law or human rights. However, the reality is that if there is no control over the re-export of equipment, it clearly can end up being used in that way and in violation of all kinds of international law. The statements that Amnesty International and other organisations sent before today's debate have been extremely useful on this matter. I hope that the Minister has seriously taken on board the points and views that they have put forward.

The Government response states:

“The Government is working with the European Commission to take this forward, and has passed to the Commission a draft amendment to the existing Torture Regulation”.

It then goes on to explain what the position is, adding:

“The Government will continue to push for early adoption of the proposed revision to the Regulation. We shall keep the Committees informed of progress.”

Will the Minister tell us how far that particular proposal has gone and what progress is being made in that respect?

My final points concern the economy and other aspects surrounding the arms industry that Ministers and others often quote when they say what an important export earner the arms industry is for our economy. The long-standing and, in my view, very respected organisation, Campaign Against Arms Trade, which is based in my constituency, placed a memorandum before the Committee. At paragraph 16, it states:

“The Annual Reports of the Export Credits Guarantee Department (ECGD) show that, yet again, one business benefits more than any other—the arms business. Even though arms account for just 1.5 per cent. of total UK exports, in 2006-7, 42 per cent. of all export credits were for military goods and, in 2007-8, the figure was even higher, 57 per cent. This export credit support is given for very few deals. In the earlier year, the whole 42 per cent. was accounted for by BAE's arms sales to Saudi Arabia. At £750 million this was also by far and away the ECGD's biggest liability in 2007-8”.

The arms industry tells us that it is a huge and very efficient exporter from this country, but it receives a disproportionate amount of export credit guarantee support. Also, there is some suspicion that finance for research and purchasing by the British military of equipment in effect pays for an awful lot of the arms industry's basic costs. It can then go on to become an exporter almost free of risk because its basic costs have already been met.

I conclude with this thought: we live in a world that is extremely dangerous, in which we witness conflict the whole time. Is it morally right for us to spend such a huge amount of money on expanding and developing the arms industry in this country when we have brilliant skills, technical abilities and developments that could be used for much better, useful social purposes, rather than the business of war? The House needs to consider that.

Written Parliamentary Question
(WPQ)

Date of Answer:	04.11.2009																																				
Column References:	498 c1068-9W																																				
Member Tabling Question:	Corbyn, Jeremy																																				
Topic:	Housing: Construction																																				
Question:	To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government how much funding has been allocated to housing construction in Islington in each of the last five years; how many (a) council and (b) housing association dwellings for (i) rent and (ii) shared ownership were built in Islington in each such year; how many such dwellings he expects to be built in 2009-10; how much such funding he expects to allocate in each of the next three years; and how many such dwellings he expects to be built in Islington in each of those years.																																				
Answering Department:	Dept for Communities and Local Government																																				
Member Answering Question:	Austin, Ian																																				
Answer:	<p>The following table shows the number of new registered social landlord (RSL) affordable homes (social rent, intermediate rent and low cost home ownership) built in the London borough of Islington each year since 2003-04. There were no local authority affordable homes built in Islington in this period.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="6">RSL New build affordable homes in Islington</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th>2003-04</th> <th>2004-05</th> <th>2005-06</th> <th>2006-07</th> <th>2007-08</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Social rent</td> <td>210</td> <td>140</td> <td>200</td> <td>220</td> <td>260</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Intermediate rent</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>300</td> <td>190</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Low cost home ownership</td> <td>40</td> <td>10</td> <td>20</td> <td>350</td> <td>110</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total affordable homes</td> <td>250</td> <td>150</td> <td>520</td> <td>760</td> <td>390</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Source: Homes and Communities Agency Investment Management System (IMS), and local authority returns to CLG. Figures have been rounded to nearest 10 units.</p> <p>Not all affordable housing is provided by new build completions, as some supply can come from acquisitions. For example, in 2007-08, a total of 530 additional affordable homes were provided in Islington (new build and acquisitions). Total affordable housing supply statistics for 2008-09 will be released by CLG in December 2009. Information</p>	RSL New build affordable homes in Islington							2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	Social rent	210	140	200	220	260	Intermediate rent	0	0	300	190	20	Low cost home ownership	40	10	20	350	110	Total affordable homes	250	150	520	760	390
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	<p>on the number of homes completed for social rent under the National Affordable Housing programme (NAHP) for April to September 2009 will be released by the HCA on 24 November. The following table shows expenditure through the Affordable Housing programme in Islington over the last five years (both for new build and acquisitions).</p>
	£ million
	2004-05 30.8
	2005-06 25.8
	2006-07 44.9
	2007-08 39.2
	2008-09 25.9
	As set out in the Homes and Communities Corporate Plan for 2009-10 we are aiming to deliver in England 55,000 affordable homes in 2009-10 and 56,000 in 2010-11. Future levels of expenditure and outputs beyond 2010-11 will be dependent upon the outcome of the next Spending Review. Funding through the HCA is a process of competitive bidding and is not budgeted to local authority level.
Question Number:	297231
Date Tabled:	28.10.2009
Date for Answer:	04.11.2009
Legislature:	House of Commons (HoC)
Chamber/Committee:	Commons Chamber
Status:	Answered
Session:	08-09
Notes:	

Written Parliamentary Question (WPQ)

Date of Answer:	04.11.2009
Column References:	498 c1023W
Member Tabling Question:	Corbyn, Jeremy
Topic:	Office of the Public Guardian
Question:	To ask the Secretary of State for Justice what plans he has to move the premises of the Office of the Public Guardian from Archway Tower; and if he will make a statement.
Answering Department:	Ministry of Justice
Member Answering Question:	Prentice, Bridget
Answer:	As part of its programme of change and improvement, the Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) has over the past 12 months taken a phased approach to moving functions out of London. In doing so it has sought to capitalise on existing Ministry of Justice buildings and staff where possible. The first office outside London opened in Birmingham in the spring of this year. A second office, in Nottingham, has recently commenced operation and functions will continue to migrate there over the next four months. No further decisions as to timing and location of future moves have been taken. OPG aims to have reduced its presence in London to a necessary minimum over the next two to three years. The OPG engages actively with staff and trade unions regarding its change plans. Appropriate impact assessments are made. Staff impact is managed in line with the Ministry of Justice Managing Organisational Change Framework.
Question Number:	297157
Date Tabled:	28.10.2009
Date for Answer:	02.11.2009
Legislature:	House of Commons (HoC)
Chamber/Committee:	Commons Chamber

Written Parliamentary Question (WPQ)

Date of Answer:	04.11.2009
Column References:	498 c1002W
Member Tabling Question:	Corbyn, Jeremy
Topic:	Railways: Electrification
Question:	To ask the Minister of State, Department for Transport what capital funding he has allocated for the electrification of the Barking to Gospel Oak railway line; and what his Department's most recent estimate is of the total cost of the project.
Answering Department:	Dept for Transport
Member Answering Question:	Mole, Chris
Answer:	In January 2009, the Department for Transport made an offer to contribute a capital sum towards the cost of the electrification of the Gospel Oak to Barking line conditional on Transport for London taking forward the project, including working up a business case, finding the balance of the cost and bearing all risks. The Department's contribution could be up to £25 million, the amount depending on as yet undefined savings against the budget for the North London Line Camden Road freight scheme announced last year. Transport for London has since indicated that there is little likelihood that it could undertake to fund and bear the risks of the Gospel Oak to Barking electrification scheme. Although Network Rail and Transport for London have made preliminary cost estimates of this scheme, the Department has not done so.
Question Number:	297232
Date Tabled:	28.10.2009
Date for Answer:	04.11.2009

Written Parliamentary Question (WPQ)

Date of Answer:	04.11.2009
Column References:	498 c1002W
Member Tabling Question:	Corbyn, Jeremy
Topic:	Railways: Electrification
Question:	To ask the Minister of State, Department for Transport what discussions he has had with (a) Transport for London and (b) the Mayor of London on the electrification of the Barking to Gospel Oak line.
Answering Department:	Dept for Transport
Member Answering Question:	Mole, Chris
Answer:	There have been a number of discussions between Department for Transport Ministers and both Transport for London officials and the Mayor of London on the electrification of the Barking to Gospel Oak line. In addition there has been ongoing official engagement on the subject.
Question Number:	297233
Date Tabled:	28.10.2009
Date for Answer:	04.11.2009

Written Parliamentary Question (WPQ)

Date of Answer:	04.11.2009
Column References:	498 c1001W
Member Tabling Question:	Corbyn, Jeremy
Topic:	Railways: Contract Cleaning
Question:	To ask the Minister of State, Department for Transport what recent representations he has received on the working conditions of contract cleaners providing services to train operating companies.
Answering Department:	Dept for Transport
Member Answering Question:	Mole, Chris
Answer:	At a recent meeting between the RMT Parliamentary Group and the Secretary of State for Transport, the issue of conditions of contract

	cleaners on Eurostar was raised. Ministers have also received correspondence in relation to the issue.
Question Number:	297433
Date Tabled:	28.10.2009
Date for Answer:	02.11.2009
Legislature:	House of Commons (HoC)
Chamber/Committee:	Commons Chamber

Written Parliamentary Question (WPQ)

Date of Answer:	04.11.2009
Column References:	498 c1000W
Member Tabling Question:	Corbyn, Jeremy
Topic:	Finsbury Park Station
Question:	To ask the Minister of State, Department for Transport whether his Department has made a recent assessment of levels of (a) safety and (b) accessibility at Finsbury Park station; and whether his Department has made a recent estimate of passenger numbers at that station.
Answering Department:	Dept for Transport
Member Answering Question:	Mole, Chris
Answer:	Annual safety assessment on the railway network is a function of Infrastructure Managers and Railway Undertakings as set out by the Railway and Other Guided Transport Systems (Safety) Regulations 2006 (ROGS) and is overseen by the Office of Rail Regulation, not the Department for Transport. Reporting and estimating of annual passenger numbers at stations is also a function of the Office of Rail Regulation. However the Department is aware that approximately 5.2 million passenger entries/exits, and 2.4 million interchanges, were estimated at Finsbury Park for the 2007-08 period. The accessibility of Finsbury Park station was assessed by the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) as part of the consultation strategy behind the Railways for All programme in 2005. The SRA concluded that the station did not meet current standards for accessibility and recommended that level access routes be provided to platforms serving passenger trains. Finsbury Park has since been targeted for investment under the Department's Access for All programme towards achieving this, but these plans have been delayed by the decision of London Underground Ltd. to postpone the provision of step free access to underground trains.
Question Number:	297234
Date Tabled:	28.10.2009
Date for Answer:	04.11.2009
Legislature:	House of Commons (HoC)
Chamber/Committee:	Commons Chamber
Status:	Answered
Session:	08-09
Notes:	

Written Parliamentary Question (WPQ)

Date of Answer:	04.11.2009
Column References:	498 c1001W
Member Tabling Question:	Corbyn, Jeremy
Topic:	Railway Stations: Disabled
Question:	To ask the Minister of State, Department for Transport what monitoring his Department undertakes of the construction of step-free access to interchange stations in London; how much funding his Department has allocated for that programme of work; and what recent assessment he has made of progress towards completion of that programme.
Answering Department:	Dept for Transport

Member Answering Question:	Mole, Chris
Answer:	38 mainline rail stations in London boroughs have been included in the Access for All programme and are due to receive an accessible route to and between platforms serving passenger trains. Each of these sites has some interchange with the tube, Docklands Light Railway, buses or other modes of transport. Until detailed designs have been prepared for all these sites, it is too early to give an accurate estimate of the total investment required to deliver the work. However, the programme overall has a ring-fenced budget of £370 million until 2015. The projects are being delivered by Network Rail, and progress is monitored at monthly programme group meetings and through site visits by officials. Delivery on the programme has improved this year and we expect 11 stations in London boroughs to be completed during 2010.
Question Number:	297363
Date Tabled:	28.10.2009
Date for Answer:	04.11.2009
Legislature:	House of Commons (HoC)
Chamber/Committee:	Commons Chamber

Urgent Question (UQ)

Date of Answer:	29.10.2009
Column References:	498 c450
Member Tabling Question:	Corbyn, Jeremy
Topic:	Business of the House
Question:	The postal workers are back on strike because they are frightened about job losses, bullying management and the future of a vital public service. It seems extraordinary that Ministers do not have more hands-on involvement. May I repeat the calls made by other Members for a special debate to be held, as urgently as possible, on the future of the Post Office and the situation facing postal workers?
Answering Department:	Leader of the House of Commons
Member Answering Question:	Harman, Harriet
Answer:	Ministers are hands-on, with the intention of getting the management and the union to agree to settle their differences for the sake of the people who use Royal Mail and those who work in it.
Question Number:	
Date Tabled:	
Date for Answer:	
Legislature:	House of Commons (HoC)
Chamber/Committee:	Commons Chamber

28/10/09: Sri Lanka Debate

Jeremy Corbyn: I apologise for missing the first few minutes of the debate, Dr. McCrea; I was tied up on constituency matters. If the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy (Mr. Llwyd) had any Tamil constituents, they would have been in touch. They are the most communicative community that this country has, and that is what is brilliant about them. I pay tribute to my right hon. Friend the Member for Enfield, North (Joan Ryan) for what she has done and does, and for obtaining today's debate, which has provoked a flurry of briefings and advice, not least from the Sri Lankan high commission, which has once again furnished us with its version of the current situation and facts pertaining in Sri Lanka.

I shall be very brief, so that others get to speak. I was first elected to the House in June 1983. In July 1983, there were riots in which many Tamil people ended up in refugee camps. There was terrible bloodshed and an outbreak of the fighting that has, essentially, gone on ever since. One could read in this Chamber now the debate that

took place in the House in July 1983, and, sadly, it would not sound out of place; it would sound much the same as what hon. Members have been saying this afternoon. I have watched the situation and worked with many people from Sri Lanka over many years, and I have constantly been appalled at the level of violence, the amount of displacement and the killings. Huge efforts were made, particularly by the Norwegian Government, to bring about a long-term sustainable peace. Unfortunately, those efforts were not successful. Many others have tried to bring about such a peace, without success.

Not so long ago, we all witnessed on global television the final acts, when the Sri Lankan military moved in on the Tamil positions: brutality and killings, a huge number of deaths, the displacement of large numbers of people and the destruction of their homes. Then followed the triumphalism of the Sri Lankan army and the declarations of a national victory. That is not a good sign for reconciliation or a harmonious island of Sri Lanka in the future. The presence of large numbers of people in the refugee camps is frankly horrific. They are not in refugee camps; they are in prison camps. That is what those places are in reality. They cannot leave or be communicated with unless they have permission, and the sense of displacement and anger in the Tamil community around the world is palpable. It must be addressed.

So what do we do? Sri Lanka is a member of the Commonwealth and a trading partner. It seems to carry on getting tourists and all the trade that it wants. I recognise that sanctions cause people hardship, but if that is the only instrument that is left to bring recognition of and reasonableness towards the Tamil people, it is a policy that we must pursue. I therefore have no hesitation in supporting that approach. In the humiliation of the Tamil people in the camps, their poverty and displacement and all the privations that they now suffer lie the seeds of tomorrow's conflict, and the one after. All that will be created by the present policy is another version of the LTTE. It is utterly counter-productive, apart from being illegal in human rights law. I have also been looking at the convention on the prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide. It is regrettable that the United Nations Human Rights Council could not see that when it voted at the special meeting on this subject in September.

I look forward to hearing what the Minister has to say. It is not a question of being anti-Sri Lanka. It is a question of being pro-human rights, pro-peace, pro-justice and ensuring that the Tamil people have their place, their rights, their language and their identity. That is what brings harmony. Denial of that identity brings tomorrow's death and conflict.

Oral Parliamentary Question (OPQ)

Date of Answer:	26.10.2009
Column References:	498 c9-10
Member Tabling Question:	Corbyn, Jeremy
Topic:	Prevent
Question:	Will the Home Secretary agree to meet me to discuss the Islington experience, since he has just referred to it in answer to a previous question? May I invite him to read the report produced by the Institute of Race Relations called "Spooked!—How not to prevent violent extremism", by Arun Kundnani? It is an interesting report and will show him that other aspects of the Prevent agenda are effectively stigmatising an entire community.
Answering Department:	Home Office
Member Answering Question:	Johnson, Alan

Answer:	The answer to the first question is yes—of course either I or a member of my ministerial team will meet my hon. Friend to discuss the matter. Secondly, he points to one particular contribution to this debate, of which there are many. It is a valuable one, but it is not in isolation and many other reports have made points contrary to the ones in that report.
Question Number:	
Date Tabled:	
Date for Answer:	
Legislature:	House of Commons (HoC)
Chamber/Committee:	Commons Chamber

Oral Parliamentary Question
(OPQ)

Date of Answer:	20.10.2009
Column References:	497 c757
Member Tabling Question:	Corbyn, Jeremy
Topic:	Iran's Nuclear Programme
Question:	Will the Foreign Secretary acknowledge that Iran is still a signatory to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and that that should be welcomed as a sign of at least an ability to negotiate? Will he also recognise that now is the time to push for a nuclear-free middle east, which will of course require the disarmament of all nuclear states in the region, including Israel, as a way of bringing about long-term peace and security?
Answering Department:	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Member Answering Question:	Miliband, David
Answer:	My hon. Friend will know that we have voted consistently for the aspiration of a nuclear-free middle east as part of a drive for nuclear disarmament around the world. However, I think that it is important to bear in mind that although it is right to acknowledge that Iran is a signatory to the NPT—and that is welcome—signing is only the first step. Obeying the treaty's injunctions and following its requirements should go with that signature. I hope that my hon. Friend will join me in sending a united message from this House that Iran has the hand of engagement outstretched towards it and that it will be treated as a normal country, not least in respect of civilian nuclear power, but that it must behave as a normal country would in its relations with the IAEA and the rest of the international community.