



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Herald of a noisy world – interpreting the news of all nations

The Research and Analysis Department of the
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

A History

by
Robert A Longmire
and
Kenneth C Walker

Foreign Policy Document
(Special issue)
No 263

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*He comes, the herald of a noisy world ...
News from all nations lumbering at his back*

(William Cowper, *The Task*, IV, *The Winter Evening*)

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Foreword

Arnold Toynbee, the first Director of Research Department, defined its role as: not to make policy but to provide information for those who did. This still holds true. Policy makers here and in friendly capitals overseas have over the years had many occasions to be grateful for the services of Research and Analysis Department, as it has become. Toynbee omitted, however, another equally key role of our Research Analysts: to act as a link between the Office and "outside experts". One of my personal objectives is to make the Office more "open": to test our thinking and policy making against outside expertise, and to promote a more informed public debate on foreign policy issues. The staff of RAD play an important part in achieving this objective.

Ken Walker and the late Bob Longmire have produced an admirable history. It will serve to highlight the excellent work done by the present members of the Research Cadre and FCO Fellows, as well as by their predecessors.

It marks a time of change and evolution. The Cabinet Office Scrutiny concluded that Research Analysts should work directly alongside the policy making Departments they chiefly serve. This means, of course, that RAD staff will be spread throughout the Office. But Research and Analysis will continue to be a distinct function with its own strong tradition of independence and integrity. The Office as a whole stands to gain from these new arrangements.

Sir John Coles
Permanent Under-Secretary

Acknowledgements

The untimely death in early 1992 of my colleague and friend, Bob Longmire, has delayed the completion of this short history, originally intended to be published in 1993 to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the Foreign Office Research Department. The work done by Bob, particularly on tracing the origins and early years of the department, and the assistance given to him by John Hay – a member of Research and Analysis Department (as it is now called) until early 1995, when he moved to the FCO's Information Systems Division – constitute the basis of this account. I was very pleased to be asked to update and expand his draft after my retirement and return to the UK last year on completion of a tour of duty in Hong Kong.

Thanks are due to many other past and present members of the department for contributing their knowledge of particular times and areas of the department's work and in general for their valuable assistance to Bob and myself. Jeffrey Ling and certain senior members of the department during his Directorship (1986–89) deserve credit for originating the idea of such a history. The clear memories of Ivy Giachardi, the late Muriel Grindrod and Louis Branney contributed much to the description of the department's antecedents, the Foreign Research and Press Service and the Foreign Office's Political Intelligence Department, and of its own early development. Professors John Keep and Marcus Wheeler, Dick Cashmore, Tony Bishop, Jim Hoare, Susan Pares, Sally Morphet and many others have also provided useful recollections and in some cases directed me to additional sources of information. Kath Kazer should be thanked for drawing my attention to an admirable fictional member of the department who appeared briefly in John Le Carré's *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy*. Joan MacPherson, Simon Malpas, Joyce Markham and John Sweeney in the FCO's Library and Records Department also gave valuable help and advice, as did Richard Bone (Head of Library and Records Department, who sadly died in February this year, just when he was about to retire). Finally, and far from least, I wish to thank Basil Eastwood, Director of Research and Analysis since 1991, for his interest and encouragement as well as his explanations of the changes which the department is now undergoing.

Kenneth C Walker
April 1995

I Introduction

The great importance of having in the Foreign Office a Department in which precedents and information on every variety of subject can be quickly, readily and accurately obtained, cannot be overestimated – Edward Hertslet (Foreign Office Librarian), 1871 (commenting on the value of research which was then the responsibility of the Library).

Foreign affairs are now more complicated than at any other period in history. The increase in the number of independent states, the growth of international organisations, the complexity of international commerce and the existence of fusion and fission means of destruction have made it more difficult than ever before for ordinary men and women to form a judgement on events – Sir Charles Webster, 1961.¹

Just over fifty years ago the pressures of the Second World War and the experience of the First led senior officials and academics to see the need for foreign policy makers to have ready access to experts supplied with all sources of information to provide high quality briefing and analysis relevant to, but independent of policy concerns. Thus was formed the department – originally named the Foreign Office Research Department (FORD) – which has since become the Research and Analysis Department (RAD) of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO).

The importance of combining intellectual integrity with relevance to policy, of maintaining links between in-house and outside expertise, and of ensuring continuity while the means of promoting British interests have to be adjusted to changes in the world about us, have inspired many reviews of the department over the years. All these reviews have affirmed the importance of the research and analysis function in an increasingly complex and interdependent world, and the latest recommends that from 1997 RAD should be divided into Research Units subordinate to, and located alongside the policy departments which are its chief customers. The new arrangements are designed to enable research analysts to make a more direct contribution to policy-making and to have more fulfilling careers while maintaining their intellectual integrity and further improving the FCO's links with experts outside government and in other governments.

¹ The quotation from Edward Hertslet, who succeeded his father, the first Librarian of the FO, in 1857, is taken from *FCO Library - Print, Paper and Publications*, History Note no 5, Historical Branch, LRD, March 1993, p 4. Sir Charles Webster's comment is from his book *The Art and Practice of Diplomacy*, London, Chatto & Windus, 1961.

II Origins of the Department

FORD had two immediate antecedents:

- the Foreign Research and Press Service (FRPS), which was set up at Balliol, Oxford, in 1939, was staffed by experts from the Royal Institute of International Affairs (otherwise known as Chatham House) and other academics, and used the press cuttings library and other materials provided by Chatham House, but was funded mainly by the FO; and
- the FO's own Political Intelligence Department (PID), which had first been set up towards the end of the First World War to collect, sift and coordinate all political intelligence received from FO, Admiralty and War Office sources. The department had in fact originated in April 1917 as the Department of Information's Intelligence Bureau (DIIB) and had been transferred to the FO at the instigation of Lord Hardinge, then Permanent Under-Secretary. PID had been disbanded in 1920 and resurrected in 1939.

Before 1939 the supply of historical background information and advice (except on those countries covered by PID during 1918–20) had been the responsibility of the FO Librarian and his staff. The Library and Records Department still retains historians whose primary functions are the editing of the FCO's documentary series, *Documents on British Policy Overseas*, and the provision of historical advice and information.¹

The FRPS was largely the brainchild of the historian, Professor Arnold Toynbee, then Director of Studies at Chatham House. Toynbee had been a member of the 1918–20 PID, which he later described as a "concentration

¹ A Historical Section of the Library was established during the First World War, replaced shortly thereafter by a single Historical Adviser, and re-established after the Second World War. It was later renamed Historical Branch. The staff are now known simply as the Historians and form part of the Records and Historical Services branch of the Library and Records Department (LRD). Their work, which includes preparation for publication of *Documents on British Policy Overseas*, is distinct from and complements that of RAD (see: K Hamilton, "The Pursuit of 'Enlightened Patriotism': the British Foreign Office and Historical Researchers during the Great War and its Aftermath", *Historical Research*, Vol 61 (1988), pp 316-44; E Goldstein, "Historians outside the Academy: G W Prothero and the experience of the Foreign Office Historical Section, 1917-20", *Historical Research*, Vol 63 (1990), pp 195-211.

of talent that was immensely stimulating".¹ In 1938, around the time of the Munich Agreement, as war clouds gathered again, he and others at Chatham House began to consider what role their institute might play should a new war break out. Toynbee thought that it should act like PID as a source of advice to the Government and was insistent that it should not degenerate into a propaganda agency. He envisaged that its members would do work of first-class national importance without "selling their souls or losing their reputation".² Following negotiations with an FO team led by Allan Leeper, an Australian who was also a former member of PID, agreement was reached in early August 1939 that the staff of Chatham House should be transferred to accommodation at Balliol College, Oxford, to form the FRPS, tasked to provide accurate information on foreign affairs to any branch of government as required. They were joined by five professors and one Reader from the university, as well as by some Foreign Office personnel, including Allan Leeper.

The staff were instructed to report for duty at Balliol at 8am on 2 September 1939, whereupon they were allotted work rooms and lodgings. Thus, FRPS was *in situ* just in time for the declaration of war the next day.³ With Toynbee himself in charge, a wealth of academic talent contributed, on a full- or part-time basis, to the FRPS's work, under Toynbee's leadership. Professor Sir Bernard Pares headed the Soviet Section. The five Oxford professors, Sir Alfred Zimmern, J Brierly, H J Paton, H A R Gibb and G N Clark covered respectively the British Empire, international law, Poland and international institutions, the Arab world, and the Low Countries. Professors A G B Fisher, W J Rose, W C Atkinson and C W Manning covered respectively international economics, Poland and the Baltic States, Spain and Portugal, and the Dominions, while Professors C K Webster and D W Brogan advised on the United States. Professor R W Seton-Watson covered South-Eastern Europe. Dr R A Humphreys from Chatham House worked on Latin America, assisted by G Scheele from the British Museum. Other members of the FRPS included Albert Hourani, Dr (later Sir) Harold Beeley, Dr Violet Conolly, Dr J A Hawgood, Geoffrey Hudson, Cecil Edwards, David Mitrany, R G D Laffan, C A Macartney, T H Marshall, W L Burn, S P Walters, Ivy Giachardi, Elisabeth Pares (Sir Bernard's daughter, who was to marry Robin Humphreys), Denys Sutton (later to become a distinguished art critic) and Professors N H Baynes, R M Dawkins, J Mabbott and W M Stewart.⁴ Violet Conolly, Geoffrey Hudson and Ivy Giachardi were to become members of FORD.

In response to criticism, both already expressed and anticipated, R A Butler, then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign Office, circulated a statement (which was printed in *The Times*) about the

¹ Arnold J Toynbee, *Acquaintances*, Oxford, OUP, 1967, p 161.

² Comment by A J Toynbee to G M Gathorne-Hardy quoted in W H McNeill, *Arnold J Toynbee: A Life*, Oxford, OUP, 1989, p 180.

³ Information from former members of staff of the FRPS to R A Longmire.

⁴ The staff at that time were named in the listed included in Mr Butler's statement cited in the next paragraph which was published in *The Times* of 23 November 1939 (which contains some additional names). See also: J Mabbott, *Oxford Memories*, Oxford, Thorntons, 1986, p 92.

"Chatham House at Oxford", listing the specialist staff and their salaries and offering an assurance that its work would not duplicate that of HM Representatives overseas or of the Ministry of Information and its press officers abroad. The costs were expected to amount to about £56,400 annually, to be borne mainly by the Government, but the university agreed to pay the salaries of the seconded academics (amounting to £5400) and Chatham House contributed £6000 per annum.¹

During its three and a half years of existence the FRPS produced a weekly *Review of the Foreign Press*, summarising reports from newspapers received via neutral countries, and papers on such subjects as post-war frontiers, ethnic minorities and economic prospects.²

Some of his former colleagues have criticised Toynbee's weak grasp of administration and extreme sensitivity to criticism, but he was undoubtedly hard-working and dedicated. Rather than specialising in a particular region, as he had done with the Middle East in the First World War, he edited others' assessments, kept an eye on administrative matters, and above all cultivated his connections with senior figures in Whitehall, including the Foreign Secretary. He sought to maintain an academic and collegiate atmosphere at the FRPS. He instituted an early morning service for the staff in Balliol College chapel. He held informal seminars on Friday afternoons addressed by senior colleagues and sometimes by distinguished outside speakers. Among the latter were R A Butler, his successor as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (and the son of Bonar Law) Richard Law, and Ivan Maisky, the Soviet Ambassador. John Foster Dulles, then a prominent Presbyterian layman and New York lawyer, attended a meeting on peace aims in July 1942.³

¹ *The Times*, 23 November 1939. The draft FRPS budget for 1942-43 was set at £67,568, of which £7600 was to be provided by Oxford and £3271 by Chatham House (according to McNeill, *op cit*, p 319).

² The numbers of the *Review of the Foreign Press* up to mid-1940 were in roneo. The whole was reproduced by the Kraus International Publications, Munich in 1980.

³ McNeill, *op cit*, pp 181-2, 319; and information supplied to R A Longmire by former members of staff of the FRPS .

III The Founding of FORD

The expertise of the FRPS had soon gained wide recognition. But by late 1942, some members of its staff and senior FO officials felt that there were serious disadvantages in its unofficial status and its location outside London, for example limited access to intelligence reports and other official information and disparity with their American counterparts in the Special Research Division (now the Bureau of Intelligence and Research) of the State Department. Chatham House, meanwhile had informed the FO that it proposed to cease its contribution towards the funding of the FRPS and asked the FO to assume the full financial responsibility. These matters were discussed at a meeting on 24 September 1942 of some members of the FRPS with Gladwyn Jebb (later Lord Gladwyn), who headed the recently created Economic and Reconstruction Department (E&RD) of the FO, which was responsible for dealings with the FRPS, in subsequent FO minuting and at a meeting of FO officials on 14 October 1942.¹

Gladwyn Jebb welcomed the opportunity to provide the FO with its own "wise men" like those of the American Special Research Division: they would be under closer control and, "owing to their seeing FO papers, would be less likely to indulge in nebulous theories and impractical suggestions". But he also warned of the risk that some of the experts "might try to be the tail which wags the dog and generally throw their weight about", and of the danger that they might be indiscreet. He took the opportunity to consider also the future of the PID which was located at Woburn. Compared with the 70-odd members of the FRPS, PID had only 16-20 experts who were temporary civil servants employed on a monthly basis covering the following areas: the Soviet Union and Poland; Middle East; Scandinavia and Low Countries; South-East Europe; Germany and Czechoslovakia; Far East; United States; Latin America; Spain and Portugal; Italy; and France. It produced a weekly summary of the events based on confidential sources and assisted FO policy departments with the preparation of current memoranda. He proposed cutting PID and transferring some of its staff to an enlarged FRPS which would come under his own department.²

¹ FO371/31499 (1942): U1019. The Americans had floated the idea of an exchange between their Special Research Division and the FRPS, under which two members of each organisation would serve in the other, but they lost interest on learning of the unofficial status (and limited access to official material) of the FRPS. See also: J Mabbott, *op cit*, p 93.

² FO371/31499 (1942): U1019, U1763.

On the whole, departmental heads valued the work of the FRPS but were less complimentary about PID. They mostly agreed that some or all of the outside experts should be brought into the FO. Some were wary at the possibility of their acting as a Planning Department, but Nigel Ronald, the Assistant Under-Secretary (AUS) responsible for E&RD, pointed out that Toynbee had made clear that the FRPS, like its American counterpart, the Special Research Division, was not concerned with the making of policy (or planning) "but only with the preparation of materials for the use of those who do make policy". Meanwhile, the presence of an economist in the FRPS (Professor A G B Fisher) revived the long disputed issue of the need for an Economic Adviser in the FO.¹

By mid-November 1942 there was a consensus at official level, endorsed by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Richard Law, that the FO should take over the FRPS. Following informal soundings, Nigel Ronald wrote to the Secretary of the FRPS on 21 November. He explained that the change was needed because the FRPS's work required "constant reference to material of a highly confidential nature and the closest and most intimate relations with the officials of a large number of Departments of State", adding that it was considered desirable to make clear that the FO was taking over full responsibility for the FRPS in order to dispel possible misunderstandings by other departments concerning its status and to ensure that they took it fully into their confidence.²

When the proposal was put to him, Mr Eden was at first opposed. In a manuscript minute of 4 December he wrote: "I don't like this and I don't want it. I shall take much convincing that we need to take over this organisation".³ His officials and Mr Law persuaded him, however, adducing not only the reasons outlined above but also emphasising that an FRPS based in the FO would be more speedy and efficient. Besides, it was argued that the numbers of staff were not large, about 160 *in toto*⁴. Three days later Mr Eden agreed to and signed a letter to Lord Astor, Chairman of the Council of Chatham House, formally putting the proposal for the transfer of the FRPS to the FO for consideration by the Council. Mr Eden wrote:

"Only by thus clarifying its status, shall I be in the position to make the full use which I wish to make of this remarkable organisation for the important tasks which lie ahead of us; and continuance of the present system of delegated control would hamper its future growth".

The Council on 9 December agreed to the change, and on the same day its Chairman, Lord Astor, replied to Mr Eden, informing him of its decision and enclosing draft terms of agreement covering arrangements for the

¹ FO371/31499 (1942): U1617.

² FO371/31499 (1942): U1462.

³ FO371/31499 (1942): U1693.

⁴ FO371/31499 (1942): U1693. Mr Eden confirmed that he agreed with the decision taken in a further manuscript minute of 20 Dec 1942 (FO371/31499: U1763).

future of the FRPS's staff and research resources.¹ The final text of the Terms of Agreement was settled, after consultation with the Treasury, in April 1943.²

Despite the Chatham House Council's agreement, Lord Astor had reservations. He had informed Mr Law on 20 November that he thought an opportunity for co-operation between Chatham House and the FO had been missed.³ In a second letter to Mr Eden on 9 December, which he marked "confidential until the end of the war", he argued that an independent FRPS could offer a wider range of views than could UK officials. He added:

"As you have decided to absorb FRPS you can count on the fullest co-operation of Chatham House in making the transfer. So long as the War lasts the Council will utter no word of public criticism but will report the transfer to their members. Whenever peace returns, we must be free to submit to Government and to Parliament the view that Government Departments should be instructed to utilise voluntary organisations to the utmost without seeking to convert them into Government Departments".

Mr Eden responded with a personal and confidential letter of 24 December reiterating his appreciation of the Council's agreement to the transfer and assuring Lord Astor of his belief that the Government would benefit from maintaining Chatham House's independence.⁴

The left and centre of the political spectrum displayed considerable suspicion of the change. A writer in the *New Statesman and Nation* (6 March 1943) expressed the fear that the "effect of the changes will be to strengthen the position of the most reactionary forces in the Foreign Office". The journal returned to the attack on 15 May. Under the heading "Triumphant Bureaucracy", it asserted that "research" in the mind of the official administrator was very apt to mean "digging up the facts which support the conclusions he has already decided, or been ordered, to reach and not digging up the facts which get in the way of these conclusions". If there was to be sensible and realistic interpretation of trends of world opinion during the war, an independent FRPS was much more likely to arrive at it than a subordinate section of the Foreign Office.

Time and Tide (6 March 1943) took up the cudgels on behalf of PID *vis à vis* the FRPS, making a critical swipe at the latter and in particular at Professor Toynbee whom it described as an apologist for Munich who had never distinguished himself in the field of political judgment. An article "Die-hardened arteries" by Spartacus in the left-wing Sunday paper *Reynolds News* on 7 March 1943 welcomed the infusion of fresh blood into the FO but hoped that it would not be "anti-red" blood.

¹ FO371/31499 (1942): U1774 (A further letter from Mr Eden, dated 24 December, in reply to Lord Astor's of 9 December, is at U1898).

² FO371/35260 (1943): U1483.

³ FO371/31499 (1942): U1675.

⁴ FO 371/31499 (1942):U1898.

IV The Early Years of FORD

It was decided that the new department was to be called the Foreign Office Research Department, and it was formally established on 1 April 1943. Mr Eden announced the change in an oral answer in the Commons on 14 April 1943 (Annex B).¹ PID, less some members who transferred to FORD, became a joint department of the Foreign Office and Supreme Allied Headquarters, and it survived in this form until shortly after the end of the war in Europe. In other respects, the plans for FORD went ahead. The new department was estimated to cost £80,000 for the year 1943/44. Its staff were not established members of the Civil Service but temporary employees – this status being based on the assumption that they would no longer be required when the war ended.² Its principal functions were broadly to review the foreign press, concentrating on political and administrative subjects, to prepare Country Handbooks for post-war use, and to "turn out the *Weekly (Intelligence) Summary* and memoranda called for by Departments to assist them in the formulation of policy". To do so, FORD would "collect and collate intelligence past and current, digest and analyse it and in doing so append tentative inferences. It is not their function to formulate plans". FORD was also to answer queries and provide memoranda asked for by Service and other Government Departments.³

The move to London took place from 15 to 24 June 1943 and involved most of the staff; a small contingent remained in Oxford and maintained contact with the sections of the Admiralty and War Office Intelligence Departments there. In London they were first housed in the former Wyndham Club at 13 St James's Square next door but two to Chatham House. But there was a basic incompatibility between the requirements of Air Raid Precautions that there should be open access to all the houses in the square via the roofs and the need for security befitting a department of the Foreign Office. During this time Denys Sutton remembers being on fire-watch duty the night that the London Library next door was bombed. Fortunately the FORD archives and press-cutting boxes still stacked in the hall of No 13 escaped damage.⁴

Shortly afterwards the department was moved to the Old Stationery Office in Westminster (the site now occupied by the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Hall). Ivy Giachardi (who left FORD in 1945 to join the Allied

¹ *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons (Hansard)*, 14 April 1943, Column 1183.

² FO371/35259 (1943): U333, U1157.

³ FO371/35260 (1943): U1622 (FO Circular), U1801 (letter, Lord Hood, FO, to S Y Scarlett, Political Warfare Executive).

⁴ Information from the late Denys Sutton to R A Longmire.

Commission for Austria) describes this period as "rather an uncomfortable time" for the staff since many of the academic people had to travel up from Oxford and elsewhere and stay in lodgings during the week. In the summer of 1944 life was further complicated by the V1 and V2 rocket attacks on London.¹

FORD's structure initially remained similar to that of the FRPS, but as time went by there were several staff changes. When the war ended, most of the academic staff returned to their universities, some of the gaps being filled by temporary personnel from other war-time departments. A special section was established to scrutinize captured German documents for information on pre-war German diplomacy and on war criminals, but staff numbers in several other sections declined. A few academics stayed on (eg Violet Conolly and Harold Beeley, already mentioned, and Ian MacMaster, who had taken over the Vatican desk from the first Mrs Toynbee after the move from Oxford). Toynbee himself became adviser to Ernest Bevin at the Peace Conference and in 1946 resigned from the FO to return to Chatham House as Director of Studies. Among others from Chatham House Muriel Grindrod returned there as the Italian specialist and also became Assistant Editor of *The World Today*, publication of which had just begun.

The Treasury had agreed to funding for FORD for the duration of the war on the assumption that it would be disbanded after any necessary work in connection with the peace treaties.² But the prospect of life without FORD was not to the liking of the Foreign Office Library, which would then have been expected to resume research functions for which it had been responsible before the Second World War, but on a larger scale. At the beginning of 1945 the Library pointed out that, were FORD to be closed down, the Library staff would be "inadequate in numbers to cope with the anticipated large increase in work once the war in Europe was over".³

For a short time from early 1946, FORD's establishment was greatly increased by the absorption of the former German & Austrian Section of PID (also known as the Captured German Documents Section). This was concerned with the study of captured documents, including those relating to the concentration camps and their victims, war criminals and German foreign policy. The aims of the section's work included: to find materials which could be used to refute any post-war German attempt to foster the notion that Germany was not to blame for the war; and to collect evidence against war criminals. Among the documents unearthed from the archives of the German Foreign Ministry was a microfilm copy of the secret protocols to the 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. By the time of its transfer to FORD, the section had an establishment of about 100 staff, also mainly temporary employees. But most of its priority tasks had by then been completed, and staff numbers were quickly reduced following the move.⁴

¹ Information from Ivy Giachardi to R A Longmire.

² FO371/35260 (1943): U333 (letter, Treasury to FO).

³ FO371/50618 (1945): U778/778/750.

⁴ FO366/1743 (1946):XS3H/0/28 Vol I. Information from Louis Branney and Peter Roland.

Toynbee was succeeded in April 1946 by James Passant, a historian from Sydney Sussex College, Cambridge, who had served in the FO from 1939 to 1941, then in the Naval Intelligence Division of the Admiralty until the end of the war, and for a short time thereafter as Head of the German and Austrian Section of FORD. He was also put in charge of the Library, his full title being Director of Research, Librarian and Keeper of the Papers. The two departments were regarded as two branches of a single "Research Department and Library", as it was shown in the *FO List* during the late 1940s and early 1950s, and they were both accommodated in a single building – Cornwall House in Stamford Street near Waterloo Station – although for most practical purposes they remained separate.

Before Passant was appointed, discussions had begun between FO and Treasury officials on the need to retain FORD and the grading and recruitment of its staff. In consultation with Toynbee, Passant produced a paper, entitled "Status and Recruitment of Future Permanent Staff of Research Department, Foreign Office", in which he commented on the difficulty of recruiting suitable personnel and identified various other problems which needed to be considered. Passant began by outlining the main function of the department (in addition to producing a weekly *Political Intelligence Summary*) as follows:–

"Each of its Sections, corresponding to one of the Political Departments of the Foreign Office, should continuously build up a body of intelligence about the recent political and social history of each country in its area, including recent political, social and religious movements and the personalities involved. Each member of a Research Department Section should also be thoroughly versed in the general historical development of the country or countries with which he is concerned and should be able to write *ad hoc* papers on the historical background of the political developments in 'his' country for the Political Department to which his Section is attached.

"Each Section should, in fact, be a body of experts on the countries within its area, and should be capable of supplying advice about current problems based on close study of the permanent characteristics of foreign States to the officers of Political Departments. These officers are trained to acquire versatility by relatively rapid movement from one country to another. But serious mistakes in policy can easily arise from decisions taken on the basis of knowledge restricted to the immediate facts of a situation. The long-term trends of social and political forces in a country need always to be taken into account in such decisions. It should be the main task of Research Department to provide Political Departments with a view of the more permanent lines of development in any given country as a balancing factor to the pressures of what may seem to be the dictates of immediate expediency."

Passant noted that it would be necessary for close personal relations to be maintained between political departments and FORD and that the intellectual calibre of members of RD must be "not inferior to, though in some respects different from, what has hitherto been required of the Foreign Service as a whole". He went on to say that, while the staff of FORD should be more stable in composition than those of the political departments, they should be given short-term attachments to Missions abroad to enable them to renew and extend their personal knowledge of the countries which they studied. It might also be useful to post into RD diplomats who had returned from abroad for a period of study of a country with which they were already familiar or to which they might later be sent.

Dr Passant argued that, in order to attract good candidates and to avoid creating a "depressed class" of men in RD, consideration should be given either to

- (a) offering them the possibility, at the discretion of the FO, of transfer to the Foreign Service after a term of service in RD (although this would have to be restricted to male officers so long as women were not granted equality in admission to the Foreign Service); or to
- (b) full incorporation of the male staff of RD into the Foreign Service – even though this would give rise to a "depressed class" of women in RD – but Passant thought that the admission of women to RD on the result of the same examination and in the same grades as the men could hardly be regarded with disfavour by women so long as the Foreign Service as a whole remained closed to them.

Dr Passant thought that, if the examination for recruitment into RD were open to women, it was probable that a number of good candidates would come forward, but he added that "it would clearly be a mistake to employ too many women on a staff that must secure adequate attention from the Political Departments" and that the effect of the department's work would be reduced if the majority of Heads of Sections were women. He also discussed the possibility of attracting university dons to work in the department on short contracts of five years or thereabouts, but he doubted whether these would appeal to many young dons because for those wishing to make their name in their field there would be insufficient time left over for them to pursue their own research interests.¹

Shortly after Passant took over, the FO obtained the Treasury's agreement to an establishment for the department comprising (in addition to the Director, support staff and the remaining temporary ex-PID staff working on German documents) an Assistant Director and 31 Research Assistants (RAs), of which six were at RA Grade I, seventeen RA II and eight RA III.

¹ FO366/1745 (1946): XS3H/0/28 Vol III.

The posts were advertised with pay scales ranging from £328 – 578 per annum for men and £313 – 493 for women in the RA III grade, up to £905 – 1105 for men and £784 – 934 for women in the RAI grade, and £1105 – 1320 for the Assistant Director. The qualifications demanded for RAs were a first or second class honours degree plus fluency in a modern language, personal knowledge of a foreign country and experience of historical research (though the first requirement might be waived for candidates with other special qualifications or experience of foreign countries). The RAs thus recruited were to be Home Civil Servants rather than members of the Foreign Service. Candidates could be told that they could be considered in due course for transfer to the Foreign Service, although this possibility was not mentioned in the advertisement.¹

By degrees the role of the department began to change. The weekly *Political Intelligence Summary* was discontinued, and the department's function in providing background knowledge was emphasised. The FO as a whole began to accept the idea of a permanent research presence, although not every head of department knew how to derive the most benefit from its services, and suspicious attitudes by the "generalists" towards the "specialists" took some time to evaporate. By 1947 the department had a staff of just over 50 divided into the following sections:–

American; Far Eastern; German & Austrian; Middle Eastern; Northern; Polar Regions; Southern; Soviet; Western; World Organisations; and the ex-PID "Special German & Austrian Section", now reduced to 16 members, but still by far the largest section.²

In the event, an Assistant Director was not appointed until 1948, when Air Commodore K C Buss OBE, a specialist on the Middle East who had served as Acting Head of Department for a period in 1947, was selected.³ Ivy Giachardi, who returned to FORD in spring 1948 via the open competition, found that great changes had taken place during her three-year absence and that, apart from Violet Conolly, there was hardly a face she recognised.⁴ A distinguished new recruit in 1948 was Dr B R Pearn OBE, who (apart from war service) had been Professor of History at Rangoon University from 1938 to 1947 and had been mentioned in despatches during his war service for undertaking a reconnaissance operation on the Chindwin and had had the future General Ne Win among his students. Dr Pearn took charge of the Far East Section, which at that time covered South-East Asia as well as China, Japan and Korea. During the next few years there was a gradual reduction in the staff so that by 1951 there were only about 30 Research Assistants, and some sections had been

¹ *ibid.*

² *FO List* for 1948.

³ J Mabbott, in his *Oxford Memories* (p 100) says that after a year in London - ie in 1944 - he was appointed Deputy Director of the department with the job of looking after its "internal affairs", but this seems to have been an *ad hoc* arrangement rather a formal appointment. He was not shown as Deputy Director in the *FO List*.

⁴ Recollection by Ivy Giachardi, as related to R A Longmire.

amalgamated¹. Later additions included the Cartographic Section (although the department had a single cartographer by 1947), which was transferred to Library and Records Department in 1980; and an Economic Section which was incorporated in the Economists' Department when this was established in the late 1960s. Polar Regions Section was transferred to American Department (as it then was) in 1967, although it did not move from Cornwall House to the main building until several years later.

Although Home Civil Servants, soon after the war researchers began to be posted overseas to their areas of specialisation. An early case was that of Ted Orchard, attached to the Russian Secretariat (which dealt mainly with internal developments) in the Embassy at Moscow. Thereafter the embassy relied heavily on FORD as a source of staff for the Russian Secretariat. An early example of an overseas research visit was one to Korea in 1949 by Peter Milward (the department's Japanologist – who also covered Korea and the Philippines).

With the onset of the Cold War, there was an even greater need for the department's expertise. One indication of this was the detachment in 1954 of Soviet Section from the rest of the department in Cornwall House and its move to the old India Office Building beside King Charles Street. This brought it close to its main customer, Northern Department, responsible for policy towards the USSR. No member of the department remembers Cornwall House as particularly comfortable, but life in King Charles Street was no more so. Soviet Section was accommodated in large rooms redolent of the imperial era, with high ceilings and tall, ill-fitting windows penetrated by icy draughts in winter. Heating was by open fires, and when the coal ran out dignified messengers were summoned by the press of a bell to replenish the scuttle. The section's largest room was shared by three or four people, screened by high shelves of boxed *Pravdas*, *Izvestiyas* and similar publications, liberally sprinkled with dust from the fire. At the end of each year the *Pravdas* were sent away to be bound, and the resulting large tomes were kept on shelves in the corridor outside.

James Passant was awarded a CMG in 1953. The following year the status of Assistant Under-Secretary was accorded to his post of Director of Research, Librarian and Keeper of the Papers. Passant retired in early 1955 and was succeeded by Duncan Wilson CMG, a career diplomat who was well qualified for the post. He had had many years' experience in the service including a war-time spell with PID. He later became Ambassador

¹ The *FO List* for 1951 listed the following sections: Middle East & Far East; Soviet; Eastern European; Western, International Organisations & American; German & Austrian; Special German & Austrian; and Polar Regions – plus a Cartographer. That for 1952 listed: Middle East; South-East Asia & Japan; China; Soviet; Eastern European; Western, International Organisations & American; German & Austrian; and Polar Regions Sections – plus Cartographer. Over the years the sections underwent several reorganisations, for example coverage of Japan and later Korea was attached to the China Section, coverage of South Asia and South-East Asia was combined in a single section, and Western & Southern European, American and UN Sections (the latter initially consisting of a single officer) evolved from the German & Austrian and Western, International Organisations and American Sections.

in Belgrade and in Moscow and, after retirement, an author of books on his special field, Serbia and Yugoslavia.¹

By this time FORD had become firmly established as part of the FO. In his book entitled *The Foreign Service* published in 1955, Lord Strang said that its functions were to "collect from unofficial as well as official sources and verify, digest and prepare facts over the whole field of foreign affairs for the use of the Secretary of State, for the Foreign Office (all departments), HM Missions abroad and other Government departments and official organisations ". He added: "The principal forms in which this material is presented are minutes and memoranda produced *ad hoc* in response to particular requests or inquiries ".² Papers produced during this era spanned a broad range of subjects relating to various parts of the world. Among those on European topics were an account of the steps leading to the establishment of the Council of Europe and several studies devoted to aspects of Western European Union.

In 1956 the department comprised eight sections – Soviet, Middle East, South-East Asia and Japan, China, Germany and Austria, Eastern Europe, Western Europe and America (including Latin America), and Polar Regions. During that year the Middle East Section expanded from two to four officers and the South-East Asia and Japan Section from four to five, while the Soviet Section remained the largest with eight.³ In 1957, evidently because of the increasing need to post Research Assistants overseas, it was decided that members of the Research Cadre should be established as members of the Diplomatic Service.⁴

Up to that time the Soviet Section had been virtually the only one to send its staff abroad. Professor Marcus Wheeler of Queen's University, Belfast, remembers his time in the Moscow embassy (1961–63) as follows⁵:

"We probably had the best of both worlds: we did not bear the responsibility for taking major decisions; but we had the satisfaction of being, virtually every day, involved in the processes leading to the formation of policy. We read the Soviet newspapers and reported items which we judged to be important. We acted, when called upon, as interpreters for the Ambassador or for visiting Ministers or other VIPs. We supplied, as best we could, advice on Russian history or literature; and we tried, through travel to approved places of interest in the Soviet Union, to inform ourselves and our superiors on everyday life outside the specialised diplomatic circle".

Duncan Wilson was succeeded in September 1957 by another career diplomat, Cecil (Joe) Parrott CMG OBE, who was later to become

¹ *The Life and Times of Vuk Stefanovic Karadzic, 1787-1864*, Oxford, OUP, 1970; *Tito's Yugoslavia*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1979.

² Lord Strang, *The Foreign Office*, London, Allen & Unwin, 1955, p 209.

³ *FO List* for 1957.

⁴ It is not possible to set out in detail the reasons for this change. The relevant file (L83/56) was destroyed in the course of routine weeding.

⁵ Information from Professor Wheeler to R A Longmire.

Ambassador at Prague and after retirement from the Foreign Service headed a centre for Slavonic studies at Lancaster University. In his memoirs entitled *The Serpent and the Nightingale*, published in 1977, he described his post as "very modest and somewhat academic", involving "glorified paper work" and giving him rich opportunities for reading.¹ His deputy, Paul Falla, was also a career Foreign Service officer and was a brilliant linguist, reputedly competent in seventeen languages. Parrott was succeeded in 1960 by Robert Whyte Mason CMG, whose five-year term as Director was to conclude with the implementation of the recommendations of the Plowden Committee (see below).

The department's product during this period included many papers on the activities of the communist powers in various parts of the world, on internal problems in communist countries, on various frontier disputes – also historical and background studies on particular countries or regional trends, for example the then significant Pan-African movement. In general, such papers were factual rather than speculative, but there were occasional exceptions, eg a paper issued in 1959 (and presumably written in co-operation with the FO's Planning Staff) on the probable trends of Soviet foreign policy over the following decade.

¹ C Parrott, *The Serpent and the Nightingale*, London, Faber & Faber, 1977, p 139.

V The Plowden Recommendations and the Joint Research Department

The Review of Representational Services Overseas, undertaken in 1962–63 by a committee under the chairmanship of Lord Plowden, and hence popularly known as the Plowden Report, covered the work of both the FO and the Commonwealth Relations Office (CRO). Research in the CRO was conducted by a small Planning and Research Unit. This consisted of a Planning Officer of Senior Research Officer grade, much of whose time was spent on preparing ministerial speeches, another Senior Research Officer, two Research Assistants, a sprinkling of CRO Executive Officers and a Clerical Officer. Its functions were (a) to prepare at the request of Heads of Department factual research papers outlining the background to current problems; (b) at the request of departments to select and prepare material from current files for printing in the CRO series of printed documents; and (c) to assist the Planning Officer with planning papers on the future of the Commonwealth.¹ Thus the unit's role was a combination of FORD and FO Planning Staff functions.

The Plowden Committee confirmed the requirement for the specialists in FORD and its CRO counterpart, saying that "full use should be made of their services by executive departments so as to ensure that action on current problems is not taken in ignorance of the lessons of the past". It added that it was "valuable to have members of the Research Department associated with study groups for long-term policy formation".²

At that time FORD had a strength of rather more than 40 posts, of which 30 were reserved for members of the Research Cadre. Each section was headed, as a rule, by a Research Assistant Grade I, with a number of Research Assistants Grades II and III in support. Transfers between sections were said to be "rare" because of the specialist nature of the work. Research Assistants were recruited by a competition run by the Civil Service Commissioners and were required to have a good honours degree. Promotion was possible only within the cadre.³ Partly in order to improve the very limited career prospects, the committee recommended that the post of Deputy Director should normally be filled by a member of the cadre. There were then seven members of the cadre serving overseas.

¹ Information from L Branney and others.

² *Report of the Committee on Representational Services Overseas 1962-63*, Cmnd 2276, February 1964, p 79.

³ *ibid.*

The Plowden Committee expressed the view that "members of the Research staff in both the Foreign and Commonwealth Offices should have close contact with other specialists working in the same fields in universities and elsewhere. Exchanges of research staff with universities should be encouraged. Members of the research staff may well be suited to undertake work at universities on a sabbatical basis and there is scope for university and other outside experts to work part-time in the Foreign and Commonwealth Offices".¹ The report was here reflecting an established tradition of liaison with the academic world. Although seldom if ever granted sabbaticals, researchers frequently attended seminars and conferences on relevant topics at universities in the UK and abroad, and ties with Chatham House remained close.

The Plowden Committee could see no reason why "within the next few years a single Research Department should not be established to meet the requirements of the Foreign and Commonwealth Offices". This fitted well with the report's main recommendation that the services of the FO and CRO should be brought together in a unified Diplomatic Service but that separate offices be maintained in order to emphasise the importance to Britain of the Commonwealth.² In 1966, the CRO and Colonial Office were merged to form the Commonwealth Office.

The FO/CRO Joint Research Department (JRD) came into being in 1965 with the addition of a Commonwealth and General Section (later joined with FORD's small UN Section to form International Section). It was staffed by a small team from the CRO, led by Louis Branney, who had earlier worked in the African Studies Branch of the Colonial Office and the FO's Department of Technical Co-operation (one of the antecedents of the Overseas Development Administration). As a result of the amalgamation the department for the first time had world-wide coverage (except for a few countries on which there was no perceived need for research and analysis to supplement the reporting of embassies).

Paul Falla served as Acting Director from Robert Mason's departure in November 1965 until March 1967, when a new Director was appointed in the person of Joseph (Joe) Ford CMG, OBE. As a former member of the Consular Service who had transferred to the Diplomatic Service, he had been Head of the China Section of FORD for a time in the 1950s, acting as an assistant to Mr Eden at the 1954 Geneva Conference.³ He had served in Hanoi and Saigon as well and was accordingly well-versed in both Vietnamese and Chinese affairs. He had been awarded the CMG in 1960 following a tour in Hanoi.

No new Deputy Director was appointed when Paul Falla left. By that time the Administration was considering a proposal to improve the status and career ladder of members of the Research Cadre by regrading them as

¹ *ibid.* p 80.

² *ibid.* p 12-13.

³ Some private letters from him about the conference are held in the department.

Research Officers (linked departmental class) with the grades of RAI, RAII and RAIII to be replaced by Senior Research Officer, Research Officer and Assistant Research Officer respectively, with pay and allowances equal to those of First, Second and Third Secretaries in the Administrative Class of the Diplomatic Service. Later the grades SRO, RO and ARO were re-titled Principal Research Officer, Senior Research Officer and Research Officer in line with Home Civil Service practice.

VI The FCO Research Department

Despite the Plowden Committee's preference for retaining separate Foreign and Commonwealth Offices, the two were amalgamated in October 1968, whereupon the department was renamed FCO Research Department (or FCO RD). Initially the FCO Research Department, like JRD, was scattered between several buildings, including Cornwall House, the old India Office (King Charles Street), Century House just south of Westminster Bridge and, from 1967, Clive House and Palace Chambers. Clive House, located in Petty France just south of St James' Park, is better known as the premises of the Passport Office. Palace Chambers, while even more conveniently situated, was an old, gloomy building with lifts to match – including one powered by the discharge of water effected by the operator pulling on a rope which passed through the lift. In 1969 most of the department was moved to Riverwalk House, a sparkling new block not far from the Tate Gallery. Soviet Section, however, remained in King Charles Street throughout these peregrinations, while the Far Eastern Section moved to Matthew Parker Street (near Parliament Square) instead of Riverwalk House. The department's functions were defined in the *Diplomatic Service List* of 1969 as follows:–

"Research Department collects, verifies and interprets facts in the field of foreign and Commonwealth affairs and presents them in various forms as other Departments may require, eg in answer to questions, in minutes or shorter memoranda for the use of Departments and in research memoranda for wider circulation which, when necessary, treat subjects in their historical context."

Joe Ford retired in 1970 and shortly afterwards was appointed Director of the newly established Great Britain-China Centre. He was succeeded by Edward (Ted) Orchard CBE, the first member of the Research Cadre since James Passant to be appointed Director. A noted Kremlinologist, Ted had been Head of Soviet Section since 1959 with the exception of a posting to Moscow (his third) from 1963 to 1965, following which he had been awarded the CBE. He was adept at displaying his expertise and that of the department to the best advantage, and RD attained a higher profile in the FCO as a consequence.

During his six-year tenure, the department acquired a structure which was to endure until the early 1990s. In 1972 all the department's sections were moved into the New Public Offices in Great George Street so that for the first time for nearly twenty years they were all under one roof. The

proximity to main FCO departments facilitated much easier personal contact between the Cadre and their principal customers.

Recommendations by the FCO Inspectors in 1973 were accepted concerning the creation of four Regional Director posts graded Senior Principal Research Officer and the grouping of the sections into four Regions under them: Soviet and East European; African and Middle East; Asian (comprising the Far Eastern and South and South-East Asian Sections – of which the latter also covered the Pacific); and Atlantic (comprising Western and Southern European, American, and International Sections). The new Regional Directors were intended to serve as channels to AUs, while the creation of the Senior Principal Research Officer posts improved career prospects to a certain extent in what was by its nature a static structure – even though two of the first four Regional Directors to be appointed (ie Henry Hainworth and Ivor Porter) were retired Ambassadors. The two members of the cadre first appointed Regional Directors were Patrick Bannerman and Ken Duke. The results of this experiment were mixed. The new structure worked better in some parts of the department than others. It was endorsed by a further Review, by the FCO Home Inspectorate in 1983 (which also made the proposal, which was not adopted, to rename the department Political Analysis and Research Department).

Members of the department regularly participated in meetings at the Cabinet Office of various Current Intelligence Groups which draft assessments for the Joint Intelligence Committee under arrangements instituted in the 1960s. They also frequently attended, usually together with representatives of FCO policy departments, meetings of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation regional experts in Brussels. Research officers have also for many years been regularly attached to the British Delegation to the annual session of the UN General Assembly and have helped to staff delegations to international conferences such as the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. Two members of the Cadre (Tony Bishop and Martin Nicholson) were selected and given professional training as Russian interpreters, thus bringing to an end years of dilettante interpreting by research officers merely plucked from their desks as need arose – which must often have caused some surprise among their highly trained Soviet counterparts.

One indication of the Soviet assessment of RD was given following the expulsion by the Heath Government in September 1971 of 105 Soviet diplomats for espionage activities. Although the Soviet reaction was generally considered mild, it included the expulsion of five members of the British Embassy in Moscow and the barring from re-entry to the country of another thirteen British citizens, among whom were three members of the Cadre (Geoffrey Murrell, Bob Longmire and Ann Lewis). Since two other members of the Cadre serving with the Russian Secretariat of the embassy had been expelled earlier the same year, it appeared that the Soviet authorities were targeting a body of people who they thought

knew too much about them.¹ Commenting on the Soviet actions, the *Sunday Times* (10 October 1971) observed that the Embassy's Russian Secretariat was a "key bureau" and the *Spectator* (16 October) declared that the FO's best Kremlinologists were "unexcelled".

Papers issued by the department in the late 1960s/early 1970s included ones on such diverse subjects as the Cape Verde Islands, treaties concluded by the People's Republic of China, the Chinese Cultural Revolution, China's organisational and legal framework for the conduct of foreign trade, African concepts of socialism, Communism in Cyprus, Christian communities in Jerusalem, the Anglo-Portuguese Alliance, the Soviet Party leadership, the Soviet concept of *détente*, private travel and labour mobility in Eastern Europe, and labour and politics in Latin America. A noteworthy aspect of the department's work at this time was the extensive historical, quasi-legal and geographical research undertaken by Commonwealth and General Section on various questions from Britain's imperial past. Much research was also required for the British case over Gibraltar. It resulted in about 300 pages of typescript examining in detail events and documents spanning some 250 years. The Falklands Islands were, of course, another focus of attention. Considerable research was also called for in preparation for the British declaration of sovereignty over the remote islet, aptly named Rockall, west of Scotland. The Northern Ireland Office and Republic of Ireland Department of the FCO, both established following the outbreak of the troubles in the province in 1969/1970, also commissioned a great deal of work from Commonwealth and General Section.² Meanwhile, Far Eastern Section was much involved in preparing background papers for the negotiations leading to the upgrading of diplomatic relations with China to ambassadorial level in early 1972.

The question of mineral rights in Northern Rhodesia, when it was about to become the independent state of Zambia, was another thorny question. Dick Cashmore, a Cambridge historian with a background in the Colonial Service in East Africa, was recruited, initially on a temporary basis, to help research this topic. Later, as Head of African Section, Dick was chosen as a member of the Pearce Commission on the future of Southern Rhodesia, keeping him hard at work from December 1971 to May 1972. After a spell as Head of South and South-East Asia Section, he went to Rhodesia again at the end of 1979 to act as Provincial Supervisor during the independence elections, and a year later he took part in the Commonwealth Mission observing elections in Uganda after the fall of Idi Amin.

¹ In a book entitled *Downing Street's Diplomacy*, published by International Relations, Moscow, in 1964, a Soviet writer, Vladimir Petrov, had described FORD as essentially an intelligence outfit, engaged in "the collection and processing of information from espionage sources". John Le Carré, in his *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* (1974), p 162, credits a J P Ribble of FORD (who is entirely fictional, of course) with spotting discrepancies in spurious intelligence reports planted by a Soviet agent in the British Secret Service.

² Information from L Branney to R A Longmire.

Ted Orchard opted for early retirement in 1976, after which he entered local politics in Haslemere, Surrey, eventually becoming mayor of that town. The Directorship then reverted to the administrative class of the Diplomatic Service, with which it has remained ever since. The new incumbent was John Sanders. It was during his term of office that British overseas representational work (together with FCO departments in London) was considered by the Central Policy Review Staff (CPRS) headed by Sir Kenneth Berrill. Two members of RD, Richard Bone and Jim Hoare, were attached to Berrill's team to assess staffing levels and other aspects of other countries' foreign services for the sake of comparison with the British one and to investigate the value of political reporting.

In their report published in 1977, the CPRS said that they were impressed by the expertise and enthusiasm of the RD staff they had met. They added that because of rapid staff turnover in overseas posts and in geographical departments in London and because of their practice of keeping classified files only for a limited period, there was a case for the retention of RD to provide continuity, although it should be smaller and more selective and should reduce the amount of information stored. In a significant shift of emphasis compared with previous reviews, the CPRS commented that RD should contribute to policy-making and "not be relegated to back-room status". Specific recommendations on RD included: endorsement of the trend away from large set piece studies in favour of contributing to the day to day policy process; that the information store should be confined to countries important to the UK and about which information was hard to obtain; that political analysis should continue to be the main focus and should be organised largely on a geographical basis; and that visits to their areas of specialisation and occasional overseas postings by research officers should be encouraged.¹

Another development around this time was the abolition of Information Research Department (set up in the early years of the Cold War with the job of preparing material to counter Soviet and other communist propaganda), the staff of which had already for some time been co-located with RD staff, sharing their registry and archive services. Some of the IRD staff joined the main Diplomatic Service and others the Research Cadre, by means of undergoing internal selection boards. Among those who transferred from IRD to RD at that time were Graham Beel who later headed Soviet Section; Martin Fuller and Janet Hancock, both of whom went on to head Middle East Section; Kathryn Colvin, Peter Roland and Kay Saunders, respectively experts on Italy, the Soviet Union and China; and Susan Pares – a granddaughter of Sir Bernard – who specialised on China and married Jim Hoare, another Far Eastern specialist.

Since 1982 RD has been accommodated in the Old Admiralty Building, situated between Horseguards Parade and the Mall – not quite so close as Great George Street to the main FCO building but convenient enough. The late Patrick Bannerman who was senior Regional Director and Acting

¹ *Review of Overseas Representation, Report by the Central Policy Review Staff*, HMSO, 1977, pp 257-8.

Director of Research on several occasions during these years described the department's rôle, in an article written in 1986¹, as follows:-

"The rôle of the Department today may be summed up as a contribution to the processes of formulating advice on policy, of implementing policy once it has been agreed, and of conducting the United Kingdom's foreign relations by;

1. Conducting research into past and current problems and offering assessments and analyses based on a longer historical perspective than is normally possible for mainstream desk officers;
2. Preparing studies in greater depth on particular issues in order to establish why events happened as they did, what implications they might have...
3. Providing, as necessary, the valuable corrective of the longer historical perspective...
4. Challenging, where to do so is deemed valuable, received wisdom;
5. Keeping abreast of academic and other research and publications on the Department's areas of specialisation;
6. Providing factual information.

"Two points are implicit in this brief description of the Department's activities. First, it provides both a straightforward information service based on the expert knowledge of its research staff together with a wide range of published and unpublished material (with the invaluable assistance of the staff of Library and Records Department) and also a variety of assessments, analysis and studies in depth. Secondly, the Department is primarily a service department, although it can and does initiate some of its work. However, the calls upon its services are such that responding to requests forms a larger part of its output than studies prepared at its own initiative...

"In order to fulfil these functions, the Research Department maintains a comprehensive bank of information on all countries in the world, on the UK's bilateral and multilateral relations with them, on their bilateral and multilateral relations with each other and on international institutions and the issues discussed in those institutions. The Department relies not only on reports from Missions abroad but also on a wide range of non-official sources

¹ "The Research Department of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office", *Arabic Resources*, Ed. D Burnett, London, Mansell, 1986. Although no formal decision was taken to revive the post of Deputy Director, Patrick Bannerman was given the title of Deputy to the Director of Research for Administrative Matters.

(eg the BBC's *Summary of World Broadcasts*, the press both in the UK and elsewhere and articles in academic and other journals). It receives a large number of foreign newspapers and other publications, many in the vernacular languages...

"Much of the work undertaken by the Department is in the form of short notes or minutes, longer in-depth studies (about the length of an academic monograph), and relatively briefer studies ... In addition members of the Department provide quick answers to quick questions over the telephone or in person. Staff are encouraged, as part of their duties, to attend and participate actively in outside seminars and conferences."

Although not mentioned above, the department also organised occasional seminars on FCO premises at which Ministers, MPs, academics, specialist journalists and officials met to discuss important and topical issues. Such events were later to become a more regular feature of the department's work. Seminars have recently been held on subjects ranging from Right-wing Extremism in Europe to UK Relations with East Asia and from Central Asia to Election Monitoring in Africa and the increasingly common international tendency towards Humanitarian Intervention. One in 1987 on Sino-Soviet Relations was addressed by the Director of the West European Department of the Chinese Foreign Ministry, who happened to be on a visit to London. Also, since the 1980s Far Eastern Section has held a joint annual "workshop" with the Contemporary China Institute under the School of Oriental and African Studies of London University, while International Section has held an annual joint seminar with the FCO's UN Department and the British International Studies Association to discuss topical international issues. Other activities organised by the department include working lunches with policy departments on current topics of importance and briefings, together with outside experts, for newly appointed Ambassadors and other senior staff about to take up positions abroad. The Director of Research and Analysis is a member of the committee of the British International Studies Association and of the Prince of Wales' Area Studies Monitoring Group, while research analysts are active in the various area studies societies. Consultations in London and overseas with experts and other officials of friendly governments have also increased in recent years.

From 1977 Research Department also became responsible for the selection of FCO papers, subject to the approval of Under-Secretaries, for publication in accordance with an announcement made in November 1976 by the then Prime Minister, Mr Callaghan, and a subsequent directive by the then Head of the Civil Service, Sir Douglas Allen (later Lord Croham), on promoting greater openness about the Government's policies by publishing as much as possible of the factual and analytical material used as the background for its major policy studies.¹ So far under this scheme, over

¹ *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons (Hansard)*, 24 November 1976, column 27.

250 official papers have been published as *Foreign Policy Documents*. They include Ministerial speeches, ambassadorial despatches, planning papers and briefing notes by policy departments, but the majority have been products of Research Department and of Arms Control and Disarmament Research Unit (which has been a separate unit since its inception in 1964).¹

¹ In 1995 Library and Records Department took over responsibility for publishing the *Foreign Policy Documents* series.

VII Recent Changes

Following a review by the FCO Management Review Staff in 1989, it was decided to rename the department Research and Analysis Department (RAD) which was thought to describe its work more accurately, and to simplify its structure by abolishing the Regional Director posts and upgrading the Heads of Sections – henceforward to be known as Assistant Directors – to the rank of Senior Principal Research Officer (ie that of the former Regional Directors). The review once again considered whether the department should remain a single entity or whether its resources might be more effectively used if it were split up and its members attached to their respective main customer departments. The argument was decided, subject to a further check in 1991, in favour of retaining the department as a unit, but the review also recommended that the department should be accommodated in the main FCO building when refurbishment had been completed. The reviewers also recommended the introduction of a modern data processing system – a task on which the department had already embarked, and in which Middle East Section shouldered the main pioneering role, with the assistance of John Hay, a mainstream officer and former member of South and South-East Asia Section who had concentrated on developing expertise in the field of computerisation.

The conclusions of the 1989 review were endorsed by a follow-up study in 1991. One year later, a report on market testing and contracting out in the FCO by the consultants Coopers Lybrand Deloitte recommended against market testing RAD's operations, but it was decided to maintain a programme of market exposure by identifying and contracting out the drafting of papers which had been commissioned by client departments and would still be useful to Whitehall customers if written to a slower time-scale and without reference to official material. This has been done in several cases, but since it was recognised that there would be a limited number of such papers it was also decided to "contract in" outside experts on term appointments to cover vacancies arising when RAD analysts were posted overseas. Also in 1992, an "FCO Structural Review" called on AUSs to strengthen links with RAD.

Against this background, an Efficiency Scrutiny in 1993 (which also examined Library and Records Department) recommended the reorganisation of the department into Research Units (each to be headed by an Assistant Director) co-located with AUS commands, while balancing this with measures to give researchers "the reassurances about their intellectual and operational independence, and collegiate identity,

which they rightly seek". With this aim in view, the scrutiny recommended that a Chief Research Analyst should be appointed Deputy Head of the Policy Analysis Staff (under the Head who would rank as an AUS and also supervise policy planning) with responsibility for management of the Research Cadre (in consultation with Personnel Management Department and relevant AUSs). The scrutiny also recommended a small reduction in the complement of the Research Cadre and endorsed the recruitment of academics on term appointments (henceforward to be known as FCO Fellows) to fill additional vacancies created in consequence of a significant increase in the rate of postings of RAD analysts out of the department.

The reviewers noted that RAD was one of the first FCO departments to have its own office automation system and that it was one of the most highly computerised departments. They recommended that the forthcoming introduction of computerisation into the main FCO departments should be used to minimise overlap between the research analysts' archives and those of their customer departments and to maximise the efficiency of the operational links between researchers and policy-makers: each RAD section should be enabled to search and retrieve documents from its customer department's database.¹

The majority of these recommendations were accepted by the FCO Administration, although the physical co-location cannot take place until 1997 because of space constraints. The Administration, however, did not accept the recommended creation of a new AUS post of Head of Policy Analysis to supervise policy planning as well as research and analysis. Instead, recognising the need for an AUS-level official to secure the independence of the research and analysis function, the Administration decided that the Deputy Political Director (a position normally filled by the AUS responsible for Western and Southern Europe) should oversee the Research Cadre and manage the remaining centralised functions of RAD. The department's establishment was cut by 10 per cent.

¹ The scrutiny recommended that the Chief Research Analyst should be responsible for managing research and policy analysis exchanges with other governments and for managing a unified research budget, which could be used to fund the commissioning of outside research and other activities, including contacts and exchanges with outside area specialists – all aspects of the department's work which have expanded greatly in recent years.

VIII The Research Cadre, Past and Present

Is there such a creature as a typical research officer? Apart from the basic requirements of intelligence, the possession of a good first degree – and nowadays usually a PhD or MA – plus linguistic knowledge and an aptitude for coping with burgeoning supplies of information, the obvious answer is that members of RD are very diverse creatures. Different methods of working have developed in various sections and on various desks, depending on whether the countries studied have open or closed societies. An officer dealing with a single country tackles his tasks differently from a colleague dealing with several countries. The familiarity or otherwise of a culture, social and political structure or religion also has an effect. Accordingly, not only specialised training and experience make a good analyst, but also adaptability – a quality even more needed in the present era of great changes.

In practice, a wide variety of people have served in the department. Most of the academics who originally staffed FORD returned to their universities after the war's end, while several former officers of the war-time Armed Forces entered the department in the early post-war years. These were joined by some ex-members of the Colonial Service, a number of whom had also served with the forces. Some had returned to the home country when the colonies concerned achieved independence; others came back later. One of the former was Stephen Clissold, who had served with the British Military Mission to Yugoslavia in 1943 and subsequently as a liaison officer at Tito's headquarters. Among the latter were: Richard Broome who had acted as liaison officer with the anti-Japanese guerrillas in Malaya; Frank Brewer, a former Secretary for Chinese Affairs of the Federation of Malaya who had stayed on for a while as Secretary for Defence in newly independent Malaya; and Alec Redpath who had served as an adviser to the Government of Pakistan. Various senior and middle-ranking members of the main Diplomatic Service have served in RD. These have included at least two ex-ambassadors (Walter Graham and Julian Walker, former Ambassadors to Tunisia and Syria respectively) besides the two who were appointed as Regional Directors in the mid-1970s.

Quite a few members of the department moved over to take up academic posts. Those who did so include: F C Jones who became a professor at Bristol University; Ivan Morris who while in FORD served as a member of the committee on reparations set up under Article 16 of the Japanese Peace Treaty and later became Professor of Japanese at Columbia; John Keep and Marcus Wheeler, both members of Soviet Section who later became

respectively Professor of Russian History at the University of Toronto and Professor of Slavonic Studies at Queen's University, Belfast; Henry Sawbridge, a mainstream Diplomatic Service officer attached to FORD who was later Deputy Director of the Japan Centre at Sheffield University; and Andrew Watson who became Professor of Chinese Studies at Adelaide. In FORD's early years, a few academics had worked on a temporary or part-time basis in FORD or had written *ad hoc* studies for the department. Those who had done so included Drs Hugh Tinker and Jeremy Cowan (later Professors at the School of Oriental and African Studies of London University), Dr Harry Rigby (later Professor at the Australian National University), Dr Michael Leifer (later Professor and Pro-Director of the London School of Economics) and Dr Alistair Hennessey (later Professor of History at Warwick University). Mention should also be made of Dr Philip Hanson who served in the department on loan from Birmingham University in the 1960s and later became Professor of Russian at Birmingham, and of Dr John Heap of Polar Regions Section who went on to become Director of the Scott Polar Research Institute at Cambridge University. The recent introduction of FCO Fellows thus strengthens a tradition of exchange with the academic world which goes back to the beginnings of FORD.

Members of the department who have published academic or general books on their fields, either while working in the department or after retirement, include P G Rogers (author of *The First Englishman in Japan*), Stephen Clissold (who wrote several books on Latin America), Patrick Bannerman (author of *Islam in Perspective: a Guide to Islamic Society, Politics and Law*), and Jim Hoare and Susan Pares (husband and wife co-authors of *Korea: an Introduction*).¹ A member of Far Eastern Section, Elizabeth Wright, became Deputy Director, and subsequently Director in succession to Joe Ford, of the Great Britain-China Centre, then went on to have a successful career with the BBC External Services and presented a series entitled *The Chinese People Stand Up*, broadcast on BBC Radio Four and World Service in the first half of 1989.²

Over the years a few members of the Cadre have transferred, or "bridged" to the administrative class of the Diplomatic Service. One who did so is George Walden, who later became Private Secretary to Dr Owen when the latter was Foreign Secretary, remained as Private Secretary to Lord Carrington and subsequently headed the FCO Planning Staff before resigning to become an MP. Others were Roy Reeve, Consul-General in Sydney since 1991; Andrew Caie, Deputy High Commissioner in Islamabad since 1993; John Hughes, who recently served as Head of the FCO's Aviation and Maritime Department and is now Deputy Head of Mission in Oslo; Tony Longrigg, currently Counsellor in Madrid; and the

¹ P G Rogers, *The First Englishman in Japan*, London, Harvill, 1956. S Clissold, *Soviet Relations with Latin America, 1918-68*, London, OUP, 1970 (and others). P Bannerman, *Islam in Perspective*, London, Routledge, 1988. J Hoare and S Pares, *Korea: an Introduction*, London, Kegan Paul International, 1988.

² Elizabeth Wright's book based on the series was published by BBC Publications in 1989.

late Richard Bone who after a brief stint as acting Director of Research was appointed Head of Library and Records Department in 1989.

The practice of appointing members of the Research Cadre to diplomatic jobs overseas within their areas of specialisation has become more common. Geoffrey Murrell holds the record for such postings, with four tours in Moscow and one in Belgrade. Other notable examples include: Chris Rundle and Janet Hancock, who have served as Chargés d'Affaires in Tehran and Beirut respectively; Paul Bergne and Paul Reddicliffe who are uniquely qualified by their knowledge of the local languages for their respective posts as Ambassadors in Tashkent and Phnom Penh; Dick Jenkins, Deputy Head of Mission in Kiev; Robert Wilson, Head of the British Interests Section in the Swedish Embassy in Tripoli; and Lillian Wong of African Section sent on temporary duty as British Government Liaison Officer in Rwanda. Two cases of research analysts being seconded to jobs in international organisations for which they were specially qualified may also be mentioned: Bob Longmire's posting as Head of the Research Services Office of the South-East Asia Treaty Organisation in Bangkok in the 1960s, and David Miller's more recent tour as Counsellor attached to the Secretariat of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation in Brussels.

The misgivings expressed by James Passant in 1946 about a preponderance of female researchers were evidently soon forgotten. The department has for many years had a higher proportion of women than the Administrative and Executive streams of the Diplomatic Service. Several have served as Heads of Sections – eg Violet Conolly, Angela Gillon, Sally Morphet, Kath Kazer and Janet Gunn.

Since the late 1980s special promotion to Research Counsellor and Senior Principal Research Officer has been available to members of the Cadre who are judged to make an outstanding contribution by their expert advice. The first two promotions to Research Counsellor were made in 1987: Patrick Bannerman, a specialist on the Middle East; and the Sovietologist, Geoffrey Murrell. Both had formerly served as Regional Directors. Later Chris Rundle, also a former Regional Director, was made a Research Counsellor, while Jim Hoare and Peter Roland were awarded special promotion to Senior Principal Research Officer. Most of the Senior Principal Research Officers attained that grade on becoming Assistant Directors, but the Scrutiny in 1993 recommended that normally promotions for Research Analysts should be on the basis of the quality of their research and analytical work rather than because of managerial responsibility. In future, Principal Research Officers, if asked to head Research Units, will receive a responsibility allowance, rather than promotion, in recognition of their management responsibility.

The professional researchers are assisted by a smaller number of support staff, including indexers and clerical officers as well as secretaries. These are mostly Home Civil Service employees of the FCO. They play an essential role, especially so in the case of those who have had many years' experience of working in the department. The indexers maintain large

stores of biographical information, which is of use to various Government Departments besides the FCO.

Following the recent slimming down, there are just under 50 members of the Cadre, of whom 13 are currently serving outside RAD, mainly overseas. The resulting shortfall in the 42 Research Analyst posts on the total establishment of the various Research Units is covered mainly by FCO Fellows. Of the researchers in mid-career, a large proportion have experience of working overseas, typically as First Secretaries and/or Deputy Heads of Mission in large or middle-sized embassies. The job, inherited from its predecessors when FORD was first set up, of supplying information and analysis on countries where for one reason or another there is no British official representation remains an important aspect of the department's work. Current examples are Libya, Syria, Iran, Afghanistan and North Korea. Another was Cambodia until the British Embassy there was recently reopened.

IX The Future

The 1993 scrutineers strongly endorsed the need for the in-house expertise represented by the Research Cadre and RAD. In 1997 the present unified department will be replaced by co-located Research Units, but the separate persona and intellectual identity of research and analysis in the FCO are to be maintained. In an ever more complex world endowed with burgeoning supplies of information of varying degrees of reliability, the Research Analysts' ability to provide increasingly hard-pressed policy-makers with distilled, policy-relevant, but policy-neutral information and advice will be all the more important. The new arrangements, together with new information technology, will improve the flow of information to analysts and improve their ability to meet these needs. The department in its new form will maintain its vital contribution to the Whitehall intelligence machinery, its links on research matters with increasingly friendly governments, and its important role in the FCO's interface with outside academics and other experts. It will offer more varied but still specialist careers to members of the Research Cadre and a closer insight into the workings of Whitehall for FCO Fellows who join the department on term appointments.

Annex A

House of Commons, 14 April 1943: Oral Answer by Mr Eden

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Oral Answers

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Oral Answers

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, 14th April, 1943

[Mr. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

FOREIGN SERVICE

Research Department

2. **Mr. Molson** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he will make a statement on the incorporation into the Foreign Office of the Foreign Research and Press Service of the Royal Institute of International Affairs?

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Eden): At the beginning of the war the Royal Institute of International Affairs placed at the disposal of the Foreign Office their extensive reference library and certain members of their permanent staff. This was the nucleus of the Foreign Research and Press Service, which has been located at Balliol College, Oxford, and has served the Foreign Office and other Government Departments in following the foreign Press and in providing memoranda and notes covering the whole range of international affairs. The cost has hitherto been borne by the Royal Institute of International Affairs, assisted by a grant-in-aid from His Majesty's Government and by help in the form of personnel lent by the University of Oxford and certain Oxford colleges. This research and reference work has been highly valued, and I have judged it advisable to associate this organisation still more closely with my Department by transferring the administrative control and the entire cost from the Royal Institute of International Affairs to the Foreign Office and by removing the organisation to London, where it will henceforth be known as the Foreign Office Research Department. I am making available in the Library of the House the correspondence which has passed between the Chairman of the Council of the Royal Institute of International Affairs and myself on this subject.

Mr. Molson: Was the purpose of this transfer to do away with a certain amount of overlapping that previously occurred between this department in Oxford and a branch of the Foreign Office?

Mr. Eden: Yes, I felt the work was so important that it was more convenient to have this department here, and I am satisfied that there will be a saving in personnel and in expense as a result of the change.

Mr. George Griffiths: Can any Member of the House have these speakers' notes on application?

Mr. Eden: I do not think they are quite speakers' notes.

Mr. Quintin Hogg: Will the right hon. Gentleman restore the Royal Institute of International Affairs to its complete independence when the emergency comes to an end?

Mr. Eden: That independence is complete and unimpaired now. It is only a matter of the use we are making of some staff which they have lent to us.

Annex B

List of Directors of Research

(Directors of Research and Analysis from 1990)

| | |
|---------|----------------------------------|
| 1943-46 | Professor A J Toynbee |
| 1946-55 | Dr E J Passant CMG |
| 1955-57 | A D Wilson CMG (KCMG 1965) |
| 1957-60 | C C Parrott CMG, OBE (KCMG 1964) |
| 1960-65 | R W Mason CMG |
| 1965-67 | P S Falla (Acting) |
| 1967-70 | J F Ford CMG, OBE |
| 1970-76 | E E Orchard CBE |
| 1976-78 | J L Y Sanders |
| 1978-80 | L J Middleton (CMG 1985) |
| 1980-83 | P M Laver |
| 1983-86 | P E Hall (CMG 1987, KBE 1993) |
| 1986-89 | J Ling (CMG 1991) |
| 1989-91 | A St J H Figgis (CMG 1993) |
| 1991- | B S T Eastwood |

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