

Bell Pottinger – FOI Material – FOI 0870-17

FOI QUESTION: Any correspondence between the FCO and the British High Commission in South Africa relating to Bell Pottinger, since January 2016.

7 June 2017 16:03 RE: Lines to clear please

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA]
Sent: 07 June 2017 08:21
To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES - FCO]
Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – FCO/BHC PRETORIA]
Subject: Lines to clear please

Good Morning All

High Commissioner is presenting his credentials tomorrow to President Zuma and is doing at least one interview on Friday, with more to follow next week.

The Bell Pottinger (see attached links and tweets for background) story is gaining ground here, with growing calls for HMG response to their involvement with the Gupta family amid a WikiLeaks-like expose of links to Zuma and others in government and large-scale corruption and state capture.

http://www.huffingtonpost.co.za/2017/06/06/gupta-leaks-how-bell-pottinger-manipulated-sa-narrative_a_22127800/

<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2017-06-01-amabhungane-and-scorpio-guptaleaks-bell-pottinger-spinner-of-a-web-for-pioneers-of-economic-transformation/#.WTeZoCOICHs>

MarianneThamm (@MarianneThamm) tweeted at 1:50 PM on Mon, Jun 05, 2017:
How foreign PR firm sought to influence you fellow South African. . <https://t.co/SVUOSHpGNq>
(<https://twitter.com/MarianneThamm/status/871695703340441600?s=03>)

Richard Calland (@richardcalland) tweeted at 6:34 PM on Mon, Jun 05, 2017:
Time to make sure that Bell Pottinger's reputation gets the hammering it deserves. Can we elicit a formal response from HMG?
<https://t.co/SUC7Fis73f>
(<https://twitter.com/richardcalland/status/871767294648758272?s=03>)

[REDACTED – S35]

Many thanks

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | Communications | British High Commission Pretoria 255 Hill Street | Arcadia | PRETORIA 0083

From: Nigel Casey
Sent: 03 July 2017 17:09
To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME - FCO]
Cc: Simon Mustard; Neil Wigan; Peter Boxer; Emma Wade-Smith; [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – FCO/BHC PRETORIA]
Subject: RE: SA politics: Bell Pottinger

Thanks will do

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]- could you ask one of the team to turn my email into a note for the Africa Minister, adding anything significant I've missed (I see today that the PRCA has reportedly acknowledged receipt of the DAs complaint and notified BP that they are launching an inquiry)

On 3 Jul 2017 4:43 p.m., "[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - FCO]> wrote:

Nigel,

Thanks - I was aware of the issue but not to the extent that this is having an effect on our reputation in SA.

[REDACTED – S35]

Could your team pull together an update?

Thanks,

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - FCO]

From: Nigel Casey

Sent: 02 July 2017 16:46

To: Neil Wigan; Peter Boxer; Emma Wade-Smith; Simon Mustard; [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO/BHC PRETORIA]

Subject: SA politics: Bell Pottinger

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - FCO]

I don't know whether you and London colleagues are already aware that London-based PR firm Bell Pottinger have made themselves extremely unpopular in SA, due to the work they have done for Duduzane Zuma (son of the President) and for Oakbay Investments (i.e. the Gupta business empire). The recent leak of 200,000 Gupta-related emails has produced further fuel for the fire and a renewed effort by the media and Opposition here to find ways to hold the company to account, either here or in the UK. I thought I should make sure this is on your radar screen.

The main accusation Bell Pottinger face is that they deliberately helped Duduzane and the Guptas design and implement a PR campaign to discredit the family's detractors and take attention away from their alleged wrongdoings, the central thrust of which involved stirring race hatred in SA.

The company's executives are accused of having proposed and delivered a campaign based on the concept that all criticism of the Guptas and Zuma came from representatives of 'white monopoly capital' who were determined to hold on to economic power in SA. In particular they targeted Johann Rupert, owner of the Richemont group, but this has now been widened to a broader attack on white journalists who have written critically about the Guptas.

This has taken a more serious turn this week, with an organisation called Black First Land First, which is widely seen as a proxy for the Guptas, picketing the home of a senior journalist, daubing 'Land or Death' on it, and threatening several more. This has united journalists here in condemnation, and even prompted a strong ANC statement defending media freedom.

Bell Pottinger have now terminated their relationship with the Guptas, having been dumped by a number of their other SA clients and conscious no doubt of the reputational damage they have suffered. But they remain a target of major opprobrium here, because the campaign they allegedly designed continues. The particular phrases 'White Monopoly Capital' and 'Black First Land First' are ascribed to Bell Pottinger, though some in the Gupta/Zuma camp claim the first has long featured in SACP documents. [REDACTED – S27].

Since I have been here there has been a pretty constant debate on Twitter about whether legal action could be launched against the company, whether for promoting racial hatred or other offences. So far this has gone no further than a protest by London-based S Africans outside the company's HQ, and a Twitter campaign against their corporate and individual accounts.

The Democratic Alliance have today announced that they have written to the London based Public Relations and Communications Association, and to the Chartered Institute of Public Relations, to lodge formal complaints against Bell Pottinger on the grounds that they promoted racial hatred here, asking them to investigate whether the company has broken their Codes of Conduct.

The company has said little publicly, other than to deny the accusations. To my surprise, although there are regular calls on Twitter for some sort of statement from HMG, and I get tagged on lots of related tweets, no-one has yet asked me directly to comment. [REDACTED – S35]. But I suspect this will run and run. We will let you know if there are further significant developments you should be aware of.

Nigel

4 July 2017 12:34 FW: Bell Pottinger

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA]

Sent: 04 July 2017 11:57

To: Peter Boxer ; [REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA/FCO]

Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME - FCO]

Subject: Bell Pottinger

The saga continues...

<https://www.businesslive.co.za/rdm/business/2017-07-04-now-bell-pottinger-faces-probe-for-stoking-racial-tension-in-sa/>

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | Communications | British High Commission Pretoria
255 Hill Street | Arcadia | PRETORIA 0083

5 July 2017 12:51 OFF SEN: SA POLITICS - BELL POTTINGER

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME - FCO]

Sent: 05 July 2017 13:21

To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA/FCO]

Subject: RE: Note on Bell Pottinger

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA],

Really sorry I have been in nonstop calls and meetings all morning.

I think your suggestion below is correct – if it isn't diptel worthy then I don't think it is update note worthy for the Ministers. Maybe just an update para with the extra info attached in case they are interested.

On the invite for Monday more than happy for you to send out but can we have a quick chat before jus to feed back a conversation I had with [REDACTED – S40 – NAME - FCO]. Let me know when good for you and I will make myself available.

Thanks,

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - FCO]

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA]

Sent: 05 July 2017 12:51

To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME - FCO]

Subject: RE: Note on Bell Pottinger

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - FCO],

Really not convinced this is diptel worthy. How about I send it as an internal note here – and then we forward that on to Private Offices under cover of an update para? Or is that not done?

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA]

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME - FCO]

Sent: 05 July 2017 12:45

To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA/FCO]

Subject: RE: Note on Bell Pottinger

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA],

Thanks. When you have a chance can we have a quick chat on this and the meeting on Monday – I just want to make sure we get that right and had a good chat with [REDACTED – S40 – NAME - FCO] on it.

I think the update looks good, however it does look like a diptel and I think Minister's offices will ask why this is not a diptel if we send it through as an info note. I would recommend that this goes out as a diptel with an update paragraph covering.

Also, just so we have a bit more time please do feel free to copy us in as you are developing these (i.e. when you are sending around your team there to add comments), just so we don't hold anything up going to Ministers.

Thanks,

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - FCO]

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA]

Sent: 05 July 2017 11:32

To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME - FCO]

Subject: Note on Bell Pottinger

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - FCO]

– assume we should be sending this direct to Ministers? If so – grateful for email addresses of those it should go to. And any comments from your end of course! I need to leave at 13.30 UK time today so grateful for quick response.

Thanks

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA]

FOR MINISTER AFRICA: INFORMATION NOTE: SOUTH AFRICA & UK PR FIRM BELL POTTINGER

Summary

UK PR firm Bell Pottinger was employed by the highly discredited Gupta family - closely aligned to President Zuma - who are accused of large scale state-capture, corruption and inciting racial tension. Fresh disclosures have exacerbated South African pressures for HMG to hold Bell Pottinger to account for their role in the saga. SA's opposition party has lodged a formal complaint with UK industry bodies, which will be investigated. Widespread media coverage in SA, and some UK press. Negative SA social media campaign levied against Bell Pottinger. No formal representations from SA government. Reputational risks to UK interests in South Africa.

Context

1. London-based PR firm Bell Pottinger has made itself extremely unpopular in South Africa, due to PR work undertaken for President Zuma's son, Duduzane Zuma, and Oakbay Investments (the holding company of the Gupta-family business empire). A recent leak of 200,000 Gupta-related emails has exposed the extent to which the Gupta family has, allegedly, inappropriately influenced ministerial appointments and state tenders. The President has promised a judicial inquiry into the wider 'state-capture' allegations. The 'Gupta-leaks' emails include a large body of material linking Bell Pottinger with these activities. The disclosures have triggered a renewed effort by the media and Opposition here to find ways to hold the company to account, either in SA or in the UK.
2. The main accusation Bell Pottinger faces is that it deliberately helped Duduzane Zuma and the Guptas design and implement a PR campaign to discredit the family's detractors and take attention away from their alleged wrongdoings, the central thrust of which resulted in allegedly stirring racial hatred in South Africa. Bell Pottinger executives are accused of having proposed and delivered a campaign based on the concept that all criticism of the Guptas and Zuma came from representatives of 'white monopoly capital', who were determined to hold on to economic power in SA. In particular they targeted Johann Rupert, owner of the Richemont group and one of South Africa's wealthiest business figures, but this has now been widened to a broader attack on white journalists who have written critically about the Guptas.
4. Events took a more serious turn this week, with the Black First Land First organisation - widely seen as a proxy for the Guptas and allegedly acting on direction from Bell Pottinger - picketing the home of a senior journalist, daubing 'Land or Death' on it, and threatening several more. This has united SA journalists in condemnation, and prompted a strong ANC statement defending media freedom.

Reactions

5. Bell Pottinger has now terminated its relationship with Oakbay, having been dumped by a number of its other SA clients – including Investec, Richemont and SA Tourism. The company has said little publicly, other than to deny the accusations. Conscious, no doubt of the reputational damage it has suffered, Bell Pottinger has reportedly appointed a law firm to independently review its dealings with Oakbay. But it remains a target of major opprobrium here, because the campaign it allegedly designed still continues. The particular phrases 'White Monopoly Capital' and 'Black First Land First' are ascribed to Bell Pottinger, and have entered the national lexicon, with many South Africans claiming that this external British entity has enflamed SA's delicate racial landscape. [REDACTED – S27]

6. There has been an aggressive Twitter campaign targeting Bell Pottinger's corporate and individual accounts, protests outside Bell Pottinger's London head offices and growing debate in the SA media about whether legal action could be launched against the company under UK or SA legislation. Although we know of one NGO exploring options, so far, no charges have been lodged. However, the official opposition (the Democratic Alliance) announced on 2 July that they have written to the London-based Public Relations and Communications Association (PRCA), and to the Chartered Institute of Public Relations, to lodge formal complaints against Bell Pottinger on the grounds that they promoted racial hatred; asking them to investigate whether the company has broken their Codes of Conduct. PRCA has confirmed receipt of the complaint and said it will investigate. Should Bell Pottinger be found culpable, sanctions against them could include termination of their membership and public censure.

Reputational risk & response

8. Comment and criticism to date – mostly on social media - has highlighted the questionable ethics of the UK company and urged HMG to now hold them to account (rather than suggesting that the UK government knew of or condoned Bell Pottinger's conduct). To date we have deployed a [REDACTED – S35] line agreed with Press Office, to the effect that 'Bell Pottinger is a private company and its work in SA is a matter for the company and its clients'. [REDACTED – S35]

9. We have received no formal or private lobbying on the issue from the South African Government. It is worth noting that, in country, the British High Commission has had no recent engagement or provided any recent support to Bell Pottinger.

10. Bell Pottinger has caused major affront to some of South Africa's most influential media and business figures; we should expect the issue and calls to run and run. We will keep Africa Directorate and Private Offices with further significant developments [REDACTED – S35].

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | Counsellor

British High Commission | Pretoria, South Africa, 255 Hill Street, Pretoria 0002, South Africa

7 July 2017 07:17 Re: OFF SEN: SA POLITICS - BELL POTTINGER

From: Peter Boxer

Sent: 07 July 2017 07:53

To: Nigel Casey; [REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA]

Cc: Annabel Gerry (DFID); Emma Wade-Smith; [REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA/FCO/DFID/HMRC/DIT]

Subject: RE: SA POLITICS - BELL POTTINGER

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA]

Thanks for this.

Obviously lots of commentary in the media today here in SA. Running item one last night and two this morning. People thoroughly unconvinced by the statement. But no clear indication of any further action on. Last night people were pointing to the regulator action in the UK as far more likely to produce a satisfactory outcome than anything here.

Plenty of "UK Based company" but nothing directed towards us.

P

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA]

Sent: 07 July 2017 08:23

To: Nigel Casey

Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA/FCO/NCA/DFID/DIT]; Simon Mustard; Peter Boxer; Annabel Gerry (DFID); Emma Wade-Smith

Subject: RE: SA POLITICS - BELL POTTINGER

Full statement below for those that haven't seen it.

Three months ago, Bell Pottinger announced that it had decided to cease work for Oakbay Capital. We had worked for them for a year, following a competitive bid process.

When we terminated our work with Oakbay, we said we were doing so because of increasingly strong social media attacks on our staff and our business from South Africa, and that we regarded the criticisms of what our team had done as unfair.

These attacks on, and criticisms of, our staff continued and were clearly the result of strong and sincere anger. Most seriously, it was said that we had supported or aided campaigns to stir up racial division in South Africa. Therefore, we called in the leading independent international law firm, Herbert Smith Freehills LLP, to review the account and the work done on it. That investigation is still continuing and will be completed in the next few weeks. We intend to publish the findings of that report and take appropriate action.

However, we have already been shown interim evidence which has dismayed us. Much of what has been alleged about our work is, we believe, not true — but enough of it is to be of deep concern.

There has been a social media campaign that highlights the issue of economic emancipation in a way that we, having now seen it, consider to be inappropriate and offensive. At various points throughout the tenure of the Oakbay account, senior

management have been misled about what has been done. For it to be done in South Africa, a country which has become an international beacon of hope for its progress towards racial reconciliation, is a matter of profound regret and in no way reflects the values of Bell Pottinger.

Though the inquiry is ongoing, we have dismissed the lead partner involved and suspended another partner and two employees so that we can determine their precise role in what took place. As soon as we were made aware that we had been misled and that work was being done which goes against the very core of our ethical policies, we acted immediately.

At Bell Pottinger — a proudly diverse and international team — we have good, decent people who will be as angered by what has been discovered as we are.

We wish to issue a full, unequivocal and absolute apology to anyone impacted. These activities should never have been undertaken. We are deeply sorry that this happened.

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | Counsellor

British High Commission | Pretoria, South Africa, 255 Hill Street, Pretoria 0002, South Africa

From: Nigel Casey

Sent: 07 July 2017 07:17

To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA]

Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA/FCO/DFID/NCA/DIT]; Peter Boxer; Annabel Gerry (DFID); Emma Wade-Smith

Subject: Re: SA POLITICS - BELL POTTINGER

Thanks [REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA]

Bell Pottinger's public apology has made it onto the Today programme here this morning. As you'll have seen from their statement yesterday, they have dismissed and/or suspended four of their staff involved and said they are 'dismayed' to discover what those staff have done in the company's name.

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA]

Sent: 05 July 2017 13:56

To: Nigel Casey

Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA/FCO/DFID/NCA/DIT]; Emma Wade-Smith; Peter Boxer; Simon Mustard

Subject: SA POLITICS - BELL POTTINGER

Nigel,

You asked for an update on the Bell Pottinger situation. With thanks to [REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] for pulling this together, please see a helpful summary of the current state of affairs below.

Context

1. London-based PR firm Bell Pottinger has made itself extremely unpopular in South Africa, due to PR work undertaken for President Zuma's son, Duduzane Zuma, and Oakbay Investments (the holding company of the Gupta-family business empire). A recent leak of 200,000 Gupta-related emails has exposed the extent to which the Gupta family has, allegedly, inappropriately influenced ministerial appointments and state tenders. The President has promised a judicial inquiry into the wider 'state-capture' allegations. The 'Gupta-leaks' emails include a large body of material linking Bell Pottinger with these activities. The disclosures have triggered a renewed effort by the media and Opposition here to find ways to hold the company to account, either in SA or in the UK.

2. The main accusation Bell Pottinger faces is that it deliberately helped Duduzane Zuma and the Guptas design and implement a PR campaign to discredit the family's detractors and take attention away from their alleged wrongdoings, the central thrust of which resulted in allegedly stirring racial hatred in South Africa. Bell Pottinger executives are accused of having proposed and delivered a campaign based on the concept that all criticism of the Guptas and Zuma came from representatives of 'white monopoly capital', who were determined to hold on to economic power in SA. In particular they targeted Johann Rupert, owner of the Richemont group and one of South Africa's wealthiest business figures, but this has now been widened to a broader attack on white journalists who have written critically about the Guptas.

4. Events took a more serious turn this week, with the Black First Land First organisation - widely seen as a proxy for the Guptas and allegedly acting on direction from Bell Pottinger - picketing the home of a senior journalist, daubing 'Land or Death' on it, and threatening several more. This has united SA journalists in condemnation, and prompted a strong ANC statement defending media freedom.

Reactions

5. Bell Pottinger has now terminated its relationship with Oakbay, having been dumped by a number of its other SA clients – including Investec, Richemont and SA Tourism. The company has said little publicly, other than to deny the accusations. Conscious, no doubt of the reputational damage it has suffered, Bell Pottinger has reportedly appointed a law firm to independently review its dealings with Oakbay. But it remains a target of major opprobrium here, because the campaign it allegedly designed still continues. The particular phrases 'White Monopoly Capital' and 'Black First Land First' are ascribed to Bell Pottinger, and have entered the national lexicon, with many South Africans claiming that this external British entity has enflamed SA's delicate racial landscape. [REDACTED – S27].

6. There has been an aggressive Twitter campaign targeting Bell Pottinger's corporate and individual accounts, protests outside Bell Pottinger's London head offices and growing debate in the SA media about whether legal action could be launched against the company under UK or SA legislation. Although we know of one NGO exploring options, so far, no charges have been lodged. However, the official opposition (the Democratic Alliance) announced on 2 July that they have written to the London-based Public Relations and Communications Association (PRCA), and to the Chartered Institute of Public Relations, to lodge formal complaints against Bell Pottinger on the grounds that they promoted racial hatred; asking them to investigate whether the company has broken their Codes of Conduct. PRCA has confirmed receipt of the complaint and said it will investigate. Should Bell Pottinger be found culpable, sanctions against them could include termination of their membership and public censure.

Reputational risk & response

8. Comment and criticism to date – mostly on social media - has highlighted the questionable ethics of the UK company and urged HMG to now hold them to account (rather than suggesting that the UK government knew of or condoned Bell Pottinger's conduct). [REDACTED – S35]

9. We have received no formal or private lobbying on the issue from the South African Government. It is worth noting that, in country, the British High Commission has had no recent engagement or provided any recent support to Bell Pottinger.

10. Bell Pottinger has caused major affront to some of South Africa's most influential media and business figures; we should expect the issue and calls to run and run. We will keep Africa Directorate and Private Offices with further significant developments – [REDACTED – S35].

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | **Counsellor**

British High Commission | Pretoria, South Africa, 255 Hill Street, Pretoria 0002, South Africa

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA]

Sent: 05 July 2017 14:21

To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO/BHC PRETORIA]; Southern Africa Section; Simon Mustard; Nigel Casey; Neil Wigan; PUS

Subject: SA POLITICS - BELL POTTINGER

Dear [REDACTED – S40 – NAME - FCO],

Please see FS update para below on current sensitivities in South Africa with UK PR firm Bell Pottinger. I have also attached a background note with more detail should it be required.

South Africa / Bell Pottinger: UK PR firm Bell Pottinger are attracting a lot of negative attention in SA due to their involvement in a PR campaign alleged to be aiding large scale state-capture and corruption and exacerbating racial tension. Their clients, the highly discredited Gupta family, are closely aligned to President Zuma. Fresh disclosures have led to mounting pressure for HMG to hold Bell Pottinger to account for their role in the saga, and SA's main opposition party (the Democratic Alliance) has lodged a formal complaint with UK industry bodies. There has been widespread media coverage in SA, and some UK press, which is likely to continue over coming weeks and months. No formal representations received from SA government as yet, but there are reputational risks to UK interests in South Africa. Post will continue to monitor.

Best regards,

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | **Counsellor**

British High Commission | Pretoria, South Africa, 255 Hill Street, Pretoria 0002, South Africa

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME - FCO]

Sent: 10 July 2017 11:47

To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA]
Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME - FCO]; Simon Mustard ; Nigel Casey ; Neil Wigan
Subject: FW: SA POLITICS - BELL POTTINGER

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA],

Thank you for sending this through, along with the background note. The Foreign Secretary was grateful for the update.

Thanks

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - FCO]- Attaché
Foreign Secretary's Office
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London, SW1A 2AH

10 July 2017 09:45 RE: OFF SEN: SA POLITICS - BELL POTTINGER

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES - BHC PRETORIA]
Sent: 10 July 2017 09:45
To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES - FCO]; Nigel Casey
Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES - BHC PRETORIA/FCO]; Peter Boxer
Subject: RE: SA POLITICS - BELL POTTINGER

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO] – no calls received at Post. [REDACTED – S35]

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | Counsellor
British High Commission | Pretoria, South Africa, 255 Hill Street, Pretoria 0002, South Africa

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME - FCO]
Sent: 07 July 2017 16:47
To: Nigel Casey; [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES - BHC PRETORIA/FCO]
Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES - BHC PRETORIA/FCO]; Peter Boxer
Subject: RE: SA POLITICS - BELL POTTINGER

All,

I have now received two emails from members of the public on Bell Pottinger today (see attached), posing some fairly direct questions to the FS (*Does the British Government condone this type of interference in foreign countries?; Is Bell Pottinger PR work, inciting racial discord & hatred in another country (in this case South Africa) acceptable behaviour in the UK?*). I suspect more will come. With it being so widely covered by UK media, it is plausible that it will be raised at FCO orals is next Tuesday.
[REDACTED – S35]

Regards,

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - FCO] | Southern Africa Section | Central and Southern Africa Department (AD-CS) | Africa Directorate | Foreign and Commonwealth Office | London SW1A 2AH |

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME - FCO]
Sent: 07 July 2017 12:44
To: Nigel Casey ; [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES - BHC PRETORIA/FCO]
Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES - BHC PRETORIA/FCO]; Peter Boxer
Subject: RE: SA POLITICS - BELL POTTINGER

Hi all,

[REDACTED – S35]

Have you had any calls from media on this today in post? We haven't had any queries here on it but I will keep you posted if we do get any.

Best,

07 July 2017 11:47 SOUTH AFRICA: BELL POTTINGER ALLEGATIONS AND REACTIONS [DIPTTEL 1702846]

Diptel PRETORIA CAPE TOWN
Foreign & Commonwealth Office Diplomatic Telegram

Summary

Bell Pottinger attracting negative attention in South Africa (SA) due to their involvement in a PR campaign alleged to be aiding large scale state-capture and corruption and exacerbating racial tension. Widespread media interest and mounting pressure for Bell Pottinger to be held to account for their role in the saga. Company have issued statement admitting that elements of their campaign were 'inappropriate and offensive' and have launched an independent review. UK industry body investigating alleged breach of Code of Conduct.

Context

1. London-based PR firm Bell Pottinger is attracting negative attention in SA due to work undertaken for President Zuma's son, Duduzane, and Oakbay Investments (the holding company of the controversial Gupta-family business empire). A recent leak of 200,000 emails has exposed the extent to which the Gupta family has, allegedly, inappropriately influenced ministerial appointments and state tenders. The President has promised a judicial inquiry into the wider 'state-capture' allegations. The 'Gupta-leaks' emails include a large body of material linking Bell Pottinger with these activities. The disclosures have triggered a renewed effort by the media and Opposition to find ways to hold the company to account, either in SA or in the UK.

2. The main accusation Bell Pottinger faces is that it deliberately helped Duduzane and the Guptas deliver a PR campaign to discredit the family's detractors and take attention away from alleged wrongdoings. They are accused of having driven a campaign based on the concept that all criticism of the Guptas and Zuma came from representatives of 'white monopoly capital', determined to hold on to economic power in SA. Initial targets included influential and wealthy business figures, but then widened to a broader attack on white journalists who have written critically about the Guptas. Events took a more serious turn this week, when the Black First Land First organisation - widely seen as a proxy for the Guptas and allegedly acting on direction from Bell Pottinger - picketed the home of a senior journalist, daubing 'Land or Death' on it, and threatened several more. This has united SA journalists in condemnation, and prompted a strong ANC statement defending media freedom.

Reactions

3. Bell Pottinger has stated that it terminated its relationship with Oakbay three months ago. It has since been dumped by a number of its other SA clients – including Investec, Richemont and SA Tourism. Bell Pottinger have appointed independent law firm, Herbert Smith Freehills, to review their dealings with Oakbay and have committed to publishing the full report from that investigation within the next few weeks. A statement issued yesterday said that interim evidence had been of 'deep concern' to the company. Although they fell short of admitting wrong doing, they have admitted that elements of their campaign were 'inappropriate and offensive'. The lead partner involved has been dismissed and other staff suspended.

4. The statement has done nothing to assuage SA anger. The effects of the campaign it allegedly designed are still being felt. The particular phrases 'White Monopoly Capital' and 'Black First Land First', allegedly coined by Bell Pottinger, have entered the national lexicon, with many South Africans claiming that this has enflamed SA's delicate racial landscape. [REDACTED – S27]

5. There has been an aggressive Twitter campaign targeting Bell Pottinger's corporate and individual accounts (in which we have been tagged), protests outside Bell Pottinger's London offices and growing debate in the SA media about whether legal action could be launched against the company under UK or SA legislation. The official opposition (the Democratic Alliance) have written to the London-based Public Relations and Communications Association (PRCA), and to the Chartered Institute of Public Relations, asking them to investigate whether the company has broken their Codes of Conduct. The PRCA has confirmed receipt of the complaint and said they will investigate. Should Bell Pottinger be found culpable, sanctions against them could include termination of their membership and public censure.

Response

6. Comment and criticism to date – mostly on social media - has highlighted the questionable ethics of the UK company and urged HMG to now hold them to account (rather than suggesting that the UK government knew of, or condoned, Bell Pottinger's conduct). Local media are also asking questions about Bell Pottinger's conduct in the wider region.

7. We have received no formal or private lobbying on the issue from the SA Government. We have had no recent engagement with Bell Pottinger.

8. Bell Pottinger has caused major affront to some of SA's most influential media and business figures; we should expect the issue to run - at the very least until the PRCA findings issue. It is also likely to bubble up again in the context of any 'state capture' judicial review.

9. [REDACTED – S35]

Comment

10. Despite being frequently cited as a 'UK based' company, HMG to date haven't been embroiled in this saga and we judge our reputation hasn't been negatively impacted – as yet.

BOXER

Authorised

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | Counsellor Political, Prosperity and Communications

Contact

[REDACTED – S40 – NAMES - BHC PRETORIA]

Action

[REDACTED – S40 – NAMES - FCO]

10 July 2017 12:34 RE: FCO Orals - South Africa-Bell Pottinger v2

Thanks [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES - FCO] - [REDACTED – S35]

[\[see Ref 1 – Final Version at bottom of file\]](#)

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]

[REDACTED – S35]

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]

Sent: 10 July 2017 13:30

To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]

Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – FCO]

Subject: FCO Orals - South Africa-Bell Pottinger v2

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA],

[REDACTED – S35]. Need to submit by 1300 UK time.

Shout if you disagree.

Regards,

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - FCO] | Southern Africa Section | Central and Southern Africa Department (AD-CS) | Africa Directorate | Foreign and Commonwealth Office | London SW1A 2AH |

29 September 12:08 FW: Reputational issues with McKinsey scoping of the Education and Skills Prosperity Fund programme in SA

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]

Sent: 24 July 2017 14:18

To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – DFID]

Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA/DFID/FCO]; Nigel Casey

Subject: Reputational issues with McKinsey scoping of the Education and Skills Prosperity Fund programme in SA

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – DFID],

You might be aware that there's been recent media interest here and in the UK on a family called the Guptas who have allegedly corrupted senior levels of the SA Government and its institutions. A UK-based PR firm called Bell Pottinger was embroiled in this recently (see attached for background) [See email of 5/7/17, 13.56pm on p.8] which led to protests outside its offices in London.

A large volume of emails allegedly showing the extent of this corruption and 'state capture' was released leaked recently and we've been keeping watch for further revelations as they emerge.

Let me know if you'd like to discuss and what detail you want to support your analysis of risk,

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | Programmes | British High Commission | Pretoria, South Africa, 255 Hill Street, Pretoria 0002, South Africa

26 July 2017 14:08 RE: For info: Lord Hain - enca interview

TBA

From: **[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BCG CAPE TOWN]**

Sent: 26 July 2017 13:17

To: Nigel Casey; South Africa Political Team; **[REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – BHC PRETORIA]**

Subject: For info: Lord Hain - enca interview

In case not seen, I caught Lord Hain interview on eNCA breakfast show this morning. Fairly punchy on Zuma and Bell Pottinger.

Key points below.

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | Political

British High Commission | Pretoria, South Africa, 255 Hill Street, Pretoria 0002, South Africa

<https://www.enca.com/south-africa/south-africas-current-leadership-imperils-future-hain>

JOHANNESBURG - British author and anti-apartheid activist, Peter Hain says he's worried about South Africa's future under the current leadership.

"You have changed from being the miracle rainbow nation over the 1990s," said Hain.

"The leadership of the country is not delivering stability, is not empowering people, is not actually delivering programs that will help the majority of the South Africans and give confidence to national investors."

"This whole thing of the Guptas and the presidency is very dangerous for South Africa, because viewing it from outside, as a friend of South Africa who's childhood was here, whose parents were South African born, involved in the struggle as I was, I see a lot of what is happening as a betrayal of everything we fought for and made sacrifices for.

"Nelson Mandela spent 27 years in prison to make the transformation and I am supporting those forces that want progressive change and hope that the ANC will deliver that change, otherwise the future of South Africa is very worrying."

Hain said British PR firm Bell Pottinger must face consequences for meddling in South Africa's politics. It is accused of inciting racial tensions in the country while doing work for the Gupta family.

"I find the role of Bell Pottinger - a British public affairs firm working to foment sectoralism here in South Africa, using the fake news on behalf of the state capture project by individuals that funded them - outrageous.

"And they made a lot of money from the project. I think they should be run out of town. I think they should not be allowed to operate in South Africa at all. There should be big consequences for them globally for insidious interference in South Africa's politics."

READ: Anti-apartheid vets honoured in UK <<https://www.enca.com/south-africa/anti-apartheid-vets-honoured-uk>>

Hain will deliver a public lecture on terrorism at Wits Business School on Tuesday.

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | Political

British High Commission | Pretoria, South Africa, 255 Hill Street, Pretoria 0002, South Africa

From: **[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]**

Sent: 21 August 2017 10:35

To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]
Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA/FCO]
Subject: FW: Activities of British-owned PR company, Bell Pottinger, in South Africa

Hi [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA],

To see the reply below by MOP on Bell Pottinger. First person to come back to us with the tight lines we have agreed. I'd be grateful if Post might consider a reply.

Regards,

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - FCO] | Southern Africa Section | Central and Southern Africa Department (AD-CS) | Africa Directorate | Foreign and Commonwealth Office | London SW1A 2AH |

From: [REDACTED – S40 – FCO Mailbox]
Sent: 21 August 2017 09:31
To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – FCO]
Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – FCO Mailbox]
Subject: FW: Activities of British-owned PR company, Bell Pottinger, in South Africa

Both – see reply from [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – Member of Public].

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – Member of Public]
Sent: 17 August 2017 15:44
To: [REDACTED – S40 – FCO Mailbox]
Subject: RE: Activities of British-owned PR company, Bell Pottinger, in South Africa

Good afternoon,

Thank you for your response to my mail of 20 July (below), which is much appreciated.

While I understand that Bell Pottinger is a private company and that it is currently being investigated by the PRCA, I am deeply disappointed to hear that this effectively indemnifies it against parliamentary oversight. Especially in a case such as this, where there is evidence to suggest that the company consciously and systematically set out to destabilise a sovereign nation, I had hoped that citizens of Commonwealth nations such as myself would have had some kind of recourse to the British political establishment. The fact that we do not seems to indicate that private companies in the UK are effectively a law unto themselves and that they can participate in overtly political activity in other countries with impunity.

Is there no further recourse than a simple ethics investigation by an industry association and a slap on the wrist? Could you please advise?

Thank you for your assistance and kind regards,
[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – Member of Public]

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED – S40 – FCO Mailbox]
Sent: Thursday, August 17, 2017 2:24 PM
To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – Member of Public]
Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – FCO Mailbox]
Subject: FW: Activities of British-owned PR company, Bell Pottinger, in South Africa

Dear [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – Member of Public],

Thank you for your email of 20 July 2017. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is replying as the lead Government Department.

We have followed the news closely and note your concerns. However Bell Pottinger is a private company and its work in South Africa is a matter for the company and its clients.

Bell Pottinger made a statement concerning the allegations on 6 July and have appointed an independent law firm, Herbert Smith Freehills LLB, to review their work on the account in question. They have committed to publishing the full report from that investigation in due course.

The UK's Public Relations and Communications Association (PRCA) have confirmed receipt of a complaint about Bell Pottinger's conduct in South Africa and are also investigating.

Yours sincerely,

Central and Southern Africa Department (AD-CS) | Africa Directorate | Foreign and Commonwealth Office | London SW1A 2AH

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – Member of Public]

Address: [REDACTED – S40]

Subject: Activities of British-owned PR company, Bell Pottinger, in South Africa

I am writing with regard to the activities of the British-owned PR company, Bell Pottinger, in South Africa.

There is strong evidence to suggest that, through its activities here, the company tried to destabilize a sovereign nation, foment racial division and even create the conditions for civil conflict. This could plausibly be interpreted as an act of terrorism by the citizens of one nation against both the citizens and the structures of governance in another.

As Bell Pottinger is domiciled in the UK, I would like to ask the British parliament to conduct a full investigation into its activities in South Africa and to take any appropriate action against the company that may be required within the context of both British and international law.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

15 September 2017 10:43 RE: Activities of British-owned PR company, Bell Pottinger, in South Africa

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]

Sent: 15 September 2017 10:43

To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – FCO/BHC PRETORIA]

Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – BHC PRETORIA]

Subject: RE: Activities of British-owned PR company, Bell Pottinger, in South Africa

So, are we all agreed then? In which case, good to go from my perspective

Thanks

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | **Counsellor: Politics, Prosperity and Communications**

British High Commission | Pretoria, South Africa, 255 Hill Street, Pretoria 0002, South Africa

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]

Sent: 15 September 2017 11:33

To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – BHC PRETORIA/FCO]

Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – BHC PRETORIA]

Subject: RE: Activities of British-owned PR company, Bell Pottinger, in South Africa

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2017-09-07/debates/5FBAA9BE-B7DD-444F-9E24-4F85384E5C65/BellPottinger>

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]

Sent: 15 September 2017 10:30

To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA/FCO]

Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – BHC PRETORIA]

Subject: RE: Activities of British-owned PR company, Bell Pottinger, in South Africa

Or just give them the link – it is all online? We normally do this with letters.

Thanks,

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]
Sent: 15 September 2017 10:12
To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – BHC PRETORIA]
Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – BHC PRETORIA/FCO]
Subject: RE: Activities of British-owned PR company, Bell Pottinger, in South Africa

Looks good to me. We might be super helpful and attach a copy of the Hansard record (I have this).

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - FCO] | Southern Africa Section | Central and Southern Africa Department (AD-CS) | Africa Directorate | Foreign and Commonwealth Office | London SW1A 2AH |

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]
Sent: 12 September 2017 15:04
To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – BHC PRETORIA/FCO]
Subject: RE: Activities of British-owned PR company, Bell Pottinger, in South Africa

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA],

Suggest you use lines from last week's PQs (DITs one probably of most help) for this. Shout if you don't have copies.

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]
Sent: 06 September 2017 14:56
To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – BHC PRETORIA]
Subject: RE: Activities of British-owned PR company, Bell Pottinger, in South Africa

Ok – then lets hold off until Monday then please. Remind me then if I don't get back to you!

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]
Sent: 06 September 2017 14:41
To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – BHC PRETORIA]
Subject: RE: Activities of British-owned PR company, Bell Pottinger, in South Africa

20 working days so we have until next Friday (roughly).

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA] | Political Officer | British High Commission, Pretoria, South Africa
255 Hill Street, Arcadia, Pretoria, 0002, South Africa

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]
Sent: 06 September 2017 14:30
To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – BHC PRETORIA]
Subject: RE: Activities of British-owned PR company, Bell Pottinger, in South Africa

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA] - what is deadline for this? Would prefer to wait until we've answered the Hain questions in the Lords if at all possible.

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]
Sent: 21 August 2017 10:35
To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]
Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – FCO/BHC PRETORIA]
Subject: FW: Activities of British-owned PR company, Bell Pottinger, in South Africa

Hi [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA],

To see the reply below by MOP on Bell Pottinger. First person to come back to us with the tight lines we have agreed. I'd be grateful if Post might consider a reply.

Regards,

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - FCO] | Southern Africa Section | Central and Southern Africa Department (AD-CS) | Africa Directorate | Foreign and Commonwealth Office | London SW1A 2AH |

From: PRD - AD CS

Sent: 21 August 2017 09:31

To: **[REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – FCO]**

Cc: PRD - AD CS

Subject: FW: Activities of British-owned PR company, Bell Pottinger, in South Africa

Both – see reply from **[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – Member of Public]**.

From: **[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – Member of Public]**

Sent: 17 August 2017 15:44

To: PRD - AD CS

Subject: RE: Activities of British-owned PR company, Bell Pottinger, in South Africa

Good afternoon,

Thank you for your response to my mail of 20 July (below), which is much appreciated.

While I understand that Bell Pottinger is a private company and that it is currently being investigated by the PRCA, I am deeply disappointed to hear that this effectively indemnifies it against parliamentary oversight. Especially in a case such as this, where there is evidence to suggest that the company consciously and systematically set out to destabilise a sovereign nation, I had hoped that citizens of Commonwealth nations such as myself would have had some kind of recourse to the British political establishment. The fact that we do not seems to indicate that private companies in the UK are effectively a law unto themselves and that they can participate in overtly political activity in other countries with impunity.

Is there no further recourse than a simple ethics investigation by an industry association and a slap on the wrist? Could you please advise?

Thank you for your assistance and kind regards,

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – Member of Public]

-----Original Message-----

From: **[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]**

Sent: Thursday, August 17, 2017 2:24 PM

To: **[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – Member of Public]**

Cc: **[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]**

Subject: FW: Activities of British-owned PR company, Bell Pottinger, in South Africa

Dear **[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – Member of Public]**,

Thank you for your email of 20 July 2017. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is replying as the lead Government Department.

We have followed the news closely and note your concerns. However Bell Pottinger is a private company and its work in South Africa is a matter for the company and its clients.

Bell Pottinger made a statement concerning the allegations on 6 July and have appointed an independent law firm, Herbert Smith Freehills LLB, to review their work on the account in question. They have committed to publishing the full report from that investigation in due course.

The UK's Public Relations and Communications Association (PRCA) have confirmed receipt of a complaint about Bell Pottinger's conduct in South Africa and are also investigating.

Yours sincerely,

Central and Southern Africa Department (AD-CS) | Africa Directorate| Foreign and Commonwealth Office | London SW1A 2AH

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – Member of Public]

Address: [REDACTED – s40]

Subject: Activities of British-owned PR company, Bell Pottinger, in South Africa

I am writing with regard to the activities of the British-owned PR company, Bell Pottinger, in South Africa.

There is strong evidence to suggest that, through its activities here, the company tried to destabilize a sovereign nation, foment racial division and even create the conditions for civil conflict. This could plausibly be interpreted as an act of terrorism by the citizens of one nation against both the citizens and the structures of governance in another.

As Bell Pottinger is domiciled in the UK, I would like to ask the British parliament to conduct a full investigation into its activities in South Africa and to take any appropriate action against the company that may be required within the context of both British and international law.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

28 August 2017 13:28 FW: Bell Pottinger - breaking news on London hearing

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO],

Not sure if you saw this or not - but no doubt you are following none the less. Could we have a quick word tomorrow about ongoing handling please?

Hope you enjoyed the bank holiday.

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | Counsellor: Politics, Prosperity and Communications
British High Commission | Pretoria, South Africa, 255 Hill Street, Pretoria 0002, South Africa

24 August 2017 16:56 RE: Bell Pottinger - breaking news on London hearing

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BCG CAPE TOWN],

Thanks for updating. I see DA already tweeting out that their complaint upheld, and pressing for tougher PRCA measures against them.

We can expect this to reignite interest here. And in the UK. [REDACTED – S35] We'll keep a close eye on reactions/any fresh pressure for HMG involvement.

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BCG CAPE TOWN]

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BCG CAPE TOWN]

Sent: 24 August 2017 17:06

To: South Africa Chancery

Subject: Bell Pottinger - breaking news on London hearing

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BCG CAPE TOWN],

Latest on Bell Pottinger query in London. Unconfirmed reports that Public Relations and Communications Association has made findings against Bell Pottinger. Next steps: Findings to go to board, and then to parties (DA and BP), for them to respond/appeal. Final findings to be released week of 4 September. See snippets from article below.

<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2017/aug/24/bell-pottinger-south-africa-claims-pr>

Bell Pottinger sanctioned over claims it stirred racial tension in South Africa

Bell Pottinger will be given a "disciplinary sanction" by the UK's public relations trade body over allegations that the leading PR firm ran a secret campaign to stir up racial tension in [South Africa](https://www.theguardian.com/world/southafrica) on behalf of its billionaire clients.

The Guardian understands that the Public Relations and Communications Association (PRCA) is considering a range of actions it could take against Bell Pottinger, including terminating its membership of the trade body.

Only one PR company has ever had its membership terminated. Other possible disciplinary options include a formal warning or reprimand.

The PRCA declined to comment on what action it was considering taking against Bell Pottinger. The body had previously said that if it were to take no action against the firm it would make a statement on Thursday.

Francis Ingham, the PRCA's director general, said: "Our final decision on this case will be made once it has been through the full and balanced process set out in our professional charter and codes of conduct, including any appeals. We can't comment further while the process is ongoing." A final decision will be published in the week of 4 September.

Kevin Read, a Bell Pottinger partner, has resigned from the PRCA's board in advance of its meeting to decide what sanction to issue against the PR firm, founded by Margaret Thatcher's spin doctor Lord Bell

Bell Pottinger has lost some of its biggest clients, including the South African investment bank Investec, the South African tourism board, the London-listed, African-focused miner Acacia, and Richemont, the luxury goods company that owns Cartier and Montblanc and is controlled by the South African billionaire Johann Rupert.

Maimane has written to a host of the PR firm's biggest clients calling on them to drop the agency. "Though legal action is effective, corporations respond to their bottom line faster than they do to judges," he said.

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BCG CAPE TOWN] | Political Officer |
British Consulate-General, Cape Town

30 August 2017 14:31 RE: DIT - HMG Business ethics oversight

Sorry this has come full circle.

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - FCO] approached DIT London following a conversation with me yesterday.

We are in the process of refreshing our lines (and identifying gaps) in preparation for the PRCA findings being announced on Friday.

We will def involve and consult DIT here and FCO Desk in London in that process. But will need assistance from policy and legal experts in London (in FCO and DIT or BEIS) with some areas.

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | **Counsellor: Politics, Prosperity and Communications**
British High Commission | Pretoria, South Africa, 255 Hill Street, Pretoria 0002, South Africa

From: **[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA]**

Sent: 30 August 2017 10:56

To: **[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA]**

Cc: **[REDACTED – S40 – NAMES - BHC PRETORIA/FCO/DIT/DFID]**

Subject: RE: DIT - HMG Business ethics oversight

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] just sent round latest lines, which I presume will be shared with Desk

On 30 Aug 2017 9:40 am, "**[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA]**" wrote:

Copying in **[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA]** and **[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA]** who are leading/closest to this issue in Pretoria.

From: **[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA]**

Sent: 30 August 2017 08:41

To: **[REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – DFID/DIT]**

Cc: **[REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – FCO/BHC PRETORIA/DIT]**

Subject: RE: DIT - HMG Business ethics oversight

Morning **[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA]**,

A good question. I've asked **[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA/DIT]** for advice and she suggested speaking with **[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - DIT]** (cc'd) to see if there's anyone in DIT that might be able to assist.

In the meantime, I'm copying in **[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA]** and **[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA]** as I almost think they might have prepared some lines on Bell Pottinger already.

Kind Regards,

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA]

From: **[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - DIT]**

Sent: 29 August 2017 17:01

To: **[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – DIT/BHC PRETORIA]**

Cc: **[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - FCO]**

Subject: RE: DIT - HMG Business ethics oversight

Hi [REDACTED – S40 – NAME - FCO],

Thanks - interesting question. I'm not sure whether anyone in DIT looks at this, but it seems more of a trade promotion/business-to-business question than trade policy.

[REDACTED – S40 – NAMES - BHC PRETORIA]- might you be able to help? Do we have lines or someone looking at UK business conduct overseas?

Thanks,

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – DFID/DIT] | Trade for Development | Trade Policy Group | DFID/DIT
3 Whitehall Place, London SW1A 2AW

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME - FCO]
Sent: 29 August 2017 12:06
To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – DFID/DIT]
Subject: DIT - HMG Business ethics oversight

Hi [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – DFID/DIT],

I wonder if you can help? You may have seen stuff in the media about Bell Pottinger who it seems have been doing some pretty dubious things in South Africa. We're getting lots of interest from the public and possibly Parliament when back. Is there someone at DIT that looks at HMG's position on UK companies that flout international/local laws overseas? Someone in HMG must have some oversight of British Companies abroad, but just not sure where/who they are? Any help to locate someone in DIT would be most grateful.

Regards,

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - FCO] | Southern Africa Section | Central and Southern Africa Department (AD-CS) | Africa Directorate | Foreign and Commonwealth Office | London SW1A 2AH |

05 September 2017 16:52 RE: Bell Pottinger lines

Fab thanks [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]!

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO] | Media Office | Communication Directorate | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]
Sent: 05 September 2017 10:11
To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]
Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]
Subject: RE: Bell Pottinger lines

Blanket coverage here to and trending locally on Twitter but nothing so far to us although we're still monitoring response on Twitter.

Will definitely let you know and keep you updated, thank you so much for the support.

Have a great day

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]
Sent: 05 September 2017 11:10
To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]
Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]
Subject: RE: Bell Pottinger lines

Thanks [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA], much appreciated.

Shout if you need anything from us – has it been v busy for you overnight? Lots of media coverage here.

Thanks,

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO] | Media Office | Communication Directorate | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]

Sent: 05 September 2017 09:28

To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]

Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]

Subject: RE: Bell Pottinger lines

Hi

Final lines cleared by High Commissioner:

- *Bell Pottinger is a private company and its work in South Africa is, in the first instance, a matter for the company and its clients, and for the relevant industry bodies.*
- *An investigation has been carried out by the Public Relations and Communications Association (PRCA) and we note its findings*
- *British businesses are of course also subject to the law of the countries in which they operate.*

Regards

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]

04 September 2017 14:18 RE: Legal privilege - advice on our legal risks in South Africa in respect of UK firms

Hi [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA],

Have made some edits to the below. [REDACTED – S35]

Would you mind letting me know how this all progresses and if you get any media queries through please?

Copying in [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO] for info.

Thanks,

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO] | Media Office | Communication Directorate | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]

Sent: 04 September 2017 09:12

To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]

Subject: FW: Bell Pottinger lines

Hi [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]

Please see below on Bell Pottinger draft public lines. [REDACTED – S35]

Many thanks,

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]

Sent: 31 August 2017 16:00

To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – BHC PRETORIA/FCO]; Ben Llewellyn-Jones

Subject: RE: Bell Pottinger lines

Thanks [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]. [REDACTED – S35]

[REDACTED – S35]

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]

Sent: 05 September 2017 11:08

To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]

Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – BHC PRETORIA/FCO]

Subject: RE: Legal privilege - advice on our legal risks in South Africa in respect of UK firms

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO],

Thank you very much for such quick and helpful advice. I suspect [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA] and team may have some follow up questions for you, but will leave to her to be in touch directly on that.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA] | Programmes | British High Commission Pretoria

255 Hill Street | Arcadia | PRETORIA

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]

Sent: 30 August 2017 15:42

To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]

Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO/BHC PRETORIA]

Subject: RE: Legal privilege - advice on our legal risks in South Africa in respect of UK firms

Hi [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO],

Thanks v much for this – pleased/surprised you describe them as happy days given the amount of work it involved, albeit fascinating!

Look forward to hearing from [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO] in due course. If she could copy in [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA] the 1st Sec Political here, that would be very helpful given this will be of most interest to her.

All the best,

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA] | Programmes | British High Commission Pretoria

255 Hill Street | Arcadia | PRETORIA

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]

Sent: 30 August 2017 16:32

To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]

Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]

Subject: RE: Legal privilege - advice on our legal risks in South Africa in respect of UK firms

Hi [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA],

Good to hear from you and of course I remember those happy BIOT days!

My colleague [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO] (cc'ed) advises on South Africa issues. She'll get back to you asap.

Best,

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]

Legal Counsellor

Legal Directorate

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]
Sent: 30 August 2017 13:12
To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]
Subject: FW: Legal privilege - advice on our legal risks in South Africa in respect of UK firms

Hi [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO],

I hope you're well and vaguely remember me from BIOT days!? I hear from [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO] that you are now supervising legal advice on Africa, and wondered if you could give me a steer on our legal risks and obligations in respect of alleged misbehaviour of UK firms in South Africa.

[REDACTED – S35]

Kind regards,

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA] | Programmes | British High Commission Pretoria
255 Hill Street | Arcadia | PRETORIA

04 September 2017 11:25 RE: FS Update Para [BE Pretoria to London]

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO],

Yes planning an update para today - waiting for Bell Pottinger statement before drafting.

And a diptel tomorrow following PRCA statement.

Will mention Hain questions in both.

Will run both by you - so watch this space.

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | Counsellor: Politics, Prosperity and Communications
British High Commission | Pretoria, South Africa, 255 Hill Street, Pretoria 0002, South Africa

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]
Sent: 04 September 2017 11:56
To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]
Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]
Subject: FS Update Para

Hi [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA],

No doubt you're already on it but we think we should put an update para up today to FS. Are you happy to draft at post? Grateful for sight before it goes up. [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO] is happy with more than one this week if things develop further in the next few days. Worth mentioning Peter Hain's questions to Parliament in para.

Happy to discuss.

Regards,

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - FCO] | Southern Africa Section | Central and Southern Africa Department (AD-CS) | Africa Directorate | Foreign and Commonwealth Office | London SW1A 2AH |

04 September 2017 14:45 RE: Bell Pottinger: Update para

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]
Sent: 04 September 2017 14:18
To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA/FCO]
Cc: Ben Llewellyn-Jones; [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]
Subject: Bell Pottinger: Update para

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO],

We still haven't managed to get hold of Herbert Smith Freehills findings (but are seeing a lot of media reporting of them). We will keep searching - but here is a first draft to get us started:

[REDACTED – S35]

All comments welcome.

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | **Counsellor**

British High Commission | Pretoria, South Africa, 255 Hill Street, Pretoria 0002, South Africa

04 September 2017 14:43 SOUTH AFRICA/BELL POTTINGER UPDATE PARA

Dear [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO],

Please find below an update para for the Foreign Secretary on the investigations into Bell Pottinger's conduct in South Africa.

South Africa / Bell Pottinger update: Herbert Smith Freehills have today released the findings of their, Bell Pottinger commissioned, independent legal review of the controversial PR campaign the firm ran in South Africa (see diptel 1702846). It is being reported that the law firm found that elements of the campaign were 'potentially racially divisive and/or potentially offensive and was created in breach of relevant ethical principles' but that they had found no evidence that Bell Pottinger had invented the term 'white monopoly capital' or were behind the social media campaign that embedded it in the South African lexicon. Bell Pottinger's CEO, James Henderson, resigned today, saying he felt "deeply let down" by colleagues who misled him about the account. The firm also released a 6 point plan designed to provide reassurance of future compliance with professional and ethical standards. The Public Relations and Communication Association (PRCA) met today to consider Bell Pottinger's appeal against the findings of its enquiry. Their final ruling will be announced tomorrow, though we have seen an embargoed PRCA statement suggesting Bell Pottinger will be expelled from the professional body for 5 years. We expect a lot of interest in the UK media and parliament - we understand Lord Hain has already tabled some questions. Post will send a diptel with more detail tomorrow.

Best regards,

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | **Counsellor**

British High Commission | Pretoria, South Africa, 255 Hill Street, Pretoria 0002, South Africa

05 September 2017 10:57 FW: Zuma PM Brush-By: request to add Bell Pottinger line

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]

Sent: 05 September 2017 10:57

To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA/FCO]; Ben Llewellyn-Jones

Subject: RE: Zuma PM Brush-By: request to add Bell Pottinger line

Or (to tie in with first part of para better – which was in original draft))

[REDACTED – S35]

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | **Counsellor**

British High Commission | Pretoria, South Africa, 255 Hill Street, Pretoria 0002, South Africa

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]

Sent: 05 September 2017 11:51

To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – BHC PRETORIA/FCO]; Ben Llewellyn-Jones

Subject: RE: Zuma PM Brush-By: request to add Bell Pottinger line

[REDACTED – S35]

Quick responses please as need to get this back to Cabinet office in next 10 mins!

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | **Counsellor**

British High Commission | Pretoria, South Africa, 255 Hill Street, Pretoria 0002, South Africa

From: **[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]**

Sent: 05 September 2017 10:00

To: **[REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – BHC PRETORIA/FCO]**

Cc: **[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]**

Subject: RE: Zuma PM Brush-By: request to add Bell Pottinger line

Leave it with me. Got a BP meeting now and we'll sort this and the diptel directly afterwards.

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | **Counsellor**

British High Commission | Pretoria, South Africa, 255 Hill Street, Pretoria 0002, South Africa

From: **[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]**

Sent: 05 September 2017 09:55

To: **[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA/FCO]**

Cc: **[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]**

Subject: FW: Zuma PM Brush-By: request to add Bell Pottinger line

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA/FCO] – I think you best placed to add (**[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]** working on a diptel in parallel)?

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]

From: **[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – Cabinet Office]**

Sent: 05 September 2017 09:47

To: **[REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – BHC PRETORIA/FCO]**

Cc: **[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]**

Subject: Zuma PM Brush-By: request to add Bell Pottinger line

[REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – BHC PRETORIA/FCO]

I hope this finds you well. We're just doing some final consistency work here in NSS this morning on the PM's brush-bys for UNGA, ahead of the pack (and all 150 of them!) going up to No 10 today.

The latest SA one is attached. But given the news this morning I think it would be good to include a line on Bell Pottinger. Not upfront, but an extra sentence or two of background in a new paragraph at the end. Timing is tight on this today, but would you be able to send me something back by 11am this morning?

Huge thanks – and do call if easier.

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – Cabinet Office] | Policy Adviser, National Security Secretariat

05 September 2017 11:06 FW: Zuma PM Brush-By: request to add Bell Pottinger line

From: **[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]**

Sent: 05 September 2017 11:06

To: **[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – Cabinet Office]**

Cc: **[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA/FCO]**; Ben Llewellyn-Jones

Subject: FW: Zuma PM Brush-By: request to add Bell Pottinger line

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – Cabinet Office],

Revised version attached. Haven't had time to clear with desk in London so **[REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – FCO]**: please wave warning flag quickly if you have concerns. **[See Ref 2 at end of document]**

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | **Counsellor**

British High Commission | Pretoria, South Africa, 255 Hill Street, Pretoria 0002, South Africa

29 September 2017 12:15 FW: Bell Pottinger lines

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – DIT]

Sent: 05 September 2017 17:56

To: Nigel Casey ; Wade-Smith, Emma; Simon Mustard [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]

Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA/DFID]; Ben Llewellyn-Jones ; Annabel Gerry (DFID)

Subject: RE: Bell Pottinger lines

I've spoken to London – our client relationship management system shows that UKTI had some engagement with BP in 2015 but not in relation to South Africa. Additionally, checks show that DIT does not currently procure any services from BP.

I've reached out the Emma WS's predecessor to find out if he had any engagement with them during his time here. Our local records show no interactions, but that doesn't mean they didn't take place. I'll let you know as soon as I hear from him.

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA/DIT]

From: Nigel Casey

Sent: 05 September 2017 11:59

To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – BHC PRETORIA/FCO/DFID/DIT]; Wade-Smith, Emma; Simon Mustard

Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – BHC PRETORIA/DFID]; Ben Llewellyn-Jones; Annabel Gerry (DFID)

Subject: RE: Bell Pottinger lines

Thanks. I'm copying these to Emma and [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA/DIT] both because they relate to trade policy and also to double check that there were no contacts with any of their team here, or with DIT London; and to FCO London in case not seen already

[REDACTED – S35]

Nigel

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA/DFID]

Sent: 05 September 2017 10:43

To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]

Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – BHC PRETORIA/DFID]; Nigel Casey ; Ben Llewellyn-Jones ; Annabel Gerry (DFID);

Subject: RE: Bell Pottinger lines

Thanks [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]

In case not seen, yesterday's BizNews article [here](#) by Peter Hain includes a list of the Lords questions he has tabled (copied below). So far these relate only to Bell Pottinger and not McKinsey or KPMG.

I'm not aware of any DFID interaction with Bell Pottinger in 2016 or 2017 but we'll obviously need to do a proper commission to double check. Let me know how you're proceeding on this and what you need from us.

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA/DFID]

Questions by Lord Hain accepted by the Table Office and will go down in the UK's House of Lords:

- To ask HMG what assessment they have made of whether Bell Pottinger's recent public affairs work in South Africa was in line with Government policy on international trade conducted by British firms. [REDACTED – S35]
- To ask HMG what assessment they have made of whether the taking of income by UK Directors of Bell Pottinger for public affairs work in South Africa commissioned by businesspeople linked to President Zuma was in line with Government policy on international trade conducted by British firms. [REDACTED – S35]
- To ask HMG whether Government staff, in the UK or in South Africa, were consulted by Bell Pottinger's Directors before they took income for public affairs work in South Africa commissioned by businesspeople linked to President Zuma. [REDACTED – S35]
- To ask HMG whether, if Bell Pottinger were to be found in breach of the UK Public Relations and Communications Association code of conduct regarding its recent activities in South Africa, this would constitute a contravention of UK trade policy. [REDACTED – S35]

- To ask HMG whether any UK High Commission staff stationed in South Africa assisted, advised, or were in contact at any time with Bell Pottinger over its activities in South Africa on behalf of President Zuma's business supporters. [REDACTED – S35]
- To ask HMG what meetings, telephone calls, or formal or informal contacts UK High Commission staff stationed in South Africa had with Bell Pottinger inside or outside that country in 2016 and in 2017 to date. [REDACTED – S35]

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA] | South Africa Development Partnerships Unit | DFID

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]
Sent: 05 September 2017 10:29
To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA/DFID]
Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – BHC PRETORIA]
Subject: Bell Pottinger lines

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA/DFID]

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA] asked me to share with you our final cleared locally and by FCO Press Office in London on Bell Pottinger.

- *Bell Pottinger is a private company and its work in South Africa is, in the first instance, a matter for the company and its clients, and for the relevant industry bodies.*
- *An investigation has been carried out by the Public Relations and Communications Association (PRCA) and we note its findings*
- *British businesses are of course also subject to the law of the countries in which they operate.*

Warm regards

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA] | Communications | British High Commission Pretoria | 255 Hill Street | Arcadia | PRETORIA 0083

06 September 2017 11:16 RE: Bell Pottinger lines

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]
Sent: 06 September 2017 11:16
To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – DIT/DFID/FCO/BHC PRETORIA]
Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]
Subject: RE: Bell Pottinger lines

OK – I will lead on PQ's then.

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO] – so keep with FCO please.

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | Counsellor
British High Commission | Pretoria, South Africa, 255 Hill Street, Pretoria 0002, South Africa

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA/DIT]
Sent: 06 September 2017 12:12
To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA/FCO/DFID]
Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]
Subject: RE: Bell Pottinger lines

All - I can confirm that Andy Henderson didn't have any dealings with BP during his tenure here.

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA] – I will be in Gauteng for the remainder of the week, but literally only have 90 minutes of unallocated time left in the week (before accounting for the SOS work that's landed in my lap).

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA/DIT]

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]
Sent: 06 September 2017 11:56
To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – BHC PRETORIA/FCO]
Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – BHC PRETORIA]
Subject: RE: Bell Pottinger lines

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA],

I've had confirmation that the questions tabled are coming to the **FCO** and will be uploaded on the system today. Are you happy for FCO to answer these or do you think worth sending any to DIT? Either way post can lead on drafting the answers so won't matter which dept technically answers?

Regards,

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]
Sent: 06 September 2017 09:51
To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA/FCO/DIT]
Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – BHC PRETORIA]
Subject: RE: Bell Pottinger lines

All – I will be running with this from here on in. Have taken seniors – and a few others - off the distribution list . We can save their inboxes until we have final drafts to clear.

[REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – FCO] are kindly trying to track down the PQs – which we think may have gone to DIT given the subject matter. But this will need close co-ordination across HMG (in particular DIT and FCO) whoever ends up being responsible for responding.

Will be touch again once we track the PQs down.

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA/DIT]: suspect this will predominantly fall to the 2 of us. Are you in Jo'burg for rest of week or travelling?

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | **Counsellor**
British High Commission | Pretoria, South Africa, 255 Hill Street, Pretoria 0002, South Africa

From: Diptel PRETORIA CAPE TOWN
Sent: 05 September 2017 15:30
To: Diptel FCO
Subject: SOUTH AFRICA: BELL POTTINGER 'INFLAMED RACIAL DISCORD' [DIPTTEL 1703557]

Diptel PRETORIA CAPE TOWN
Foreign & Commonwealth Office Diplomatic Telegram

Summary

Bell Pottinger expelled from its UK industry body, and CEO resigns, over a PR campaign in South Africa that 'inflamed racial discord'. Though we have kept well away from Bell Pottinger's work here, inevitably the image of the UK, and of British business, have been somewhat tarnished by association. We should expect further scrutiny of work done by other UK and international companies for the Gupta-Zuma business empire. The silver lining is that a UK body has helped deliver a measure of accountability where South African institutions have so far failed.

The allegations

1. London-based PR firm Bell Pottinger has been accused by South African (SA) media and Opposition of carrying out a campaign for President Zuma's son and Oakbay Investments (of the controversial Gupta family). The campaign was aimed at discrediting those critical of the Guptas/Zuma through attacking representatives of supposed 'white monopoly capital'. This led to vicious verbal attacks on wealthy business figures and journalists by radical groups, and also some physical threats.

2. The recent 'GuptaLeaks' of 200,000 emails provided evidence of apparently clear links between Bell Pottinger and these activities, triggering the opposition Democratic Alliance (DA) to formally complain to the UK industry body, the Public Relations and Communication Association (PRCA), on grounds this was stoking racial tensions.

Inquiry Findings

3. Today the PRCA announced Bell Pottinger's expulsion from the professional body, for a minimum of 5 years: its harshest sanction. The PRCA concluded that Bell Pottinger had breached various clauses of its Professional Charter and of its Public Affairs and Lobbying Code. It found that Bell Pottinger failed "to maintain and protect its own reputation" and "the standing of the profession as a whole". The PRCA's Director-General said that it had 'never before passed down such a damning indictment of an agency's behaviour.'
4. Bell Pottinger had dropped the Oakbay account in April, apologised unequivocally, sacked/suspended four staff and commissioned its own internal inquiry, led by Herbert Smith Freehills. Yesterday that internal inquiry also found that elements of the campaign were 'potentially racially divisive and/or potentially offensive and it was created in breach of relevant ethical principles'. Bell Pottinger's CEO, James Henderson, resigned yesterday. The firm released a 6-point plan to provide reassurance of future compliance. Founder Lord Bell has called for the entire Board of Directors to resign.

Reactions

5. The story dominated SA media headlines today and was widely picked up in UK press. The DA has welcomed the PRCA finding but said that Bell Pottinger is 'not off the hook just yet', calling for full disclosure of all their Oakbay account information and to 'reinvest all monies from their Oakbay account back into South Africa.'
6. There has, predictably, been no reaction by the SA Government. Despite a drip feed of evidence from the GuptaLeaks, no SA investigation has taken place, although one Parliamentary Committee has started an inquiry. The judicial inquiry into State Capture has been stalled **[REDACTED – S27]**. To date we have received no official requests for assistance, nor are we likely to under the current ANC leadership.

Comment

7. Although we have kept well clear throughout this saga, Bell Pottinger's behaviour has been damaging for the UK's reputation in SA. It is therefore welcome news that pressure from the Opposition and media here has led to accountability processes in the UK being carried rapidly, transparently and with clear effect. Consequently, the commentary here has shifted back somewhat towards the failure of SA's own institutions to deliver in the same way. **[REDACTED – S27]**
8. But the outrage felt here at Bell Pottinger's behaviour will linger, and this success may encourage the DA and others to pressure other international businesses which have worked for Oakbay/Guptas. All SA's major banks, and now India's Bank of Baroda, have already closed the Guptas' accounts. The Bell Pottinger saga will have a chilling effect on others considering doing business with any part of the SA state in which the Guptas have an interest. **[REDACTED – S27]**. Lord Hain has tabled a set of PQs about HMG's involvement in Bell Pottinger's work.
9. **[REDACTED – S27]**. We are setting up a cross-HMG group at Post to look at corruption, consider what more we can do now (including via DFID/Prosperity Fund programming), and position ourselves to assist the SA authorities, should requests arise in future, or should evidence emerge by other means which we would in any case be obliged to act on (e.g. under the UK Bribery Act 2010).

Reference
1702846

CASEY

Authorised
Nigel Casey | High Commissioner

Contact
[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA] | First Sec Political |

Action
[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]

Sorry – not a Cabinet Office Minister. But answering oral questions on their behalf in the Lords today. Lord Young of Cookham – Lords Spokesperson. [REDACTED – S35]

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | Counsellor

British High Commission | Pretoria, South Africa, 255 Hill Street, Pretoria 0002, South Africa

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]

Sent: 06 September 2017 19:20

To: Ben Gascoigne

Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]

Subject: RE: SOUTH AFRICA: BELL POTTINGER ?INFLAMED RACIAL DISCORD? [DIPTTEL 1703557]

Cabinet Office Minister.

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | Counsellor

British High Commission | Pretoria, South Africa, 255 Hill Street, Pretoria 0002, South Africa

On 6 Sep 2017 18:50, "Ben Gascoigne "> wrote:

Sorry who is he?

On 6 September 2017 at 17:31:24 BST, [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]> wrote:

[REDACTED – S35]

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | Counsellor

British High Commission | Pretoria, South Africa, 255 Hill Street, Pretoria 0002, South Africa

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]

Sent: 06 September 2017 09:40

To: Ben Gascoigne [FCO Special Advisor]

Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]

Subject: FW: SOUTH AFRICA: BELL POTTINGER 'INFLAMED RACIAL DISCORD' [DIPTTEL 1703557]

Ben,

Would you happen to have a few minutes free today to discuss the issue below?

[REDACTED – S35]

The current cleared lines are:

- *Bell Pottinger is a private company and its work in South Africa is, in the first instance, a matter for the company and its clients, and for the relevant industry bodies.*
- *An investigation has been carried out by the Public Relations and Communications Association (PRCA) and we note its findings*
- *British businesses are of course also subject to the law of the countries in which they operate.*

Nb we've seen an advance copy of Lord Hain's questions, also below for reference [REDACTED – S35]:

- *To ask HMG what assessment they have made of whether Bell Pottinger's recent public affairs work in South Africa was in line with Government policy on international trade conducted by British firms.*
- *To ask HMG what assessment they have made of whether the taking of income by UK Directors of Bell Pottinger for public affairs work in South Africa commissioned by businesspeople linked to President Zuma was in line with Government policy on international trade conducted by British firms.*
- *To ask HMG whether Government staff, in the UK or in South Africa, were consulted by Bell Pottinger's Directors before they took income for public affairs work in South Africa commissioned by businesspeople linked to President Zuma.*

- To ask HMG whether, if Bell Pottinger were to be found in breach of the UK Public Relations and Communications Association code of conduct regarding its recent activities in South Africa, this would constitute a contravention of UK trade policy.
- To ask HMG whether any UK High Commission staff stationed in South Africa assisted, advised, or were in contact at any time with Bell Pottinger over its activities in South Africa on behalf of President Zuma's business supporters.
- To ask HMG what meetings, telephone calls, or formal or informal contacts UK High Commission staff stationed in South Africa had with Bell Pottinger inside or outside that country in 2016 and in 2017 to date.

Best regards,

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | Counsellor

British High Commission | Pretoria, South Africa, 255 Hill Street, Pretoria 0002, South Africa

06 September 2017 14:53 RE: Bell Pottinger - Removal from PRCA Code of Conduct

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]

Sent: 06 September 2017 14:53

To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO/Cabinet Office]

Subject: RE: Bell Pottinger - Removal from PRCA Code of Conduct

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – Cabinet Office],

Yesterday's diptel and one we sent last month as a starting point for you.

Our current lines are:

- Bell Pottinger is a private company and its work in South Africa is, in the first instance, a matter for the company and its clients, and for the relevant industry bodies.
- An investigation has been carried out by the Public Relations and Communications Association (PRCA) and we note its findings
- British businesses are of course also subject to the law of the countries in which they operate.

But these are likely to evolve over the next 24 hrs in response to other PQs **[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]** has mentioned.

Please call either myself or **[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]** to discuss that ASAP. Nb The office closes here in just over an hour given the time difference.

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | Counsellor

British High Commission | Pretoria, South Africa, 255 Hill Street, Pretoria 0002, South Africa

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]

Sent: 06 September 2017 15:49

To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – Cabinet Office]

Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]

Subject: RE: Bell Pottinger - Removal from PRCA Code of Conduct

Hi **[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – Cabinet Office],**

Could you urgently call me about this please (I've left a message and have tried calling). I understand from our own Parliamentary Relations Team that this is an Oral Topical Question with the chance of supplementary questions. Our High Commission in Pretoria is leading on the Bell Pottinger responses. The FCO and DIT have had a number of other (written) PQ's posed yesterday from Lord Hain. Post have a script to work from, but might need to work up more for the Lords Oral Question.

Copying in the lead at post (**[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA]**).

Regards,

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - FCO] | Southern Africa Section | Central and Southern Africa Department (AD-CS) | Africa Directorate | Foreign and Commonwealth Office | London SW1A 2AH

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – Cabinet Office]
Sent: 06 September 2017 13:27
To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]
Subject: Bell Pottinger - Removal from PRCA Code of Conduct

Hi [REDACTED – S40 – NAME - FCO],

I was given your contact details by [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO] in the Parliamentary Correspondence team; I wonder if you can help with the below.

We're currently responding to a Parliamentary Question and thought you might have an interest/be able to provide some context.

The question posed was 'Lord Hain to ask Her Majesty's Government what action they intend to take, if any, following the expulsion of Bell Pottinger from the Public Relations and Communications Association.'

I wanted to find out whether you had any information to provide considering the source of the subject is in South Africa. I've included two media articles, by the BBC <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-41151361>> and the Guardian <<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2017/sep/04/bell-pottinger-expelled-from-pr-trade-body-after-south-africa-racism-row>> , for information.

Any information you can provide on the issue would be greatly appreciated. If there is any way that thoughts/comments could be provided by 3pm that would be great, as the final response needs to be submitted by close of play today.

More than happy to discuss over the phone if easier.

Many thanks,

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – Cabinet Office] | Parliamentary Policy Team | Constitutional Settlement Division | Cabinet Office

06 September 2017 13:27 RE: Bell Pottinger - Removal from PRCA Code of Conduct

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – Cabinet Office],

No problem – will pass on your thanks to Nigel.

[REDACTED – S35]

Thanks

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | Counsellor
British High Commission | Pretoria, South Africa, 255 Hill Street, Pretoria 0002, South Africa

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – Cabinet Office]
Sent: 07 September 2017 13:46
To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – FCO/BHC Pretoria]
Subject: Re: Bell Pottinger - Removal from PRCA Code of Conduct

All,

I just wanted to say thank you for your support over the last two days on what was a complex issue at short notice, it is very much appreciated. [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO] it was great to have you in the briefing with Lord Young. Could you also pass on my thanks to the High Commissioner?

Many thanks,

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – Cabinet Office] | Parliamentary Policy Team | Constitutional Settlement Division | Cabinet Office

On 6 September 2017 at 17:36, <[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA]> wrote:

[REDACTED – S35]

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – Cabinet Office] | I need to leave the office now – but will have my cell phone with me. So don't hesitate to call/email if you need to (contact details below).

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | **Counsellor**
British High Commission | Pretoria, South Africa, 255 Hill Street, Pretoria 0002, South Africa

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] |
Sent: 06 September 2017 17:47
To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES - BHC PRETORIA/FCO/Cabinet Office] |
Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – FCO/DIT] |
Subject: RE: Bell Pottinger - Removal from PRCA Code of Conduct

Sorry – not with attachment. NB awaiting comments from our Press Office but sending in parallel given time constraints.

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | **Counsellor**
British High Commission | Pretoria, South Africa, 255 Hill Street, Pretoria 0002, South Africa

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] |
Sent: 06 September 2017 17:46
To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – FCO/Cabinet Office] |
Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – FCO/DIT] |
Subject: RE: Bell Pottinger - Removal from PRCA Code of Conduct

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – Cabinet Office] |,

Some suggested amendments in text. Might be useful for us to discuss?

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | **Counsellor**
British High Commission | Pretoria, South Africa, 255 Hill Street, Pretoria 0002, South Africa

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – Cabinet Office]
Sent: 06 September 2017 17:27
To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – BHC Pretoria/FCO]
Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – FCO]
Subject: Re: Bell Pottinger - Removal from PRCA Code of Conduct

Hi all,

Just to summarise our conversation just now, [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO] you confirmed that your colleague [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO] would be able to attend the briefing meeting with Lord Young tomorrow morning at 9am in the House of Lords - [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO] thank you very much for agreeing to this at such short notice. [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO] informed me that you don't have a Parliamentary pass so if we meet at the visitors entrance to Parliament at 8.45 we can escort you in to the building. My mobile number is [REDACTED – S40]. The meeting info is below:

9-10am in the HoL Conservative Meeting Room 20. Please come to the top of the stairs at Westminster Hall and give [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – Parliament] a call on [REDACTED – S40]

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO] advised that the High Commissioner (is that the correct title?) would like to dial in; I will try to find out whether the room has speakerphone capabilities and let you all know ASAP. If not, [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO] and I agreed that it might be that the only option would be to take a call from the Commissioner on [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO] mobile.

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC Pretoria] - thank you very much for your work on the briefing document. I will review once you've had a chance to send back.

Thank you all very much, I realise this has been a less than ideal situation in terms of timing but I really appreciate you all pitching in so readily, its very much appreciated.

Anything you need from me please let me know.

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – Cabinet Office] | Parliamentary Policy Team | Constitutional Settlement Division | Cabinet Office

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA]

Sent: 07 September 2017 08:57

To: Nigel Casey; Ben Llewellyn-Jones; [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES - BHC PRETORIA/DIT/NCA]

Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME - FCO]

Subject: RE: Bell Pottinger PQs

[REDACTED – S35]

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | Counsellor

British High Commission | Pretoria, South Africa, 255 Hill Street, Pretoria 0002, South Africa

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]

Sent: 07 September 2017 09:16

To: Nigel Casey ; Ben Llewellyn-Jones ; [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – BHC PRETORIA/NCA]

Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – FCO]

Subject: RE: Bell Pottinger PQs

[REDACTED – S35]

Nigel and I are joining an oral briefing for Lord Young at 10.00 SA time.

Draft answers to our question + background para below. Not yet cleared with anyone - job for today. May need tweaking after Lord Young's appearance in the Lords.

[REDACTED – S35]

So nothing more required for now - but will no doubt be banging on your doors again in a few hours.

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | Counsellor

British High Commission | Pretoria, South Africa, 255 Hill Street, Pretoria 0002, South Africa

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]

Sent: 06 September 2017 15:35

To: Nigel Casey; Ben Llewellyn-Jones; [REDACTED – S40 – NAMES – BHC PRETORIA]

Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]

Subject: Bell Pottinger PQs

OK - we now have a full overview of all PQs needing response.

Written PQ's (deadline of 16.00 UK time tomorrow - we will leave these til tomorrow morning)

For FCO:

Lord Hain: whether any UK High Commission staff stationed in South Africa (1) assisted, (2) advised, or (3) were in contact at any time with, Bell Pottinger over its activities in South Africa on behalf of President Zuma's business supporters. HL1265

Lord Hain: what meetings, telephone calls, or formal or informal contacts UK High Commission staff stationed in South Africa had with Bell Pottinger inside or outside that country in 2016 and in 2017 to date. HL1266

For DIT: ([REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO] and [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA/DIT]) trying to track down where in DIT these have gone to so we can co-ordinate):

- To ask HMG what assessment they have made of whether Bell Pottinger's recent public affairs work in South Africa was in line with Government policy on international trade conducted by British firms.

- To ask HMG what assessment they have made of whether the taking of income by UK Directors of Bell Pottinger for public affairs work in South Africa commissioned by businesspeople linked to President Zuma was in line with Government policy on international trade conducted by British firms.
- To ask HMG whether Government staff, in the UK or in South Africa, were consulted by Bell Pottinger's Directors before they took income for public affairs work in South Africa commissioned by businesspeople linked to President Zuma.
- To ask HMG whether, if Bell Pottinger were to be found in breach of the UK Public Relations and Communications Association code of conduct regarding its recent activities in South Africa, this would constitute a contravention of UK trade policy.

Oral PQ (deadline of close today)

'Lord Hain to ask Lord Young 'what action they intend to take, if any, following the expulsion of Bell Pottinger from the Public Relations and Communications Association.'

[REDACTED – S35]

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | Counsellor

British High Commission | Pretoria, South Africa, 255 Hill Street, Pretoria 0002, South Africa

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]

Sent: 07 September 2017 12:47

To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]

Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]; Nigel Casey

Subject: RE: Lord Young

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA],

Oral question went well from our side (about half the supps were on the legal status of the lobbying register - which many Lords are upset about but very much).

On the international focused questions Lord Young stuck to the line about strong support for the findings of the reports, and he said on numerous occasions that BP had acted “unethically and unprofessionally”. He used Nigel’s steer on money laundering (i.e. no indication from the reports but if the Lord Hain had evidence then it should go through the correct authorities here). He also said that he had spoke to Nigel this morning and emphasised the damage the episode had down for our reputation in SA.

Will check on Hansard when it has been updated for official record but nothing which was said should change our answers in the PQs.

Thanks,

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]

Sent: 07 September 2017 10:52

To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]; Nigel Casey

Subject: RE: Lord Young

Thanks [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]– will try and progress the written PQs (for FCO and DIT) in the meantime, but they will need to be tweaked once we’ve heard back from you.

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | Counsellor

British High Commission | Pretoria, South Africa, 255 Hill Street, Pretoria 0002, South Africa

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]

Sent: 07 September 2017 11:30

To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]; Nigel Casey

Subject: RE: Lord Young

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA],

Huge thanks to you and Nigel - briefing went well (but was definitely needed). Nigel's overview was invaluable and Lord Young took note of all the points. He has asked for officials in the box so I will report back after the question.

Thanks,

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]
Sent: 07 September 2017 09:16
To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO/Cabinet Office]
Subject: Lord Young

In case you are looking at phone...

I'm back at my desk if you need to dial me back in (number below).

[REDACTED – S35]

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | **Counsellor**
British High Commission | Pretoria, South Africa, 255 Hill Street, Pretoria 0002, South Africa

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]
Sent: 06 September 2017 14:38
To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]
Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO/BHC PRETORIA]
Subject: RE: PQ1265 Bell Pottinger

So are these the two Hain PQ's that made the cut? We can ignore the advance list we saw? OR are these in addition to the first list we saw? Written I presume?

Any luck on pinning down Cabinet Office on the other one?

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | **Counsellor**
British High Commission | Pretoria, South Africa, 255 Hill Street, Pretoria 0002, South Africa

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]
Sent: 06 September 2017 15:30
To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]
Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO/BHC PRETORIA]
Subject: PQ1265 Bell Pottinger

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA],

Please see 2 PQ's on Bell Pottinger. Grateful for a reply by 1600hrs tomorrow to allow time to upload. Please copy in [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO] and [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO] (to allow sight before uploading).

Lord Hain: whether any UK High Commission staff stationed in South Africa (1) assisted, (2) advised, or (3) were in contact at any time with, Bell Pottinger over its activities in South Africa on behalf of President Zuma's business supporters. HL1265

Lord Hain: what meetings, telephone calls, or formal or informal contacts UK High Commission staff stationed in South Africa had with Bell Pottinger inside or outside that country in 2016 and in 2017 to date. HL1266

Also need a bit of background (Context or Justification) for each.

Date Tabled: 05/09/2017
First Day for Answer: 19/09/2017
Responsible Minister: Rory Stewart
Answering Minister: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon
To PRD By: 07/09/2017 18:00

Regards,

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - FCO] | Southern Africa Section | Central and Southern Africa Department (AD-CS) | Africa Directorate | Foreign and Commonwealth Office | London SW1A 2AH |

07 September 2017 13:33 RE: PQ1265 Bell Pottinger

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO],

We agreed to link these 2 questions. Answer and background below cleared at this end. Please upload once [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO] and [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO] are happy.

FCO:

Lord Hain: whether any UK High Commission staff stationed in South Africa (1) assisted, (2) advised, or (3) were in contact at any time with, Bell Pottinger over its activities in South Africa on behalf of President Zuma's business supporters. HL1265

Lord Hain: what meetings, telephone calls, or formal or informal contacts UK High Commission staff stationed in South Africa had with Bell Pottinger inside or outside that country in 2016 and in 2017 to date. HL1266

[REDACTED – S35]

I will be out of the office now until Monday but please call me on my mobile if you need anything further on this.

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | Counsellor
British High Commission | Pretoria, South Africa, 255 Hill Street, Pretoria 0002, South Africa

07 September 2017 13:29 RE: lines - 4 Lords PQs - by CoP tomorrow 7/9

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – DIT],

[REDACTED – S35]

I'm on leave tomorrow so won't be checking emails – but feel free to call me on my cell phone if you need any further support.

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | Counsellor
British High Commission | Pretoria, South Africa, 255 Hill Street, Pretoria 0002, South Africa

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – DIT]
Sent: 07 September 2017 12:22
To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]
Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA/DIT/FCO]
Subject: RE: lines - 4 Lords PQs - by CoP tomorrow 7/9

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA],

Thanks for this.

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA/DIT], I will update the draft that I just sent you once Lord Young has spoken and I have the background lines.

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – DIT]

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]
Sent: 07 September 2017 11:20
To: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – DIT]
Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO/DIT/BHC PRETORIA]
Subject: RE: lines - 4 Lords PQs - by CoP tomorrow 7/9

Thanks [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – DIT] – let’s wait and see what Lord Young actually says ([REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO] is in the officials box in the Lords and will report back) and then tweak accordingly.

[REDACTED – S35]

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | Counsellor

British High Commission | Pretoria, South Africa, 255 Hill Street, Pretoria 0002, South Africa

07 September 2017 13:18 RE: PQ1265 Bell Pottinger

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]

Sent: 07 September 2017 13:18

To: Nigel Casey

Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA/FCO/DIT]

Subject: RE: PQ1265 Bell Pottinger

Just got final language used by Lord Young through from Cabinet Office. No change to our answer, but minor amendment to DIT one (in green below).

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | Counsellor

British High Commission | Pretoria, South Africa, 255 Hill Street, Pretoria 0002, South Africa

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]

Sent: 07 September 2017 14:03

To: Nigel Casey

Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA/FCO]

Subject: RE: PQ1265 Bell Pottinger

All,

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO] [REDACTED – S35]

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]: please chip in if Lords appearance changes any of the above (though presume from your read out that it would not).

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | Counsellor

British High Commission | Pretoria, South Africa, 255 Hill Street, Pretoria 0002, South Africa

14 September 2017 13:18 RE: RE: Kgalema Motlanthe Chatham House write up

Many thanks for attending [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO] – and providing such a detailed read-out. We really appreciate it.

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME - BHC PRETORIA] | Counsellor

British High Commission | Pretoria, South Africa, 255 Hill Street, Pretoria 0002, South Africa

From: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]

Sent: 14 September 2017 11:00

To: Nigel Casey ; Ben Llewellyn-Jones ; [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – BHC PRETORIA]; South Africa Political Team; Pretoria Communications

Cc: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]; Simon Mustard

Subject: Kgalema Motlanthe Chatham House write up

Hi everyone,

Yesterday I went to the Kgalema Motlanthe talk at Chatham House about ‘Leadership and Governance in South Africa’s Democratic Development’.

[REDACTED – S27]

All the best,

[REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]

TOPICAL BRIEFING
SOUTH AFRICA / BELL POTTINGER

Points to make
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bell Pottinger is a private company and its work in South Africa is a matter for the company and its clients.• The company has made a statement, and the professional body responsible for regulating this sector in the UK is conducting an investigation.• [IF PRESSED] As Bell Pottinger’s activity in South Africa is subject to investigation in South Africa and the UK, it would not be appropriate for us to comment at this time.

Additional key facts and rebuttals
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• UK PR firm Bell Pottinger are attracting a lot of negative attention in South Africa due to their involvement in a PR campaign alleged to have been aiding large scale state-capture and corruption and exacerbating racial tension. Their clients, the highly discredited Gupta family, are closely aligned to President Zuma.• Bell Pottinger issued a “full unequivocal and absolute apology to anyone impacted” in a statement issued on 6 July.• Fresh disclosures have led to mounting pressure for Bell Pottinger to be held to account, and South Africa’s main opposition party (the Democratic Alliance) has lodged a formal complaint with UK industry bodies.• There has been widespread media coverage in SA, and some UK press. No formal representations received from SA government as yet, but there are reputational risks to UK.
Drafted by: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO] Cleared by: [REDACTED – S40 – NAME – FCO]

REF 2: EXTRACT FROM BRIEFING FOR A POSSIBLE PRIME MINISTER BRUSH BY WITH SOUTH AFRICAN PRESIDENT JACOB ZUMA

[BACKGROUND SECTION] The UK’s Public Relations and Communications Association recently expelled Bell Pottinger for unethical conduct over a racially divisive PR campaign they ran in SA for the Gupta family – in which Zuma’s son was, allegedly, also heavily involved.