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HOUSE OF COMMONS

ORAL EVIDENCE

TAKEN BEFORE THE

SCOTTISH AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

THE REFERENDUM ON SEPARATION FOR SCOTLAND: DEFENCE

WEDNESDAY 12 SEPTEMBER 2012

PROFESSOR WILLIAM WALKER AND DR PHILLIPS O'BRIEN

Evidence heard in Public Questions 1347 - 1471

Oral Evidence

Taken before the Scottish Affairs Committee

on Wednesday 12 September 2012

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EXAMINATION OF WITNESSES

Witnesses: Professor William Walker, School of International Relations, University of St Andrews, and Dr Phillips O'Brien, Scottish Centre for War Studies, University of Glasgow, gave evidence.

Q1347 Chair: Gentlemen, could I welcome you to this meeting of the Scottish Affairs Committee? As you know, we have been conducting a series of investigations into various aspects of the separation referendum, both process and issues of substance. We are now engaged in looking at defence, and especially your areas of expertise.

I stress that, while we are the Scottish Affairs Committee and focusing mainly on the impact of separation upon Scotland, obviously we will spill over into some areas about how it affects Britain, though the Defence Committee is looking at the aspect of how it impacts on the rest of Britain as well. I wonder if I could start by asking you to introduce yourselves and tell us a little bit about your background for the record.

Professor Walker: My name is William Walker. I teach at the University of St Andrews in Scotland. I am Scottish by background, although I worked out the other day that I have lived 29 years of my life in England and 36 in Scotland. I have an engineering degree from Edinburgh university. I worked at Sussex university for 20 years, and I have been at St Andrews since 1996. My field of expertise is international relations, particularly the international politics of nuclear weapons.

Dr O'Brien: I am Phillips O'Brien. I am from Boston but I have been a resident of the United Kingdom for 23 years now. I have spent the last 15 at the University of Glasgow, where I have run the War Studies Centre. Before that, I did my PhD at Cambridge and was a research fellow there. My area of expertise has been 20th century naval and strategic policy- in particular with a British-American angle of expertise.

Q1348 Chair: Can I kick things off by saying that initially we want to talk about the nuclear deterrent and its presence in Coulport and Faslane? If Scotland did become a separate country and said it wanted the nuclear weapons out of Scotland as quickly as possible, what would be the impacts and implications, both for the rest of the UK and Scotland?

Professor Walker: There are many uncertainties in this, but my view is that there are two options that are untenable. One is the immediate expulsion of the deterrent from Scotland. I notice that recent statements by the Scottish Government have talked about "as quickly as possible". In my view, "as quickly" cannot be very quick; it would take quite a long time politically to negotiate, organise and find other sites, if they can be found at all. The immediate expulsion of Trident from Scotland is untenable and will be regarded internationally as unreasonable.

On the other hand, in my view, if Scotland did gain independence, the idea of the UK strategic force being permanently based in Scotland would also be untenable and would probably be regarded internationally as unreasonable, if it was against the Scottish will. My conclusion is that you are really talking about phase-out, and the whole debate should be about the terms of it: how long it would take, who would pay for it and exactly how to manage and negotiate it.

Of course it begs the question: is there anywhere else to put the deterrent? Again, my view, which I think is a commonly accepted one-it is not definite-is that probably you could find alternatives to Faslane for berthing of submarines in England, but Coulport would be very difficult. There is a question about whether any kind of phase-out of the bases in Scotland is compatible with maintaining the UK deterrent in the long term at all and what the cost implications would be.

That is a very difficult question. I am sure the Ministry of Defence will be asking themselves some very difficult questions about this at the moment. I don't see a clear answer to those questions at the moment, but it clearly is a very difficult issue. Sometimes it seems rather intractable, but somehow a way through it would have to be negotiated if Scotland did gain independence.

Chair: That is a very cheery introduction.

Q1349 Lindsay Roy: If not in England and Wales, is there any possibility of a short-term stopgap in either France or the USA?

Professor Walker: My answer would be no.

Q1350 Lindsay Roy: On what basis?

Professor Walker: It is partly a matter of independence, but also various complicated matters would have to be negotiated to do with installations, costs, safety matters and public consent in these countries. There would be international issues to do with basing your deterrent in another country. Again, it would be something that would have to be negotiated and it would take quite a long time.

Q1351 Lindsay Roy: So there are huge political and logistical matters.

Professor Walker: Yes.

Dr O'Brien: The one area of the debate that has not been explored much at all is how the rest of the United Kingdom would react. It is often looked at as an intra-Scottish debate about nuclear, non-nuclear, NATO and non-NATO. If Scotland leaves the rest of the United Kingdom, that opens up the whole debate about whether the rest of the United Kingdom wishes to continue as a nuclear power. At certain times in the last 30 years there has been a lot of pressure against it. A lot of people in the military believe we don't need nuclear weapons. That aspect will go down a road and we don't know where it is heading.

Q1352 Chair: That simply raises the price of retention, does it not? There are already huge costs in retaining a successor to Trident, but the uncertainty of the additional costs simply raises the cost of all of that.

Dr O'Brien: It might be that Scotland is stuck with bearing a lot of the costs of getting rid of them.

Q1353 Chair: How would that work?

Dr O'Brien: If the rest of the United Kingdom wishes not to remain a nuclear power, how the weapons are dispensed with would have to be negotiated. After the USSR broke up, there were a lot of nuclear weapons in places like Kazakhstan, and they were quite expensive to ship out. That was paid for mostly by the United States and Russia, but these can be expensive things.

Q1354 Chair: If we work on the basis that the United States is unlikely to fund the removal of nuclear weapons from Scotland, is there any precedent as to who would bear the costs? The Scottish Government have said they are not theirs—they don't want them, and if somebody else wants to remove them, that is their problem and their cost, which would seem, on the face of it, to be a not unreasonable position.

Lindsay Roy: But, on the other hand, they are on their territory.

Dr O'Brien: Yes; they are on Scottish territory, and if the rest of the United Kingdom doesn't want to pay to take them away, it will have to be a negotiated issue where Scotland would pay, with the rest of the United Kingdom, to decommission them.

Q1355 Chair: But there would be a difference, though, between decommissioning and replacing.

Dr O'Brien: Yes, if they wanted to get rid of them. If the decision is made by the rest of the United Kingdom not to continue on as a nuclear power, which I think is possible but maybe not likely, you are talking about decommissioning the weapons system, and that would be something for which Scotland would have to pay, as the rest of the United Kingdom would.

Q1356 Jim McGovern: Thank you both for coming along. Actually it's just across the Tay bridge from St Andrews and Dundee, and I have visited Boston on a number of occasions. It's a great city.

You say that, if the UK decided not to maintain a nuclear deterrent, Scotland would probably need to bear the cost of removing it. If the UK decided to keep it, would the rest of the UK then have to pay

the cost of removing it from Scotland to another part of the UK, or would it be fee-free, as it were, to Scotland?

Dr O'Brien: It would all have to be negotiated, but if the United Kingdom very much wanted to keep the weapons—for example, to guarantee a UN Security Council seat—it would behave the UK to keep them under its control and rebase them. My guess is that, in that situation, Scotland would have a stronger negotiating stance to get the weapons moved, whereas if the rest of the UK decided it did not want to keep the weapons, those costs would have to be shared.

Q1357 Jim McGovern: Do they not have to be shared in any case?

Dr O'Brien: I think the balance would be different.

Chair: Jim, could you pick up the point about the alternative sites?

Q1358 Jim McGovern: We have heard some contrasting evidence about where nuclear submarines or weapons might have to be relocated. We have heard of the possibility of that being in England and Wales. Is that feasible?

Professor Walker: Nothing is impossible. It depends upon political will, cost—I suppose—local opposition and many other factors, such as whether the land is available and the geography.

As you may know, I did a study with Malcolm Chalmers some years ago in which we looked into the original basing decisions. They were very complicated. In the end, very few sites appeared to be feasible for the Coulport equivalent. I am not a technical person and do not know the ins and outs of what the Ministry of Defence would regard as acceptable in these respects, but it seems to me that this kind of facility is very difficult to locate. There has been an enormous investment in Coulport over decades, and a great deal of experience has been built up. Therefore, simply moving to another part of the country and opening another facility, which might be tailored a bit differently—for instance, it could be smaller than the current one—would still be a huge undertaking.

We also live in an age when planning consent is very often needed. None of these facilities had to go through any kind of planning system. The public feels it has a right to express an opinion on these matters, and I can imagine it being very controversial. I believe that the other day someone in Wales said they might welcome one of these facilities, but in practice it would be very controversial. The Government would have to go through various quite difficult political processes to try to get consent for this.

One of the great difficulties here—we might come on to the question of how Scotland and the UK negotiate a reasonable position on all this—is that, from the UK's side, it would be faced with the huge uncertainty as to whether it could open a base, how long it would take and how much it would cost. So, after independence was declared, or the yes vote had come in, it wouldn't really know what it could fix or arrange, and what it could open.

As far as we can see, there has been no significant exploration of this matter since the 1960s. It would be faced with this huge uncertainty. Could we create this new facility somewhere in the UK? I think the answer is that they wouldn't know. It is very difficult in terms of negotiating if the question of having to find another base somewhere else comes up. The trouble is that the UK Government



wouldn't know whether they could open another base somewhere else until they had gone some way into the business of working the politics on it, you might say.

Q1359 Jim McGovern: As you say, the bases have been there for 40-odd years-since the 1960s, anyway. Has something changed that means they do not necessarily have to be there and could be somewhere else in England or Wales, or are the reasons for their location there in the 1960s the same and therefore why they should remain there?

Professor Walker: It began with the Americans in Holy Loch and their insistence on having it in Scotland. They would not have it in England for some reason; it had to be in Scotland, and in a particular location in Scotland. They wanted to be reasonably close to Prestwick. When the Ministry of Defence looked at various sites around the coast of the UK, they came to the conclusion that this was the best site for them, too, so it developed like that.

These days, if you have a strategic weapons system, the precise location of the base isn't terribly important. As long as there is deep water, reasonable coverage and protection against foreign intrusion and all the rest of it, where it is around the perimeter of Britain doesn't matter very much in terms of the distance of the missiles getting to their targets and so on. It is all to do with geography, location, feasibility, infrastructure and many other things that determine these matters.

Q1360 Jim McGovern: You have almost pre-empted my next question. Presumably, expense would come into that as well. Money would come into that.

Professor Walker: Yes; it would be extremely expensive, and if you had to do this, it would profoundly affect the economics of Trident replacement. Don't ask me to put a figure on it; I have no idea at all, but certainly it would be billions of pounds.

Q1361 Jim McGovern: It would need geography, political will and engineering, but also money.

Professor Walker: Yes. It would be very difficult.

Q1362 Chair: Dr O'Brien, do you want to add anything to those points?

Dr O'Brien: That was very well said. I think that is one of the issues that might impress the UK not to keep the weapons: i.e. when the true reality of the rebasing situation came up, the cost might contribute to that.

Q1363 Chair: We understand that. Can I say that when we have two witnesses they are not obliged to agree with each other? From our point of view, it is much better if witnesses disagree. If there are any points of difference, we would much prefer to have those drawn to our attention. We would find that helpful.

Professor Walker: I am sure we will.

Q1364 Chair: I don't want to encourage you to fight, but it is always useful to us to identify whether there are disagreements. I understand the point about increasing the cost of rebasing Trident and so on, and the price of staying. I want to be clearer about the question of whether or not replacement locations can be found.

We were at Faslane a little while ago. It seemed to me that there are four separate elements there that will have different issues surrounding them for rebasing. The easiest is the minesweepers, which can go almost anywhere, as I understand it. There are the attack submarines and the nuclear-armed submarines, and then there is the nuclear-weapons storage.

Leaving aside the minesweepers-and, presumably, the attack submarines as well, since if you have got nuclear-armed submarines, the attack submarines can be in the same location-with the other two, are there more locations potentially available for the submarines than for the nuclear-weapons storage? Are there constraints that mean one has to be within five miles of the other? For example, the facility at Aldermaston is concerned with the preparation of nuclear weapons, which are then shipped up to Scotland. Is it possible to keep the weapons there, for example, and have the submarines sailing out of Barrow, albeit with dredging and the like, or do the weapons have to be close beside the submarines into which they will be fitted?

Dr O'Brien: It is good to have them close-ish. I don't think they have to be five miles away, but you certainly don't want them 100 miles away.

Q1365 Chair: Why not?

Dr O'Brien: Just for ease of replacement and if you have to make adjustments in the submarine. This is not my strong area of expertise; I am not a nuclear-weapons person.

Q1366 Chair: But you are here, so that is why we are asking.

Dr O'Brien: I would think that having them close is useful.

Q1367 Chair: But not essential.

Dr O'Brien: No. I would think you could get by without having it right next door.

Q1368 Chair: Presumably, the further you can have them apart, the more options you have, because you are not then looking for a location that can accommodate the two of them. You could be looking potentially at two separate locations within a reasonable distance. Can you illuminate for us the sort of factors that determine where you could have the nuclear-armed submarines and nuclear storage, and give an indication of whether there are potential sites available in the rest of the UK, but it is just a question of cost-understanding your point about planning matters, local political opposition and so on? Is there anything we ought to be aware of, because obviously this is one of the issues we will have to explore in our report?

Professor Walker: I read the evidence given by John Ainslie, and you went into some detail on this. I didn't see much reason to disagree with him on the question of location. In my view, the warhead storage is not the crucial issue; the crucial question is how you create a facility where you can marry the warhead and missile, load it on to the submarine and also remove it from the submarine, if you need to, and bring it back on shore. That is a very delicate and dangerous operation, so it is all to do with safety calculations. If you have a massive explosion, what exactly happens within a certain radius? How does one manage that politically with all the emergency services and so on?

There is a great deal of speculation about this, frankly, and it needs someone with great technical expertise and experience in naval matters and managing these affairs to give a strong opinion about

it. I personally don't feel I am in a position to say more than that, but my instinct simply is that it is very difficult and requires a huge accumulation of experience and expertise, plus infrastructure, to be able to do this. You don't want to do anything like this near built-up areas, tourist sites or whatever.

Q1369 Chair: Would it be fair for us to say that, notwithstanding your points about planning difficulties and additional cost, if the political will is there, this is doable? We don't record nods. You are both saying it is.

Professor Walker: Yes.

Dr O'Brien: Yes.

Q1370 Chair: Can you give us some indication of the timetable for that? Somebody said to us it was reasonable to think that the quickest would be 10 years, but it would be more realistic to think in terms of 20 years before an alternative provision for both the submarines and weapons storage was available. Does that seem to you to be the right ballpark figure?

Professor Walker: Yes, but 20 years might be a minimum; it might be longer than that. You would have to sustain your political will and funding for a very long time. I don't know whether the political parties could agree upon that and exactly what the ramifications would be. The process of finding a site might take five to 10 years, and then being sure you have one, and all the engineering and construction works, mean it could be a long time.

Q1371 Chair: People say things like, "This is going to be very difficult," or, "This is going to be a long time," but we want to try to pin it down a bit more, in the sense of providing information. You are saying that possibly 20 years might be too slow. To explain, we are trying to produce a report that puts the options in front of the people of Scotland and says that these are the issues that require answers from either the British Government or the Scottish Government as to what the policies are, and these are the things on which we want to put questions to avoid people voting for a pig in a poke, as it were. That is why we want to get as much clarification as possible.

Professor Walker: Can I add that it would require quite a severe external threat to generate the political will to do something like this?

Q1372 Chair: Do you concur with all that?

Dr O'Brien: If you had unlimited political will and funds behind it, you could do it quicker than 20 years without a doubt, but an enormous amount of resources would have to be put into it with no one objecting and cross-party support. As a guess, it would be shorter than 20 in that rare situation.

Q1373 Chair: How much shorter?

Dr O'Brien: It would be closer to 10 or 15, but personally I can't see that happening.

Q1374 Mr Reid: If Scotland became independent, one option that has been suggested to us is that the Scottish Government could lease Faslane and Coulport to the UK Government. In their evidence to us, the UK Government said that that could be acceptable to them, as long as it was a sovereign base and sovereign UK territory. Do you see that as a feasible solution?

Professor Walker: Do you mean the creation of a sovereign base area, like Akrotiri in Cyprus?

Mr Reid: Yes.

Professor Walker: It would be a very unusual thing to do these days. I can imagine that, given Scottish politics, there would be great difficulty with it. I suppose that it is one of the options that would be available to do that. By the way, there are three sites, not two. The Vulcan test reactor at Dounreay, which is used for testing submarine reactors, would have to be brought into this too. That is run by Rolls-Royce at the moment. There is also a question about whether that would have to close or if that, too, would come under some kind of leasing arrangement.

Q1375 Mr Reid: If Faslane and Coulport were to become a sovereign base, how big an area would the UK Government need? Faslane and Coulport are close to each other and a road links them. It is also possible that, for security reasons, they would want the perimeter of the base to be bigger than where the wire fence is at the moment. How large an area do you think they would want?

Dr O'Brien: It would cut off the Rosneath peninsula, like Guantanamo bay. You would need a direct connection between Faslane and Coulport. There is the road that exists there now. You would need to have everything on each side of that road for quite a while.

Q1376 Mr Reid: Would the whole Rosneath peninsula be needed?

Dr O'Brien: No, but that would cut it off from the rest of Scotland. You would have to pass through the United Kingdom to get from Cove into Scotland. You would need quite a large area. This can't be a small facility.

Q1377 Mr Reid: Do you know the geography?

Dr O'Brien: Yes.

Q1378 Mr Reid: As you know, Faslane is on the east side of the Gareloch, and on the west side there is all this wooded area. I would have thought the UK Government would want to control that wooded area to have security against, say, someone with a hand-held missile firing something into the base. Do you think the UK Government would want that part of the Rosneath peninsula as well?

Dr O'Brien: If Scotland were a NATO ally, you might be able to work up an agreement, but so much of this hinges on the NATO question. If Scotland remained in NATO, you could perhaps limit it and give Scotland, as a NATO ally, certain defensive responsibilities without it. A non-NATO Scotland would mean they would want a fully protected area, which would be good. You would certainly take the bluffs. Faslane down to the water has those huge bluffs behind it, which means it is one of the most visible nuclear bases in the world. You would probably have to close off those bluffs and then take the road to Coulport.

Q1379 Mr Reid: People going to Cove and Kilcreggan would need to pass through a secure area in a foreign country.

Dr O'Brien: They would have to get their passports out.



Q1380 Mr Reid: If this solution was pursued, what about submarines getting access to the Atlantic? Obviously, they have to sail down the Gareloch, through the Rhu Narrows, into the River Clyde and then into the Firth of Clyde to get to the Atlantic. What sort of agreement would have to be in place there?

Professor Walker: Under the Law of the Sea, territorial waters extend for 12 miles. Essentially, that means 24 miles, which takes you south of Arran. Am I right in remembering that, under article 20 of the Law of the Sea, any foreign submarines have to fly a flag and be on the surface when travelling through territorial waters? There is an issue there. Would the Scottish Government be at all times informed of the movement of submarines up and down these channels? I imagine there would have to be a separate treaty between the two as to exactly how these waterways will be managed. There is also sonar equipment and many other things to do with this, which I imagine are very sensitive matters for the UK Government, but all of this would have to be part of a treaty between the two as to exactly how these waterways were managed.

Q1381 Mr Reid: Would that treaty need to compel the Scottish Government to take action to stop protestors disrupting the progress of the submarines?

Professor Walker: I can't imagine how the Scottish Government could concede quite to that. For them to take action would be a matter of sovereignty and their decision as to what was a justifiable protest and so on. Presumably, they would feel some responsibility to look after public safety and make sure that nothing was done to infringe international agreements, but at the same time I would be surprised if something like that was built into an agreement.

Q1382 Mr Reid: It sounds as if you feel that the sovereign base idea is a non-starter.

Professor Walker: I don't think a sovereign base area has been established anywhere in the world for a long time; it is not really a contemporary idea. It would remain Scottish sovereign territory leased to the UK. That would be the likely model here. It would be Scottish sovereign territory.

Q1383 Mr Reid: But Defence Ministers seemed to believe that that would not give them the security they would need. For example, they might reach an agreement with one Scottish Government and an election could change that Government. Is there any treaty that could be put in place that would bind future Governments of Scotland?

Professor Walker: How to provide confidence in that would be subject to the negotiation.

Q1384 Mr Reid: Is it possible to provide that confidence?

Professor Walker: Whether they can establish that kind of confidence is a matter for negotiation between the two. I don't know. I have always felt that, if the UK Government look at a situation of having their strategic nuclear force in this particular place in a foreign country, they will feel extremely uncomfortable and will wonder how to manage it, what the international implications are, and how to react to exactly what you are suggesting-the idea that you might have public protests happening there and so on. You might have an accident in the Clyde. How exactly do they respond to this? I think they would feel very uncomfortable.

Q1385 Chair: What were the arrangements when the Americans were in the Holy Loch? Was that leased or sovereign?

Professor Walker: I don't think there was any formal arrangement at all; it was a gentleman's agreement. There was no legal agreement. This is my memory, but I seem to remember there was no formal agreement, and I think that is true of all the American bases in Britain. There was no formal legal treaty between the UK and US Governments; it was all done informally by gentleman's agreements. There would probably have been some understandings on paper, but there was no formal legal agreement.

Q1386 Chair: If the negotiators on each side can find gentlemen to deal with, it might be possible to find some arrangement.

I want to pursue Alan's point about access to the sea. Who had responsibility for protecting the American submarines from CND or sundry other bad people who might want to attack them? We have been there and seen it. You have the Ministry of Defence police and the last line is the Royal Marines, who potentially will shoot people if they get that far. Presumably, at some stage, Scottish police would have a responsibility before it would fall to the MOD police and then the Royal Marines. Surely, if there was an arrangement, there would be some sort of provision by the Scottish Government or Scottish forces to provide a guaranteed sea lane; otherwise, they are handing over responsibility for the whole sea lane to a foreign power.

Professor Walker: Yes, exactly. Presumably, in the cold war, the United States and the UK were very close. The UK took on a lot of responsibility in maintaining the safety of these sites. It had a great deal to lose if it did not provide that safety. I would also point out that, even under the devolution settlement, the Scottish Government have cooperated with the UK Government in providing policing and so on around the site in Faslane, so that suggests confidence can be built up to some degree. Sea lanes are particularly difficult, because there are so many things going up and down here. How do you disguise this? Nuclear-weapon states don't like other states knowing the position of their boats-when they are going up and down and so on-so these are very difficult things.

Q1387 Chair: But it works at the moment.

Professor Walker: It seems to work at the moment.

Q1388 Chair: Therefore, if there was goodwill, presumably it could work in the future.

Professor Walker: Yes, but it would nevertheless still have to form part of some international agreement between the two; it would have to be formalised to make it workable.

Q1389 Chair: From the point of view of the United Kingdom, it would be best to have a sovereign base agreement, some sort of leasing, or some gentleman's agreement. I don't think we had fully appreciated those distinctions. From the UK's point of view, that is the best deal, isn't it? Is it right that in negotiations that is what they would ask for?

Professor Walker: Probably. Again, the international lawyers would have to get involved in this. I can imagine that the Scottish Government wouldn't like this one little bit.

Q1390 Chair: We are trying to explore what the negotiating positions might be, what people might ask for and then the process of haggling. Other speakers have said to us that much of this could be set off against Scotland's right to use the pound, so it need not necessarily be contained solely within defence.

Professor Walker: Absolutely.

Q1391 Chair: We just wanted to be clear what the chosen option of the UK Government was likely to be, and something similar to the status quo is the most desirable.

Dr O'Brien: I really think the NATO question is central to this. What made the American-British gentleman's agreements work was that they acted within a structure and a very formal alliance. If Scotland was not in NATO, you would have huge trouble making this work. Personally, I don't see how a nuclear power can, in the long term, base its weapons in another country, particularly if it is done by gentleman's agreement that could be changed because of domestic political changes in that country. Scotland could go down another route. I could see that as being the best short-term-even medium-term-solution, but not in the long term.

Chair: It depends on whether you judge 20 years as being long, short or medium term. If it was that sort of arrangement until an alternative was constructed, it is probably the second-best option. Presumably, the best option for the UK is to keep it there for ever, as it were, and have no relocation costs, but the second-best option is to have that for as long as is necessary.

Q1392 Mr Reid: On the American comparison at Holy Loch, we have already discussed how long it could take for the UK Government to transfer the facilities at Faslane and Coulport, but would I be right in saying that the way the American base at Holy Loch was constructed was that, if a new UK Government had asked them to leave, they could have packed up and moved out very quickly? Would that be a fair comment?

Professor Walker: Yes, it would. You are absolutely right that the NATO framework was very important, but also the US-UK mutual defence agreement in 1958 provided a framework for an awful lot of cooperation between the two. In fact, it still is the framework for cooperation between the United States and the UK over Trident replacement, for instance.

Another point to make about all this is that the United States would be involved in all these discussions. Of course, the missiles going up and down the Clyde are American-manufactured missiles, which are taken out of a pool of missiles at Kings Bay. The Americans would be part of this discussion; you can't keep them out. I am not saying they would drive it, but they would nevertheless certainly be involved in the discussion and would have a position on it, presumably.

Q1393 Chair: When you say they would "have a position on it, presumably", give us a clue as to what you think that position might be.

Professor Walker: This takes us into the question of the international response to all this. My view is that states would not take up precise positions until London and Edinburgh had come together and discussed it a lot themselves. For instance, on NATO and the statement made by the SNP about removing the weapons from the Clyde, all that would have to be subject to negotiation between London and Edinburgh. At least to begin with, this would have to be part of the framework

agreement that would follow the yes vote and announcement of independence. The two sides would have to come together bilaterally to negotiate some kind of framework agreement before it all went international. There would be consultation, no doubt.

Q1394 Chair: But, surely, lots of that should be discussed and negotiated before the vote; otherwise, people are voting for a pig in a poke. Since there is no suggestion that there would then be a second vote once the terms were clear, you can't have a situation where people are just seeking a mandate to discuss without any idea of what might happen.

Professor Walker: It is wonderful that you are discussing this, but I can't see the two sides having any negotiation on it in advance. Both sides find it a very tricky issue. The Ministry of Defence have been very quiet about it, and the SNP want to go so far in declaring their position but probably no further. It really would come to negotiation after the yes vote as to exactly what-

Chair: I think we would regard that as unacceptable, because people in Scotland can't be asked, as I say, to buy a pig in a poke.

Q1395 Iain McKenzie: First, I apologise for not being present at the commencement of the witness session.

Did I hear you clearly enough when you said that it would be no comfort to NATO to have almost a barter system with the Scottish Government-"We keep the base and perhaps you get the pound"-or some other weighty exchange?

Dr O'Brien: No. I said it would be easier for the rest of the United Kingdom to negotiate the security arrangement on the basis that Scotland remained in NATO. A nonNATO Scotland would be subject to the kind of domestic political pressures that, say, New Zealand experienced in the 1980s when it took a very strong anti-nuclear stance.

Q1396 Iain McKenzie: Any negotiations would explicitly need to have Scotland remaining within NATO.

Dr O'Brien: It would make it much easier to have Scotland within NATO. If Scotland is outside NATO, a lot of bets are off. No one in the State Department or Department of Defense will go on record about this, but they are very worried about a non-NATO Scotland.

Q1397 Iain McKenzie: But would you see it as acceptable to NATO, if Scotland were outside it, if, for instance, the deal would be struck: "To use the pound, you could use the base"?

Dr O'Brien: I don't think the question is about usage but security. You can cut a deal that, yes, you can use the base, but that opens up a huge number of other questions: how long, how you protect it, and what if there are protestors. To my mind, it is a little more involved than just saying, "You pay; you use."

Q1398 Iain McKenzie: The Scottish Government couldn't come in and say, "We'll just do a deal in exchange," almost.

Dr O'Brien: If it is not a NATO member, you would need a formal treaty. If it is not a NATO member, say the Scottish Government changes in four or six years' time and you go down a very different



political route, or there is a greater economic crisis. Being in NATO provides greater security to the agreement.

Q1399 Chair: Being in NATO makes it more likely that nuclear weapons will stay in Scotland longer.

Dr O'Brien: I would say yes. If Scotland were to go independent and leave NATO, both the domestic pressures within Scotland to get them out and the strategic need of the rest of the United Kingdom to rebase them would be raised.

Q1400 Chair: Could I turn now to the timetable for removal? We have touched on the timetable for relocation. I don't know whether you saw the CND evidence. It seemed to me that CND were identifying three different time bands. One of them, which they were not particularly interested in, was replacement in England. The first was what I have described as removing the fuses from the missiles, and the second was the physical removal of the warheads. I think they were talking about removing the keys and triggers within about eight days of the nuclear submarines with the missiles being back in Scotland, and that all the missiles physically located there could be de-fused, as it were, within about a fortnight. Obviously, there might be a delay if some were at sea, but by the time they came back again and were de-fused, it would be a fortnight.

They were then saying that, with a generous timetable, they thought that all the warheads could be removed from Scotland within 24 months, working on the same sort of timetable at the moment for warheads coming up and down from Burghfield and Aldermaston, but perhaps speeded up a little bit. Do you recognise these two timetables as being feasible?

Professor Walker: They are feasible. Again, it comes back to political will, and it would have to be done consensually. You would need a lot of cooperation between the two sides to make it workable, but if that was what the two sides wanted to do, it could be done. John Ainslie consulted with some American experts, in particular Richard Garwin, who is extremely expert in all these matters. He didn't seem to object to these timetables. I would take that as pretty good support for his case that you can do it but, again, I come back to the fact there has to be political will and agreement-there would have to be a framework for it. I suspect it would take a bit longer.

Q1401 Chair: I understand all that. What we are trying to explore in order that we can put it in front of the people of Scotland is what the parameters are and if you are agreeing that the fuses can be removed, as it were, within eight to 14 days-all that is subject to haggling-with physical removal within 24 months. Again, we are posing 24 months against, say, 20 years. One extreme is that they are out within 24 months; the other extreme is that they remain there for 20 years until replacements are built. That is the sort of choice that might very well be open. Does that seem reasonable? Is that recognisable as a meaningful choice?

Professor Walker: Yes.

Dr O'Brien: Yes. You can de-nuclearise Scotland, but you probably cannot renuclearise the rest of the UK and replace it.

Q1402 Chair: That is right. We are exploring Scotland's position.

Dr O'Brien: Only in a perfect world, you could probably get the weapons out.

Q1403 Chair: A separate Scotland would be a perfect world. Have you not been reading the propaganda?

Dr O'Brien: You could probably get them out of there. What you do with them in the rest of the UK-

Q1404 Chair: But that is then the rest of the UK's problem. From the point of view of the Scottish Government and for people voting in Scotland, CND are right that they could be defused or de-triggered within about 14 days and the warheads could be out of Scotland within 24 months.

Professor Walker: I think you should take evidence from the Ministry of Defence on that and ask them the question. It seems reasonable to me.

Chair: We have been speaking to the Ministry of Defence. At one point we were discussing air cover over Scotland. We asked them how long it would take, if Leuchars was no longer available, for replacement jets to fly up from East Anglia. They said that it depended on how fast they were going. Those are the sorts of responses we have been getting to some questions posed publicly to the MOD, but they have been more open with us privately. Some of the people we are speaking to concur with this view. I just wanted to make sure that you did as well.

Q1405 Iain McKenzie: I am going to quote to the two witnesses the SNP conference resolution on NATO so that I can ask specific questions about some of the wording: "A long standing national consensus has existed that Scotland should not host nuclear weapons and a sovereign SNP government will negotiate the speediest safe transition of the nuclear fleet from Faslane which will be replaced by conventional naval forces." As we can see from that SNP resolution on NATO, it specifically says that "a sovereign SNP government will negotiate the speediest safe transition of the nuclear fleet from Faslane". Do you think this means that a future SNP Government would allow the nuclear fleet to remain at Faslane as long as they could claim to be in a drawn-out negotiation for what they term "the speediest safe transition"?

Dr O'Brien: I would say there is no time limit on that. You can define "speedy" or "safe" however you wish to define "speedy" or "safe".

Q1406 Iain McKenzie: My further question on that would be: what do you think is the interpretation of the Ministry of Defence and Royal Navy of "speediest safe transition"?

Professor Walker: In terms of reasonable positions to take both at home and abroad, one would be to maintain these bases for the current boats until they retire and not accept the replacements-so basically you phase it out. That would mean 10, 15 or 20 years; so you give the UK Government that length of time to find the alternative bases. That would be regarded as a reasonable position to take but, again, it would require the UK Government to accept that the replacements would go elsewhere and into another base. What would seem too reasonable probably to the Scottish Government-10 to 20 years is a very long time in their time frame, I think-would probably seem unreasonable to the UK Government if it meant the replacements had to go somewhere else and they had to find another base. There is an element of coercion in that.

Another possibility that came up at the RUSI seminar, at which we were present, was the idea that you separate Coulport and Faslane and close down Faslane reasonably quickly, perhaps relocating the berthing of submarines to Devonport, or somewhere like that, with investment and so on, and

Coulport just takes longer. That might be tied to another kind of time frame, which is the American programme for replacing the Trident missiles. The date quoted then was 2042, which is an awfully long way away, but the idea of separating Coulport and Faslane is quite an interesting one.

By the way, I notice that in the language here, which may be carelessness on their part, they say "the speediest safe transition of the nuclear fleet from Faslane". There is not a discussion about the warheads and missiles at Coulport in that language, but the interesting question is whether one should be thinking about these two bases at the same time and whether one might separate the transition. The Coulport one is obviously much more difficult.

In my view, it would take far less will, and probably less cost, to move the Faslane base. Politically, you could imagine how the Scottish Government might feel they had made their point and made a big gain in removing the submarines from Faslane, and the UK had at least maintained its deterrent by keeping its warhead and missile base at Coulport.

One can imagine that sort of compromise. Whether it is acceptable to either side is quite another matter, but you could imagine this being the basis for some kind of negotiation between them. You separate them and think about what the time frames might be for phasing out the two bases, which might be very different.

Q1407 Chair: In that scenario of separating the submarines from the nuclear weapons, where would the loading take place?

Professor Walker: The loading would still take place in Coulport.

Q1408 Chair: Nuclear submarines would still be coming into Scotland under that scenario.

Professor Walker: Yes.

Q1409 Chair: Live nuclear missiles would be in Scotland under that scenario, albeit for a relatively short period while they were sailing in and out.

Professor Walker: Yes. That, again, might be difficult in Scotland, but it is at least one of the options that might be considered.

Q1410 Chair: I must confess I don't think any of us had considered that this might be a deliberate looseness of wording by the SNP in specifying the fleet at Faslane and making a distinction between that and the weapons store and loading bay at Coulport. That is something we will want to raise with them.

Professor Walker: I suspect it is carelessness.

Q1411 Chair: We are dealing with nuclear weapons here, so I would have thought that carelessness from the SNP is the last thing we would want. If that is just simply sloppiness, that tells us something; if not, you raise a very useful point.

Taking into account what I think you have agreed about CND, in "speediest safe transition"-i.e. removal-we are talking about 24 months. To honour the pledge that is here, the minimum, I would have thought, is the 24 months. Any other agreement that is reached about keeping them for a

longer period, or until Trident wears out or a replacement is built, is not the speediest safe transition; that would be a longer transition. It might be that they want to move on that, but is it correct that nothing less than 24 months would fulfil this commitment?

Professor Walker: I understood the CND paper as saying that this is what would be feasible. It does not really go into the politics of it. I am not sure that is what is implied in the Scottish Government's statement.

Q1412 Chair: Let's come back to that. As I understand "speediest safe transition", 24 months for the removal of the weapons from Scotland is safe.

Professor Walker: Yes.

Q1413 Chair: They would be going to a store somewhere in England-either Burghfield or Aldermaston. That is "safe". The "speediest safe transition" is therefore the removal of the weapons within that 24 months, and anything other than that is not the speediest. Is that a reasonable way of reading it?

Dr O'Brien: If you are not worried about deploying them from the rest of the UK, yes.

Chair: That's right.

Dr O'Brien: If all you are trying to do is get them out, yes, but if you are looking at it from the rest of the UK, that would not be so.

Q1414 Chair: No, but we are not. It may well be true that the person who wrote this was sloppy on the Faslane-Coulport point; I understand that. But, presumably, the words "speediest safe transition" have been deliberately chosen, and in those circumstances anything more than 24 months is a departure from that resolution. I am sorry; Hansard does not record the nodding of heads.

Professor Walker: I understand what you are saying, and again it depends upon the interpretation and meaning of these words, and it is for them to clarify it.

Q1415 Chair: It is reasonable for any reasonable person to assume that "speediest" means "as quickly as possible", and "safe" is fulfilled by the 24 months.

Professor Walker: Again, the "24 months" relies upon complete cooperation between the two sides and agreement on it. We might come on to the question of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and so on. All the sensitive stuff would have to be under the complete control of the UK Government; Scottish hands could not be on it. There is a point to be made about decommissioning. It couldn't be carried out by the Scots; it would have to be carried out by the UK Government, the weapons establishment and so on. It would have to be completely under control. Again, I come back to the fact that there would have to be negotiation on this, and it would have to be consensual; otherwise, it wouldn't happen like this.

Chair: That is right. The negotiating position of the Scottish Government would have to be, "We want them out within 24 months," and it would be necessary to have specialist UK staff-contractor staff from Babcocks or whoever else deals with these things, or Royal Navy personnel-to carry out



these movements. I understand that point, but we just want to clarify what the two negotiating positions might be in order to promote discussion among people in Scotland. Lindsay, do you want to pick up the other issues of cost of removal?

Q1416 Lindsay Roy: I think we have covered them fairly well. The other issue is that at the moment Faslane is a home to nuclear-powered submarines and several mine control vessels, and by 2017 it will be home to the entire UK submarine fleet. Can you see an independent Scotland having any use for, or being able to afford, any of these assets?

Dr O'Brien: I have written a little bit on this. If you look at the number Faslane now employs-the MOD's stated figure for Faslane and Coulport is 6,500 people-it would be extraordinary for a facility of that size to continue in an independent Scotland. There is one facility in a country of comparable size-it is still considerably smaller-and that is the Norwegian base in Bergen: Haakonsvern. That is the base for the entire Norwegian fleet, which includes six submarines, five or six frigates, mine vessels and patrol vessels. That has a population of about 4,000 employees, military or not.

It would be hard to see Scotland having a navy of that size, to begin with. The Norwegians have a fleet of that size because they believe they have a real enemy-though they will not talk about it, it is Russia. It is protecting their oilfields; therefore, they are building up quite a large force.

If Scotland were to go independent, even remaining in NATO, probably it would mirror more the Danish model when it comes to fleet size. The Danes since about 2004 have given up submarines completely. They maintain two quite limited bases in number, each with three frigates, with quite distinct roles. Their total basing requirements are about 1,100 or 1,200. If you are looking at it as a naval facility, it would be in and of itself almost impossible, unless you are simply employing people to do nothing.

Q1417 Lindsay Roy: The SNP are often keen to follow the Norwegian model. Would they require non-nuclear submarines to protect assets in the North sea?

Dr O'Brien: That is a very interesting question. I don't know what submarines they use right now. They certainly couldn't use the British attack submarines that are being built. Those are four times the size of the Norwegian submarines, which are these littoral water subs to protect the coastline. I would be surprised if an independent Scotland bought the smaller submarines from other countries instead of putting money into shipbuilding in the Clyde. I would find it hard to imagine that Scotland would be basing a lot of submarines.

Q1418 Lindsay Roy: In your view, what would be needed to protect the North sea assets adequately?

Dr O'Brien: What you would need to do to build up Faslane is bring the Army there. You would bring a few frigates. I imagine Scotland would start with three or four of the Type 23 frigates and then add the Type 26 when they came on line. You would add minesweepers and patrol boats. Those, together, might get you to 2,000 men, if you are adding it up. But, if you want to keep Faslane as the kind of facility it is now, you would rebase the Army units-those in Penicuik and those up in Inverness at Fort George-and make it a joint Army-Navy base. You cannot redeploy the air force; there is no airstrip there. It is very difficult terrain on which to build an airstrip. In addition, if you look at what happens in many countries of Scotland's size, certainly non-NATO countries-Ireland and New Zealand are ones I have looked at-they have got rid of combat aircraft.

Q1419 Lindsay Roy: Do you seriously think that Scotland would get Type 26 frigates?

Dr O'Brien: I think there would be a domestic impetus behind it to try to save shipbuilding on the Clyde. The real Über issue for Scotland in independence is that the natural pull is that it will benefit the east over the west absolutely. If you look at, say, how the Danes and Norwegians base their forces and how these things go, the east would benefit: first, because the oilfields are in the east and they need to be protected; secondly, because a lot of things get built up around the national capital, and you tend to base a lot of elements around that. The west now disproportionately is supported by Faslane-Coulport.

Chair: On that happy note, can we stop because we have a vote? I am afraid we will have to go and vote and come back again. Fascinating though you are, we are more afraid of the Whips than we are of you.

Sitting suspended for a Division in the House.

On resuming-

Q1420 Chair: Can we now restart because there is a quorum? I know at least one of our colleagues has been caught by the Whips and is being tortured as we speak. Dr O'Brien, maybe you would continue your answer.

Dr O'Brien: I go back to what I was saying about the viability of Faslane and what would probably happen if you look at other models. You could certainly have as many jobs in Faslane in the future as they have now, but you would have to concentrate in that area of Scotland in a way that no other nation of this size concentrates its military. You would have to rebase the Army with the Navy in that area. It is mostly the case that the smaller nations disperse in a way that is politically sensitive to the entire country. Denmark, with its small fleet, is a good model. It maintains two separate bases. It has given them different roles and they cover different areas, but it is a way of spreading around positions. Ireland with an even smaller Navy has one base, but it has moved the Army and Air Force to different areas as a way of dispersing the benefits that those bring to the local areas. New Zealand has gone down a very extreme route. It has no combat aircraft but it maintains three airstrips. It maintains the infrastructure of a combat air force without the air force itself.

If you are looking at what would happen beyond the domestic political impact, if Scotland went independent, they might try to keep Faslane at that level, but almost certainly it would fail in that. The natural impetus would be one base on the east coast. If you are being at all sensible, you have to protect the oil base. You could follow the Danish model basically with a base on each coast. That is quite an intelligent thing for Scotland to do. Faslane is uniquely inaccessible to the oilfields. To get there, you have to cruise all the way down and around, so the natural naval input would be to split it between one force on each coast. You could also do that with the Army and split it but, whatever happens, the impetus would be to reduce Faslane.

If you look at other countries, what tends to happen is that the military tries to stay close to the seat of power. The headquarters, military colleges and human resources elements of the military will probably want to be close to Edinburgh; they might not want to be out on the Rosneath peninsula. Therefore, through independence, the general thrust would be to benefit the east over the west.

Q1421 Iain McKenzie: You said earlier that the numbers employed at Faslane were 6,000-plus.

Professor Walker: That is what the MOD said.

Q1422 Iain McKenzie: In a separate Scotland, it would be highly unlikely that that level of employment could be sustained, bearing in mind that the Navy would be significantly reduced if it was at Faslane. You are saying that to keep anywhere near that level of employment you would need to include other military forces, and that that would be significantly out of step, or it would be unusual in a defence strategy to base such a large number of your forces in one area.

Dr O'Brien: It would be unusual because there aren't many people there who would benefit. It is not a politically-

Q1423 Iain McKenzie: It would be your defensive Achilles heel by having so many forces based in the one area.

Dr O'Brien: "Defensive Achilles heel" is a phrase I would not want to use, because who is going to be the threat right now? You could say it is an illogical deployment, but it doesn't make Scotland any more vulnerable to invasion.

Q1424 Iain McKenzie: I suspect that the idea of diversifying your bases around the country is for security reasons as well. If you bring them all together, it makes it an easier target, does it not?

Dr O'Brien: I don't know that it makes it easier. You would have to have something on the east and on the west because of the way Scotland is shaped. The Norwegians have this very big base.

Q1425 Iain McKenzie: Even if you had something in the east and something in the west, could that level of employment be sustained?

Dr O'Brien: If those were the only two military facilities in Scotland.

Q1426 Iain McKenzie: If you had only two-one in the east and one in the west.

Dr O'Brien: If they were the only two in Scotland, and Scotland had a slightly larger military than it needed. If you look at a country like Ireland or New Zealand, you have about 10,000 military personnel in total. It is higher in Denmark and Norway, but of that there are always some based in and around the capital. If you are going to have two bases-one east and one west-and 6,500 to mirror what Faslane has now, in a sense you have nothing anywhere else. You could reach that level with one base in the east and one in the west, but you would have a bigger military than you might actually need.

Q1427 Chair: You mentioned the closure of Glencourse at Penicuik and all the other barracks. It would mean the closure of the barracks in Inverness and no troops being sent to any of the air bases that are being vacated; it would mean a total concentration on Faslane, which you said was an illogical deployment, and that would be done only for community reasons, as it were, not military ones.

Dr O'Brien: It would be done for political reasons. If you are going to have one big base, you wouldn't want it there.

Q1428 Chair: Let us suppose for the sake of argument that the Scottish Government were being rational in military terms. If the attack submarines and nuclear-armed submarines are removed, the expansion by 50% that is scheduled does not take place, and the minesweepers there to protect the submarines and all the Royal Marines go, it is difficult to see rationally what remains.

Dr O'Brien: Having studied it, I quite like the Danish model. The Danes have developed two naval bases. You could expand them in Scottish terms to make them naval and military, one of which focuses on domestic security-patrolling. That would be on the east coast.

Q1429 Chair: That would be Rosyth, presumably.

Dr O'Brien: It could be Rosyth, Inverness or Aberdeen. Rosyth would be the natural place, but it would be somewhere on the east. As a NATO power, what they have done is specialise certain areas of international deployment and their humanitarian and evacuation forces in the other base. That would be the kind of thing you would want to have in Faslane-an international NATO-based force.

Q1430 Chair: Is all that affordable within the parameter of £2.5 billion?

Dr O'Brien: Yes. It would certainly be smaller than Faslane is now. That split force is affordable. The Danes spend a little less than that, but it would mean that, with the Navy and Army, Faslane would probably be 2,000 to 3,000, not 6,500.

Q1431 Chair: That would mean the closure of Inverness, Penicuik and all those.

Dr O'Brien: Certainly, or a drastic scaling down.

Chair: That is helpful.

Q1432 Mr Reid: Would it cost much to develop Rosyth to enable it to be used as one of the naval bases?

Dr O'Brien: I don't know. I don't want to guess at a figure. There are the historic docks there. Rebasings surface ships as opposed to submarines is not that difficult. My guess is that it could be done with a reasonable expense, but I do not want to put a price on it.

Q1433 Pamela Nash: To come back to the SNP's resolution on NATO, they state that the budget will be £2.5 billion. They also mention that this is more than is currently spent in Scotland, but clearly at the moment Scotland benefits from the entire UK defence budget, which is 10 times that, not just the budget spent in Scotland. We are discussing here costs in terms of jobs and base closures, which are extraordinarily important and one of the focuses of our inquiry. As someone who lives in Scotland, I also want to know the cost in terms of the security of a Scotland separate from the UK.

In terms of the Danish model that you put forward and what the SNP envisaged-the vague vision that they have given us of a possible future Scottish defence force-what are the risks for Scotland and what are the threats that we need to anticipate that will not be covered by this force?

Dr O'Brien: The international risks to Scotland.

Pamela Nash: Yes.



Dr O'Brien: The one international risk to Scotland is partly protected for you now by Norway and NATO. That would be a dispute involving Russia over oil in the North sea. The only reasonable threat-and, even then, I would argue it is an unlikely one, in the short to medium term-would be some kind of dispute in the north over the oilfields, but Scotland would not get involved in that on its own. You might say there is a potential terrorist threat to the oil rigs and oilfields. That would be one.

You can go down the Irish route, which is fascinating. If you become a non-NATO country, in a sense you have almost no military. You have no aircraft; you have eight large patrol boats; you have 10,000 people, and you spend €1 billion, and that's it. To Ireland, £2.5 billion would be an extraordinary figure. You might say that Ireland is secure; the United Kingdom and NATO provide that security to it. I am not saying that Scotland needs to have a large military. I think it could be secure in the short to medium term following an Irish route. What it could not argue is that it could protect anywhere near the number of jobs it has now or the industry. You would have to say, "We will save money by spending a little," but a lot of these jobs will go.

Q1434 Pamela Nash: What about the figures that they have stated? They want to keep 15,000 regular personnel and 5,000 reserves.

Dr O'Brien: You need the £2.5 billion to get to that. The Irish have about 10,000 for €1 billion, but they are in the extraordinary situation of having almost no equipment. The Irish military is a salary-paying body; about 80% to 85% of its money is paid in salary or pensions.

Q1435 Chair: I understand the point about the £2.5 billion, but we are being told that all current bases will be retained and the Air Force will be at Lossiemouth and Leuchars. You referred to concentrating things at Faslane. It is a question of these incompatibilities between, on the one hand, £2.5 billion and keeping Faslane the size it is, and, on the other hand, keeping all the bases at their existing level and all the existing regiments. I am sorry. It is: "Regular ground forces will include current Scottish raised and restored UK regiments." We are not clear whether that means reestablishing the Argylls and the Sutherland Highlanders, or whether they will just be restored as two battalions or a full battalion. None of that is clear. It seems to me that all these things cannot be done at the same time. Is that reasonable?

Dr O'Brien: You are operating with the nexus of the contradiction of domestic politics and strategic need. The domestic political need says, "We are going to keep all these bases open." I do not want to say it would be an exceptional model, but it would be an unusual one if Scotland did that. If Scotland declared independence, kept defence spending at a very high level and kept all these facilities open, many of them would serve a purpose very different from how they have been developed to serve. It is unlikely that they would keep anything like all the aircraft they keep up at Lossiemouth; they would have to redevelop it. They could do it, but my guess is that domestic political pressure in the long run will lead to a much slimmed-down military, which tends to be what happens.

Q1436 Chair: It has been suggested to us that, if you have the idea of the current Scottish raised and restored UK regiments, which presumably are all of the Royal Scots, plus the Scots Guards-there is a debate about whether or not the Coldstream Guards are Scottish, depending on how you define "Coldstream"-you will end up with a parade ground army, which basically has enormous numbers that can march about but does not have the infrastructure and support behind it to do anything.

Lindsay Roy: It is ceremonial.

Chair: Basically, it is ceremonial. Is that a reasonable assessment?

Dr O'Brien: If you wanted to keep all those infantrymen employed and paid good salaries, you would probably have to economise on equipment purchases. They would have a more limited role—something akin to the Irish situation.

Q1437 Chair: One of our previous visitors told us that they thought in those sorts of circumstances that the Scottish forces would be less attractive as a career option to young men and women in the existing Scottish forces, or in the rest of the British Army, on the basis that they were not likely to be doing very much or going anywhere. It would tend to be those near the end of their service who wanted, as it were, a quieter life. They didn't think it was entirely fair to describe it as a "Dad's Army", but they did see it as being a different pattern of personnel from the rest of the British Army. Is that fair?

Dr O'Brien: It would certainly attract a different personality. Actually the Irish Army does deploy overseas in UN missions quite a lot. If you join the Irish Army, you don't sit in home barracks the whole time. You would spend a lot of your career going on different missions. It will not attract those who perhaps want to fight. In Ireland, certain communities tend to produce the soldiers who go through the role. It would not perhaps have the general pull for those who want to fight, but it would still be able to offer some kind of international experience.

Q1438 Chair: When Ireland deploys troops to the UN, what sort of things do they deploy? Do they deploy fully-formed brigades or sections? Are they self-sustaining or are they providing feet on the ground, with the United States or somebody else providing all the logistics, transport and everything else? An infantry-heavy Scottish Army could provide feet on the ground with rifles, but then be dependent for artillery and everything else on somebody else. That is a feasible model, isn't it?

Dr O'Brien: I don't want to say I am 100% expert on this, but the Irish Army does not deploy tanks; it would deploy light armoured personnel carriers. I can't believe it would deploy much artillery, so it would tend to be responsible for boots in the armoured personnel carriers in those deployments.

Q1439 Chair: If you want an all-arms force, it doesn't seem to me—having those sorts of numbers and all the regiments, all within £2.5 billion, and keeping all the bases open and Faslane at its existing level of employment—that that can be done.

Dr O'Brien: As a non-NATO country, I would have to say absolutely not. As a NATO country playing a full role in the alliance, you would slim down the infantry, keep the aircraft and naval vessels, and have a smaller version of what you have now.

Q1440 Chair: If a separate Scotland joins NATO, the pressure will be on it to slim down the Army—the existing regiments.

Dr O'Brien: It depends on the role. If you look at the difference between NATO and nonNATO, in the cases I have looked at, the NATO members spend considerably more. Denmark and Norway spend more than New Zealand and Ireland. That is because they have more equipment; that is where the real price difference between those militaries occurs. They have a larger military in numbers, but the

real difference is that they keep combat air wings and larger naval vessels. If Scotland was to join NATO, I think the Danish model is best. It would develop certain niches requiring equipment within NATO. It would probably not develop an armoured deployment capability within NATO. It would be hard to see it keeping these regiments going as the fighting edge of the NATO alliance, but it would more likely concentrate on certain maritime or air operations just because of where Scotland is located.

Professor Walker: I offer the thought that, as part of my career, I spent some time researching and writing about Sellafield in Cumbria, where you have a big concentration of employment in one particular part. It is not a base, of course, but an industrial site. Sometimes they prevent economic regeneration. One shouldn't assume that simply removing employment by running down bases means that in the long run that area of the country can't be regenerated and probably more sustainable industries and economic activities can't be developed there. Around Faslane, there is a point that that whole area of Scotland could be regenerated in very interesting ways.

Q1441 Chair: We understand the possibilities of regeneration if Faslane is run down, but it is the largest single employer in that area, so we want to say to people that this is the option. It is particularly helpful to have clarified that Fort George and some of the barracks at Penicuik and so on might have to shut to keep Faslane at its present size. There are very real choices to be made.

In terms of the budget-you mentioned equipment-would the construction of up to half a dozen submarines, in addition to everything else, be doable within the £2.5 billion? The six submarines would not keep the shipyards going all that long because they need a vessel a year to keep going, at least for the Type 26, and that would require closures elsewhere. They have never built a submarine. How realistic is it to say that the Clyde yards would be reformulated in order to build four submarines as a one-off?

Dr O'Brien: Again, it could be done. They would probably build Norwegian-type submarines, which were built with the Germans. The Norwegian submarines came out of German-Norwegian collaboration and that was how they were constructed. My guess is that they would not be wholly-built Scottish submarines; they would be built in collaboration with another country. You would want to have more of them and say, "We're building more than just a run for ourselves." If you were building just four or six for Scotland, they would end up being very expensive one-offs, and I do not think that that would be an efficient way to spend your money.

Chair: We are going to meet the shipyards in due course and we will discuss it with them.

Q1442 Lindsay Roy: If you went ahead with four to six submarines, how would that impact on the budget?

Dr O'Brien: They come off the line. You might produce one a year, so it is more a matter of how long the production cycle is than a one-off payment to start. You wouldn't produce all six at a time; you would produce them consecutively.

Q1443 Lindsay Roy: Are you saying that, without them, you would be dependent on others to protect your strategic assets, like the North sea development?

Dr O'Brien: You don't need submarines at this point to protect the North sea assets; you need surface vessels, helicopters and air power. The Norwegians build and man submarines because they are worried about the Russian submarines on their coast. The Russians spend a lot of time in Norwegian territorial waters.

Q1444 Lindsay Roy: Would Scotland then be dependent on others for the security of these strategic assets, or could it cope on its own?

Dr O'Brien: I am talking about this within the context of a NATO Scotland. In my view, if it becomes non-NATO, none of this will be built. If Scotland goes non-NATO, it is going the Ireland and New Zealand route and it won't spend anything like this. It will not build submarines. It might keep two Type 23 frigates going or something like that. This is being said within the context of the NATO alliance.

Q1445 Lindsay Roy: A NATO nuclear alliance.

Dr O'Brien: Yes, absolutely; NATO is a nuclear alliance. You could provide excellent security to Scotland within NATO if Scotland plays its full role in the alliance.

Q1446 Chair: To finish off the section about the removal of the submarines and so on, perhaps I can ask about "Continuous At Sea Deterrence" and how and whether it is achievable in a situation where you are potentially moving from one location to another with the existing four boats, or if it is just simply not doable?

Professor Walker: It depends on how long you are going to take to do this and how you manage the transition. If it is a question of the replacement submarines going somewhere else and you are building up a replacement fleet in other bases, you can manage the transition so that you phase out an old submarine and bring in a new one, although it is located elsewhere. I can imagine it working. If you are doing it rather suddenly and rapidly, it is hard to imagine. There would be periods in which there was no deterrent operating in those circumstances but, again, it is a matter of how it is phased and managed. You could imagine it working; in other scenarios it wouldn't work.

Q1447 Chair: One of the issues that we want the people of Scotland to be clear about is that, unless you have a 20-year period allowing for the build-up, effectively you are having unilateral nuclear disarmament, at least for a period, imposed upon Britain.

Professor Walker: Yes.

Q1448 Chair: I just wanted to get that on the record.

Professor Walker: I would like to say something about the international reaction to that and the debates that would go on in the context of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Is this a good time to say something about that?

Chair: Yes; that is helpful.

Professor Walker: These would be very unusual circumstances. As you know, the UK is a nuclear-weapon state member of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and has legal rights to maintain nuclear weapons under that treaty. If Scotland becomes independent, there is no question that it will have



to become a non-nuclear-weapon state member of that treaty. I think the Scottish Government have declared their interest in that. There is no question that internationally any other route would be accepted.

As again you are aware, the UK would be legally entitled under the treaty to base nuclear weapons in a nonnuclear-weapon state, but in this case it would be the entire strategic force.

Within the NPT context, the question of nuclear possession and disarmament is extremely controversial, and a large majority of states in the world are pressing very hard on the nuclear-weapon states to reduce their forces and even to disarm, particularly in the non-aligned movement. If the UK was seen to be imposing nuclear weapons on a non-nuclear Scotland, it would have to handle it very carefully. Internationally, one can imagine that the American, French and perhaps some NATO Governments would put pressure, perhaps indirectly, on Scotland to play with the UK and try to reach an accommodation and accept these things for quite a long time. If Scotland said no and it wanted them out faster than that, it would find it had quite a lot of support internationally for that position. If the UK, which has been in the forefront of pressing for nuclear disarmament internationally, was seen to be trying to impose nuclear weapons on Scotland for a very long time against its will, it would have to handle that very carefully internationally and might find that it provoked a lot of resistance.

A lot of people have raised the question of the UK continuing in membership of the UN Security Council. The rest of the UK would have no legal right of succession as a permanent member of the UN Security Council. It would be a political decision by the other members and the international community as to whether it inherited the right of the UK in that context. I suspect that it would gain that right and keep its seat in the UN Security Council.

But a point made to me by a Brazilian Government diplomat and others from this kind of community is that, if the UK decided to give up its nuclear weapons, it would probably do more to secure its position as a permanent member. Seriously, many countries in the world would love to see a permanent member of the UN Security Council that did not have nuclear weapons. They would also very much welcome the idea of the UK taking the lead in promoting nuclear disarmament-not just a lot of rhetoric and admittedly some very good work with the Norwegians and others in preparing the ground for nuclear disarmament.

All I am saying is that, internationally, the community of states out there would be very divided on this, and you might find that a lot of them are very sympathetic to the Scots and unsympathetic to the British Government, particularly if they tried to coerce the Scots into accepting what they don't want.

Q1449 Chair: The difficulty we have with some of these issues is that in a sense they are clearly for Britain rather than the Scottish side of things. Therefore, these are issues for the Defence and Foreign Affairs Select Committees rather than the Scottish Affairs Committee to pronounce upon.

Your argument that Britain does not automatically succeed to this seat on the UN Security Council begs a number of questions, which we have heard about from a number of witnesses, about succession and whether or not the UK remains as the UK, as it were, and Scotland is split off, or

there are two successor countries. This is the same argument about membership of the EU and a number of other things. We are conscious of that.

Can I seek clarification from you on the question of "against its will"? I can see how, if the British Army arrived in Faslane with tanks and guns and defended it against any attempt by the Scottish forces to remove it, that is clearly against its will. On the other hand, if it is part of a deal whereby Scotland comes to an arrangement and, in return for being allowed to retain the pound, it agrees to keep the nuclear weapons on the Clyde for a while, is that against its will, assuming it is a negotiation willingly entered into and eventually it is agreed, even though, as with most negotiations, it does not get everything it wants? It is the question of what "against its will" means.

Professor Walker: I agree there would be a great deal of linkage between the issues. If the UK Government said, "One of our red lines is that we want to replace Trident and the replacement will be located at Coulport and Faslane, full stop", and the Scottish Government wouldn't accept that and there was intransigence on both sides, the UK Government's position on that would not necessarily be welcomed internationally.

Q1450 Chair: I understand that, but that is only if there is a complete impasse and everything else collapses round about it, and this is unlikely to be negotiated on its own.

Professor Walker: Yes.

Q1451 Chair: If this is seen to be a deal breaker and the deals break down on both sides around here and around this, I can see that. However, if there are negotiations and the Scottish Government depart from the 24 months, which is the speediest that it can be done, and do so willingly-if not enthusiastically but freely, because it is part of a bigger deal-surely that could not be counted as being against its will.

Professor Walker: You are completely right, yes, but the international hope will be that the two sides could negotiate an agreement on this. They might express their views in the corridors, but that would be their hope and they would not grandstand on that.

Q1452 Chair: I would have thought it would be the complete NATO gang, or most of them, expressing one view and the non-aligned-the third world and so on-expressing a different view. Opinion is likely to be mixed in these circumstances. We have touched on questions about whether or not being a member of NATO is incompatible with insisting upon nuclear weapons being removed. Is a fair way of putting it that it is not incompatible but there would be tremendous difficulties?

Professor Walker: Except that the circumstances are different. These are tactical weapons and that is part of extended deterrence. It is a different situation where it is strategic weapons and not part of extended deterrence.

Q1453 Chair: You mentioned earlier countries not having strategic weapons in other states. Did not the Americans have strategic weapons in Turkey at one point, and the Russians wanted to have them in Cuba? Surely there are circumstances where people have strategic weapons on other states.

Professor Walker: But it is largely in the past. It is certainly true that the Americans had their weapons at Holy Loch.

Q1454 Chair: There are clear precedents for this. It is largely in the past because weapons have longer ranges and are more accurate, so they don't need to be in Turkey or Cuba any more. The targets can be reached from home countries, but the principle of basing furth of your own hasn't been ruled out, as I understand it.

Professor Walker: All I say is that the politics of nuclear weapons in Germany in NATO are different from what the politics would be of UK weapons in Scotland in NATO. The nuclear weapons in Germany were tactical, and it is all tied up with the question of Russian tactical weapons in Estonia and the Baltic states and a whole lot of politics around it, which are very distinctive. That is why the Germans have changed their position on this. This would be a different situation. You might arrive at the same conclusion that it is very difficult for the Scots to get out of this if they are part of NATO. It is simply a different kind of circumstance.

Q1455 Chair: No circumstances are ever exactly the same. Coming to Germany, since you have raised it, my understanding is that the Germans have said they would like to have NATO's nuclear weapons removed, and they have been obliged to back down and they have been or will be retained. The fact that they are tactical rather than strategic doesn't seem to be the issue of substance here. Germany, which is a great deal stronger than a separate Scotland is likely to be, wanted to remove nuclear weapons and because of international pressure has now bent the knee. Is that a fair assessment?

Professor Walker: Yes, but these are part of American forces in Europe, and it is to do with extended deterrence and America providing umbrellas to European countries against the possibility of Russian misbehaviour, basically. In this case it is not to do with extended deterrence. There is no question of the UK providing extended deterrence to Scotland. I don't think that is what it is about.

The degree to which the UK deterrent is extended to other European countries is very opaque. There is language about it being assigned to NATO, but what exactly is that? Perhaps you are very clear about it, but I am not. One consequence of this whole debate might be that the UK would have to clarify its position. What exactly does it mean by assigning its nuclear weapons to NATO? Is it providing guarantees to other countries? What are the implications of withdrawing the UK's nuclear deterrent from NATO? There are lots of issues around this that are very unclear, but it is a rather different circumstance.

Q1456 Chair: I accept that circumstances are never exactly the same, but I want to come back to the German parallel. If Germany, which is much bigger and economically stronger than Scotland, finds itself in a position of being unable to insist on the removal of nuclear weapons from its territory, will not Scotland be in the same position? It will not just be a dialogue with the UK. Presumably, if it seeks to joins NATO, it will be a dialogue with the whole of NATO.

Professor Walker: Your basic position is probably correct. Scotland would have difficulty within NATO. On the other hand, the NATO countries will be quite divided on this, as they have been on the question of tactical weapons. You would not find a single, uniform NATO position on this. You will

find the Norwegians taking up one position and possibly the Germans and Americans, in particular, taking up another. The politics around this will be quite complicated.

Q1457 Chair: It has been very complicated, but Germany has caved in. Do you think that Scotland might be able to stand up where Germany has fallen over?

Professor Walker: No, I am not saying it would; I think it would be very difficult for Scotland, too.

Q1458 Chair: Do people apply to join NATO? If the two states separate, would the rest of the United Kingdom end up outside NATO in the event of a split, or would it remain in NATO with Scotland outside and having to join? What is your view?

Dr O'Brien: My understanding is that, if the United Kingdom remains the United Kingdom and Scotland leaves, Scotland will have to apply, but I am not an international lawyer; I am a military historian.

Q1459 Chair: But, as we have said before, you are here.

Dr O'Brien: Yes, I am here. Scotland would not have automatic membership of NATO. The United Kingdom is a member, and Scotland would have to apply. It could be fast-tracked.

Q1460 Chair: Some Members have other commitments and must leave. As I have said before, I've got to be away by nine, so we will try to finish by then.

I think we have covered the future role for Faslane if all the nuclear submarines had to leave. Are there any other points about Faslane or Rosyth that we have not touched on? One thing we always have to explain to people is: never assume that we know the basics. We would much rather be insulted by having very simple things explained to us than run the risk of them being overlooked. If there is anything basic about Faslane and Rosyth that we have not looked at, by all means tell us. We have covered the need for a base on the east coast, the size of it and so on. If we have covered everything, I am not necessarily dragging it out.

Do you have any views about procurement? Earlier you touched on the need to keep the shipyards and so on, and as the member for Govan I am particularly keen on that. There is a possibility of the Type 26 order being given to the Clyde. That would give 13 or more years of work, plus any export work that comes up, and then we are on to the next wave. Potentially, on the positive side, you have shipbuilding on the Clyde for the next 40 years guaranteed through the Royal Navy.

Our assumption has been that separation would shut the shipyards because the rest of the UK would not place orders. You have suggested that they might possibly order some submarines, but since the Clyde has never built submarines, I would have thought the costs would be prohibitive. Given EU procurement rules, one would have thought that the cost advantage would be to throw it open and simply buy them in from elsewhere. Therefore, most of the firms dependent on UK orders-whether it is the yards, Thales, SELEX or Raytheon-would end up moving south. As somebody said, they would just follow the money in order to be within the UK market and get the opportunity for preferential treatment. Does all that seem a reasonable set of assumptions to you, or is there something that you think we are missing?



Professor Walker: My colleague knows more about this. I personally would not necessarily cry about this if I was in Scotland. In the UK, the defence industrial base is too large a part of our industrial base and has been too protected for too long. Governments have been too obsessed with protecting it over the years. We know that so much of the rest of the industrial base has gone. So, if I were in the Scottish Government, I would be focusing not on maintaining the military industrial base, but on trying to develop other areas of economic activity. Of course they would like to maintain expertise, but to lose some defence industries is not necessarily a negative thing, particularly if they are not heavily involved in the defence market.

To throw in one other thought on Trident, Scotland doesn't benefit tremendously from it in terms of procurement. It is nearly all in England, the United States or elsewhere. That is just a fact of the situation.

Q1461 Chair: That is the construction rather than the running of it.

Professor Walker: The construction and manufacturing of Trident is mostly outside Scotland, which is one reason why the whole replacement programme is not hugely beneficial to Scotland.

Dr O'Brien: Speaking about what has happened in countries of a size similar to Scotland, since the economic downturn there has been a decided shift to buying as much home-grown stuff as you can. People are not placing orders outside their own country, if at all possible. In fact they are delaying the buying of weapon systems if it means purchasing them from another country.

A country like Scotland might assume it will get a large number of orders for military equipment from outside, but getting those orders would be unusual in the present procurement climate, when all the domestic pressure is to go the other way. In fact what has happened is that a lot of the countries have been trying to build up their own export industries at this time-the Austrians in small arms and the Swedes in armoured personnel carriers. Countries like Scotland are all trying to get into this business and it is not working, but they are certainly not buying from others. The domestic pressure from the outside would be to limit orders in Scottish shipyards, and I think that would happen in the rest of the United Kingdom. It would be very unusual if the rest of the United Kingdom kept large ship orders on the Clyde, if Scotland left the United Kingdom.

Q1462 Chair: Do you think that would apply to companies like SELEX, Thales, Raytheon and all the rest of them?

Dr O'Brien: It depends on the kinds of weapons. Within the context of the European Union, if they can manufacture and ship anywhere, it might not immediately apply, but often there are quid pro quos for giving these orders: "We'll give you these orders, Raytheon, but you must make them close by." In that situation, unless Scotland wishes to spend a huge amount on the military, the pressure will be to get the jobs out, but is that a bad thing? We don't know.

Q1463 Chair: We have a budget starting off at £2.5 billion, and we have mentioned perhaps the over-provision of infantry and so on. That doesn't leave all that much for capital spending on equipment, does it? Scotland will not be a big buyer, and therefore the issue about quid pro quos isn't likely to be a big driver.

Dr O'Brien: With the Type 26, they could perhaps reach a deal with the rest of the United Kingdom that said, "We'll buy four; you buy eight." Therefore, construction is split between the Clyde and somewhere else. That would be economically quite sensible, if you could reach that deal. The more you can build of any weapons system, the cheaper it will be. I think the question is: what happens after that with weapons not now in the pipeline? The question will be: why would anyone place orders in Scotland? That would be a hard question to answer.

Q1464 Chair: Just off the top of my head, I would have thought that the cost of something like four Type 26s is likely to be totally out of Scotland's reach, and presumably it is far greater capacity than Scotland would need. You mentioned earlier the Type 23. Maybe the Type 45, or something like that, will be part of the divvying up. You don't want a tenth of an aircraft carrier, so you would swap it for something else. It might end up with a Type 45, but I would have thought a Type 26 is far more capacity than it needed

Dr O'Brien: I assume it would be a slimmed-down Type 26 without all the weapons systems. A fully developed Type 26 is a far greater warship than Scotland needs, or any other country the size of Scotland maintains.

Q1465 Chair: It would be the basic model, as it were.

Dr O'Brien: You could use the same hull with a much reduced weapons system.

Q1466 Chair: Colleagues, are there any other points that you want to raise? I think we have gone through all the things that we want to bring up. We always ask at the end whether or not there are any answers you have prepared to questions that we have not asked—things you came with that you wanted to place on the table, but we haven't given you the opportunity to raise.

Professor Walker: Perhaps I can have a minute to say that the issue perplexing me recently is what negotiation takes place, and what the objective of the two Governments is, in the immediate aftermath of a yes vote. In the defence, security and nuclear context, if, first off, you have a framework agreement negotiated between Edinburgh and London, which I think would be the first step before the big detailed negotiations happened, what exactly would have to go into that framework agreement? What basic principles would you apply and what level of detail would you have to go into in that framework agreement? Internationally, it would be expected that, first off, London and Edinburgh would agree some basic principles on what they are trying to achieve. That would be the first step before going out into the world and gaining recognition in the UN, sorting out NATO and EU issues and all the rest of it. The two Governments would have to come together to decide on some basic principles on what they are trying to achieve.

I can tell you that, in a nuclear context, there will be a lot of pressure internationally for some clarity on exactly what is entailed here. I guess that both Scotland and the rest of the UK would also wish to express clear opinions at that stage. There would need to be careful examination as to how this process would work and what kind of framework agreement would have to be developed between the two Governments before we went out into the world and tried to sort out these other international issues.

Q1467 Chair: Why do you make the assumption that the framework agreement could begin to be negotiated only once the vote was over? Look at this from the perspective of a voter. I don't know whether or not you are, but you will be a voter.

Professor Walker: Yes.

Chair: It's this point about a pig in a poke. Presumably, you want to know as much of this beforehand rather than suddenly find out after the vote has taken place—for the sake of argument, say it has been a yes vote—that maybe the Government are doing things or are prepared to settle for things that you are not willing to accept. Why should the Scottish Government's position about what they seek to achieve not be clear beforehand, with an initial response from the UK about whether or not some of these things are acceptable, so that people have an idea of the pattern of negotiation that might then occur, rather than just going into it blind?

Professor Walker: Things will certainly be clarified between now and whenever in 2014, but I can imagine that, just on the Trident nuclear issue, the two positions are poles apart. In coming together after the yes vote, the question is how you draw together these positions and over what time frame—and can you? I can't imagine the Ministry of Defence, for instance, entering into an open public debate on this issue. They haven't shown any willingness to do it so far, and I don't think they will.

Q1468 Chair: Remember that the Ministry of Defence were the people who told us that getting from A to B would depend on how fast the plane was flying. Ministers are a trifle more forthcoming and available on some of these things. Has any work been done on that? Is there a model to which we can make reference?

Professor Walker: In Edinburgh there has been discussion by constitutional experts and so on about it happening. This will all take time. These are the kinds of issues that people will be wrestling with over the coming months and the next two years.

Q1469 Chair: For example, are there precedents in the break-up of Czechoslovakia and how that was dealt with, or the break-up of the Soviet Union, or the international agreements between Russia and the Ukraine about nuclear weapons, and the Baltic states and so on?

Professor Walker: Again, these things tend to be unique to certain circumstances. I remember one statistic from the break-up of Czechoslovakia. There were 27 broad agreements and 2,000 smaller agreements.

Q1470 Chair: I thought there were 27,000 agreements, but I get the idea.

Professor Walker: The negotiating capacity of the Scots, in particular, is going to be extremely stretched.

Q1471 Chair: It is going to be a huge job creation function for lawyers, isn't it?

Professor Walker: Exactly.

Chair: Of which I am not one, thank goodness.

I think we have drawn matters to a close. Could I thank you very much for coming along? What we have heard from you has been very useful. We intend to produce a report pretty quickly on some of these things as a means of stimulating further discussion, but if, once you get out of here, you suddenly remember something you wish you had said, or if you come across something that you think would assist us, it would be very helpful if you let us have it either in writing or by speaking to one of our staff, because we see this very much as an ongoing exercise.

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