

CLUB NEWS IN BRIEF

Protocol explained to WDS

The Women in Diplomatic Service got an insider's perspective on the workings of the Protocol Directorate over lunch with Simon Martin, the FCO Director of Protocol, and were able to quiz him on the FCO's interpretation of diplomatic privileges and immunities.



WDS members and FCO Director of Protocol Simon Martin

Guerilla diplomacy

Daryl Copeland, author of the bestseller *Guerrilla Diplomacy: Rethinking International Relations* was the guest speaker at an event organised by the Diplomatic Press Attachés' Association of London.

The former Canadian diplomat told press attachés that a modern 'backpack' diplomat needed be resilient, tech-savvy and comfortable in the public sphere.

Mr Copeland also introduced the concept of 'smart' power, in which soft and hard power work together within a broader definition of security.

He said this approach was more effective at preventing trans-national, non-conventional threats, such as terrorism, climate change or organised crime and argued that public funds would be better spent on trained, skilled diplomats rather than on increased defence budgets.



Daryl Copeland talks to press attachés

CONSULAR CORPS DISCUSS CONCERNS WITH UKBA DIRECTOR OF RETURNS

Consuls demand more access to UKBA

Consuls have appealed for better cooperation with the UK Border Agency, saying they felt like "ping-pong balls" when seeking information from the organisation.

Their frustration with the agency emerged at a recent meeting of the Consular Corps, where consuls were able to discuss their concerns with Alan Kittle, the Director of Returns at the UKBA.

In particular officials were said they found it difficult to obtain information from the UKBA about the deportation of foreign offenders who had served out their custodial sentences.

Mr Kittle explained that the UK does not provide information on the reception or the return of foreign offenders without their permission, unless the country has signed a data-sharing Bilateral Consular Agreement with the UK.

Consuls pointed out that when foreign nationals were being prepared for deportation, insufficient background checks were conducted by the UKBA to establish the true identity of returning nationals in order for the consulate to issue emergency travel documents.

Some were concerned that a high pro-



Alan Kittle of the UKBA briefs consuls

portion – up to a third of the emergency travel documents issued by consulates – were not used due to legal proceedings.

Consuls also questioned the timing of the recent decision to create a separate UK Border Force under the direct control of the Home Office, following border security lapses last summer. They expressed concerns that this would have a negative impact on airport congestion during the 2012 Olympics.

Mr Kittle said the recommendation to create a separate border force was because the UKBA had become "too unwieldy".

But he assured consuls that although the UK Border Force had a separate command reporting directly to ministers at the Home Office, it was "business as usual" at the UKBA.

AERL MEETS HEAD OF GLA STRATEGIC PROJECTS

London mayor to get financial control

No matter who wins the race for City Hall on 3 May, London's next Mayor is likely to have more powers over the capital's taxes and revenues, economic attachés learned.

Speaking at a meeting of the Association of Economic Representatives in London, Jeremy Skinner, chief economist at the GLA, told diplomats that the new mayor will gain more control over London's finances, with TfL being given extra powers to receive business rates revenues.

He said that the business rates that the FCO pays on behalf of London's diplomatic missions would in future go directly into the city's coffers.

As head of strategic projects, Mr Skinner outlined to diplomats how the 2012 Olympics had been a "vanguard of regeneration"



Jeremy Skinner of the GLA briefs AERL members

in the east of the capital. He also said the relocation of the US Embassy to Nine Elms, south of the Thames, had catalysed huge redevelopment in Battersea.

He explained how largescale infrastructure projects, such as Crossrail and the extension of a branch of the Northern Line in Battersea, would catalyse future economic growth in deprived parts of the city.