

select committees ROUNDUP

Words: Tony Grew

Brand shakes up committee corridor

Actor Russell Brand provided some lively evidence to the Home Affairs Select Committee on Tuesday, and managed to raise a smile with jokes about Theresa May and David Winnick.

The Hollywood star, who saw the press line up outside Parliament for his arrival, was giving evidence on drug policy, and spoke frankly about his experiences with heroin.

Mr Brand has been arrested 12 times for drug possession and entered

rehab, which he said helped him kick his addiction.

He told the committee that treatment and not criminalisation is the best way to deal with drug use.

“A good number of times I was arrested was simply for possession and the administrative costs of that would be better spent, I think, on education and addressing the costs of treatment,” he said.

“If you have the condition of addiction there is help available for you and I recommend abstinence-based recovery.



“I think some people can safely take drugs, I think they can. As long as it doesn't turn them into criminals or harm their health then I don't feel as if it's any of my business.”

At times the chair of the committee

OUR DIRTY SECRET? GETTING TO GRIPS WITH NATIONAL GREENHOUSE GAS OUTSOURCING



Baran Doda
Grantham Research Institute
on Climate Change and the
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Hundreds of UK companies enhance performance by outsourcing abroad. A report by the House of Commons Select Committee on Energy and Climate Change shows that we have unwittingly been doing the same with our greenhouse gas emissions. The Committee's report, *Consumption-Based Emissions Reporting*, finds that despite the UK's success in reducing territorial emissions, we are importing significantly more emissions than ever before because

we have shifted the production of many domestically consumed goods abroad, particularly to China. This highlights

“ The climate change problem will not be resolved unless developing countries achieve substantial decarbonisation of their own production ”

the importance of accounting for both territorial and consumption-based emissions to properly measure the UK's climate change mitigation performance and policy options.

Existing research is unambiguous in pointing towards a growing gap between the UK's consumption-based

and territorial emissions. However, using consumption-based emissions for policy development and evaluation is a daunting proposition for policy-makers, largely because their calculation is complex and assumption-laden. Take a washing machine for example: consumption-based reporting would require the carbon footprint of every screw, seal and electronic component to be measured.

This calculation would then be combined with a calculation of the emissions from assembly, transport, and usage and disposal. While it is technically possible, much of the data used is based on assumptions and averages, and therefore subject to uncertainty. So, what if the washing machine we import from China in 2012 was produced by a firm using a technology that is less carbon-intensive than the Chinese or UK industry averages

Q & A

Keith Vaz had trouble controlling the wayward star.

Mr Brand called MPs by their first names, or “mate”, and when Mr Vaz told him time was up he replied. “Time is infinite. We can’t run out of time. Who’s next? Theresa May? She may not show up. Check she knows what day it is.” Labour’s David Winnick (L, Walsall N)

“At times Keith Vaz had trouble controlling the wayward star”

then intervened and told the actor the committee was not a variety show.

“You’re providing a little bit of variety though, making it more like *Dad’s Army*,” Mr Brand quipped. 🌿

Steve McCabe on the work of the home affairs committee.

Tell me about the remit of the committee

It is a big brief and we have always got a number of inquires running simultaneously. The drugs inquiry is quite extensive, looking at all sorts of different aspects: treatment programmes, the debate on more emphasis on criminality or health assistance, the international dimension. Then you get short snapshot things like the report into the riots last summer, the report into removals of people or the US/UK extradition treaty.

This isn’t your first time on the committee

No, there was a brief period some years back when John Denham chaired it. I was only on it for a few months because I became a government whip.

Do you miss being a whip?

I enjoyed it. The Whips Office is probably the nearest thing to a ministerial team that exists in Parliament. I did it for four or five years and I knew that in opposition it was time to do something different.

What would you like the committee to look at next?

The whole question of police and business partnering. We had a very preliminary bit of evidence from my own chief constable in the West Midlands and the Surrey chief constable. They are not quite sure what they mean by business partnering. We have to know what aspects of policing can be partnered or contracted out; it is a very grey area. Other issues include surveillance, anti-social behaviour and the UKBA. 🌿

computed from the data collected several years earlier?

Even if we obtain a reasonably accurate estimate of the magnitude of consumption-based emissions, we do not yet have a clear understanding of the factors responsible for generating the sizeable gap with territorial emissions.

Is it a by-product of globalisation and associated de-industrialisation in the UK? Is it due to UK climate change policy (actual and expected), or the insatiable appetite of British consumers for economic growth? How relevant are China’s exchange rate and industrial policies? The answers to these questions are far from settled but have fundamentally different implications for policy.

Yet what is at stake is critical. As the Grantham Research Institute indicated in its submission to the inquiry, the UK’s

experience of diverging consumption-based and territorial emissions is similar to that of the United States and other developed countries. Keeping in mind that the global carbon budget is limited, these developments point to a mounting imbalance in the global system.

With the existing trends, even when, or if, developed countries decarbonise their production completely, the climate change problem will not be resolved unless developing countries achieve substantial decarbonisation of their own production on behalf of consumers in both developed and developing countries.

The evolution of separate accounting for consumption-based and territorial emissions can impart valuable information for effective and equitable policy making.

The Energy and Climate Change Committee’s recommendation that the

government should investigate the matter further with a view to incorporating consumption based-emissions in the policy process is a sensible one, and one which the UK’s independent Committee on Climate Change is best equipped to take forward. 🌿

