Education and British Soft Power- the unexplored connection

Research by ExEdUK and Wild ReSearch

Introduction

In a globalised and highly competitive world, personal networks and shared cultural references have become an increasingly important factor.

There is a growing focus by policy makers and politicians in the UK on the need to understand how these, often subtle but powerful, connections impact on the UK's political and commercial influence around the world.

The current Lord's Select Committee inquiry into the UK's Soft Power has seen repeated mentions of the importance of British education. Those involved in exporting British education – either educating international students here in the UK or in their country of origin know from experience that their alumni have often gone on to play leading roles in their country's political, business, public or cultural life. However there has been little research done which quantifies the extent of the connection between international students' experience of British education and roles in later life.

Part of the reason for this may be because the available data, is piecemeal and dispersed. There has been no comprehensive tracking of the life paths of alumni from British education in any systematic way; or indeed over any significant timeframe.

Methodology

The analysis contained in this report, therefore takes a small starting point from an established source of data to generate an indicative picture, which we believe could provide the catalyst for a more detailed and systematic piece of research in the future.

We took as our starting point Who's Who 2013, published by A&C Black. It should be borne in mind that this 'raw' data has a number of limitations:

- The entries are selected by an editorial team based on criteria which is not public
- Individuals are invited to verify the details of their entry but where this is not the case, the editorial team verify based on available data

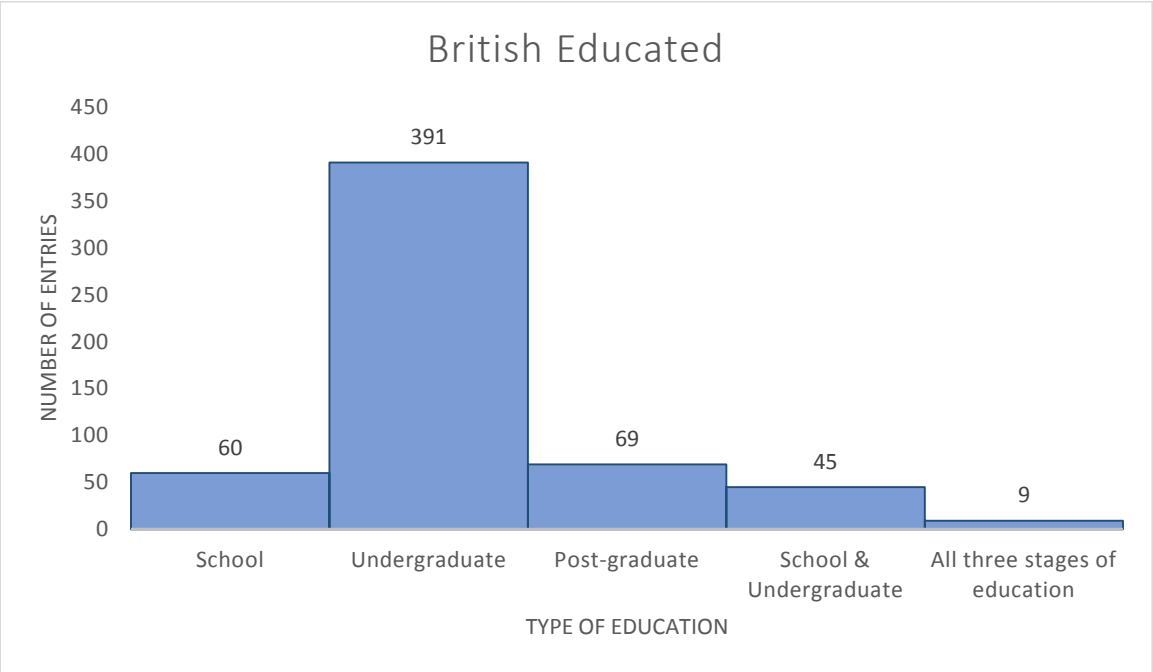
Wild ReSearch conducted a comprehensive search of the Who's Who in the World 2013 database, for mentions of British education amongst all non-UK nationals listed. ExEdUK analysed these mentions, highlighting elements which provide an indicator of where in depth, longitudinal analysis might generate useful insight.

In addition we have included an analysis of the world's Central Bank Governors and the non-UK born living winners of the Nobel Prize.

British Educated

The data trawl identified a total of 407 entries who mentioned that they had received at least one element of their education at a British institution. Of those, 60 had been to a British school, 391 had attended a British undergraduate course and 69 had attended a British postgraduate course. Of those, 45 had attended both a British school *and* a British undergraduate course; and 9 of those had *also* completed postgraduate studies in Britain.

These figures reinforce the pattern seen in official data showing that UK universities have been considered world class for many decades and securing an education at one of these universities is often a pre-requisite for those seeking to play a leading role in their own country.



Where in the World?

Those who said they received at least a proportion of their education at a British school or university come from all over the globe.

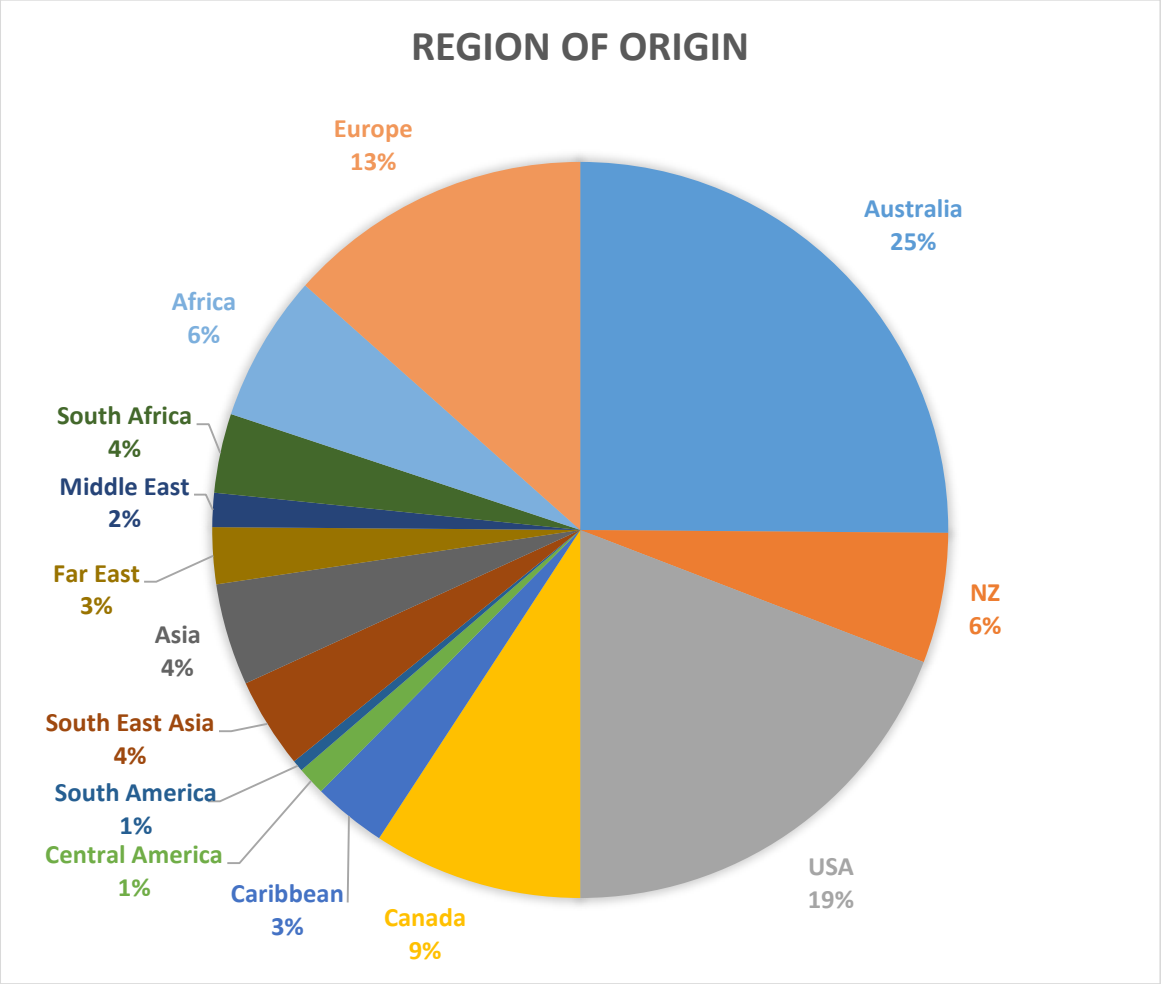
Non-UK nationals who mentioned British education came from a total of 81 different nations.

The pattern of where alumni have come from looks very different to today's pattern of student migration. This may reflect the age profile of the Who's Who entries, historical factors, changing demographics as well as the editorial decisions made by Who's Who.

Growing middle classes, with income and mobility to match, in the BRIC countries means these countries are now represented in much higher proportions in today's student intake.

The largest group in the Who's Who entries came from Australia (101 people), followed closely by the USA (77 people) and Europe (54 people). Those from Canada (37 people), Africa (26 people) and New Zealand (23 people) represented the next largest groups.

The appendix provides a full list of countries of origin and the number of entries who indicated they had a received education at a British education institution.

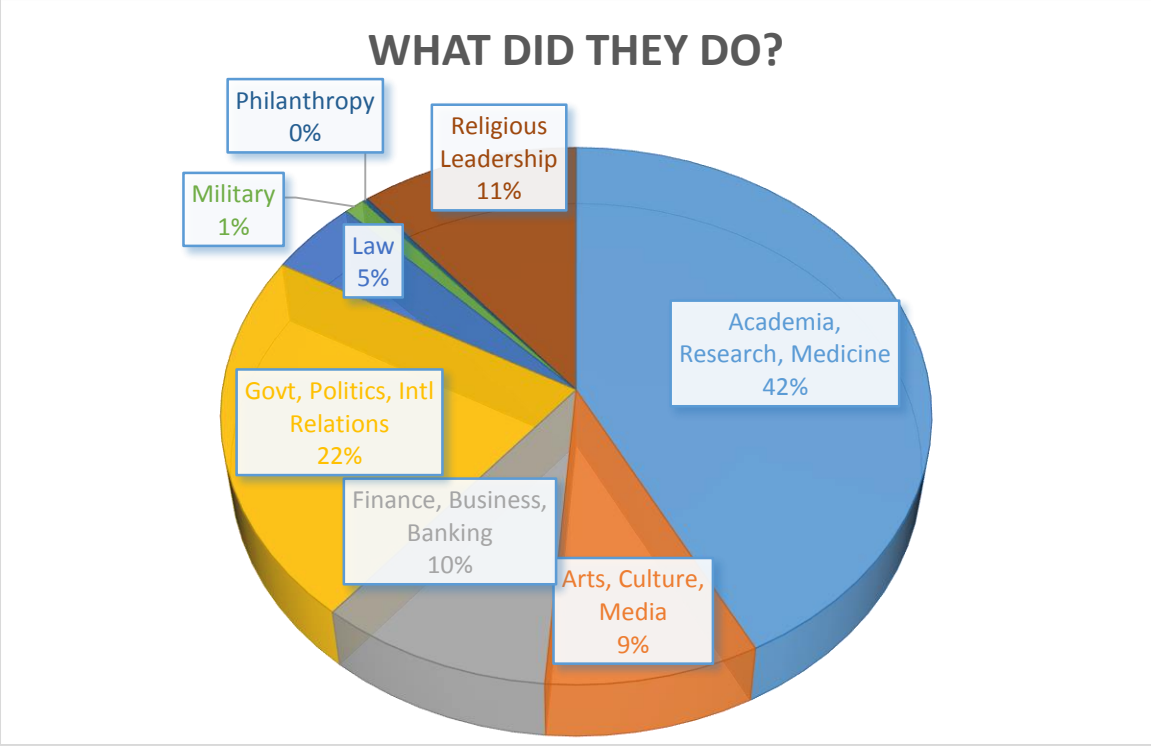


What did they do?

The alumni of British education in Who's Who, have self-evidently gone on to play leading roles in their countries of origin and, often, on the global stage.

The chart below groups the roles these people have played into the following broad areas:

- Academia, research and medicine
- Arts, culture and media
- Finance, business and banking
- Government, politics and international relations
- Law
- Military
- Religious leadership
- Philanthropy



*It should be noted that 'Philanthropy' appears as zero percent as the numbers were less than one percent of the total.

Academia, research and medicine

Within the related worlds of academia, research and medicine those that have been educated at British schools and universities take with them an academic landscape shaped by the British tradition of education, reinforcing the reputation of the sector as pre-eminent in many academic fields.

Those who returned to follow careers in academic institutions in their home countries or in other places, have in turn contributed to the development and prospects of their own nations.

It is conceivable that a virtuous cycle may have been created, generating a stream of students from around the world seeking an education in Britain which not only furthers their own career prospects but allows them to contribute to growing prospects of their own country, which is renewed for each generation.

Amongst the Who's Who entries in this genre are represented a number of Nobel Laureates. We highlight just a few here:

- Edinburgh University-educated Australian, **Professor Peter Charles Doherty**, is a Nobel Laureate in Physiology, Professor of Microbiology at the University of Melbourne. He was named Australian of the Year in 1997.

- Cambridge University-educated, American, **Professor Eric Maskin**, won a Nobel Memorial Prize for Economics in 2007. He is among those credited with "having laid the foundations of mechanism design theory".

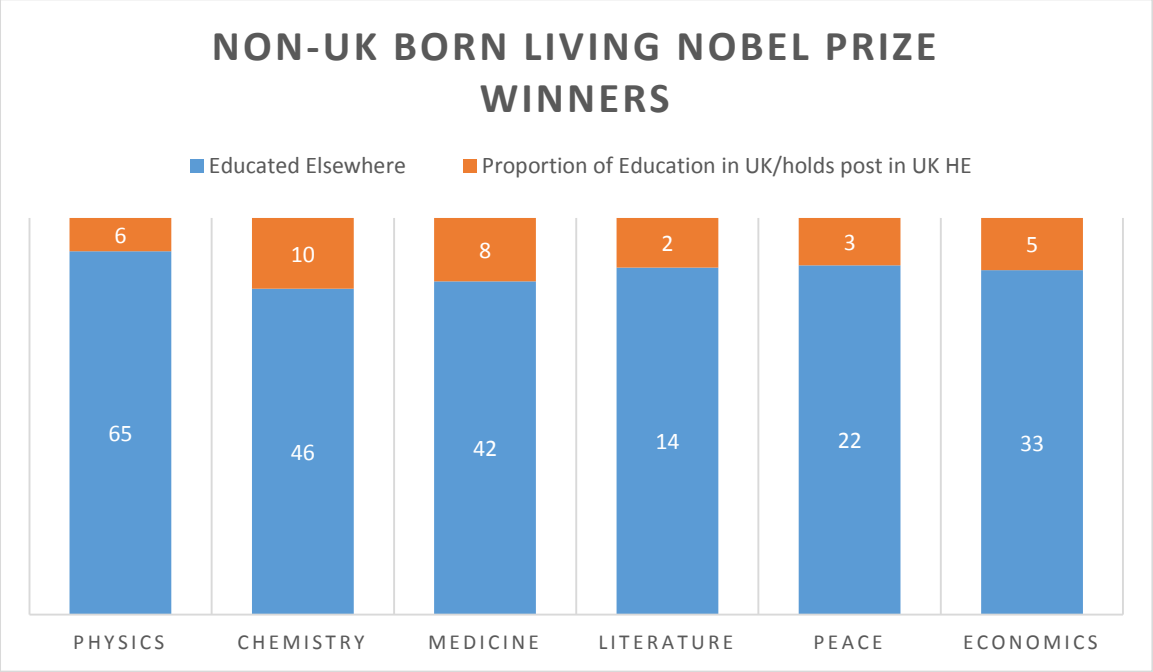
- LSE-educated, **Professor Robert Mundell**, won a Nobel Prize for Economics in 1999. He is known as the "father" of the Euro, as he laid the groundwork for its introduction through this work and helped to start the movement known as supply-side economics.

- **Richard Shrock** is a Cambridge University-educated American who won a Nobel Prize for his contribution to organic chemistry.

Nobel Prize Winners

The appearance of Nobel Prize Winners educated in UK institutions in the list above prompted us to examine the official list of Nobel Prize Winners. Of the non-UK born 256 living Nobel Prize winners 34 received at least a proportion of their education in the UK or currently hold positions in UK universities.

The table below shows the spread between the type of prize and the total numbers of non-UK born living winners.



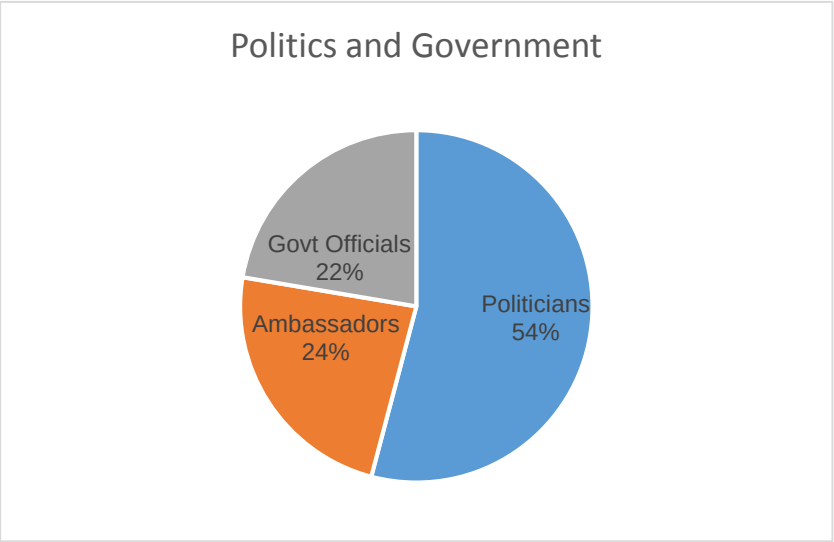
Government, politics and international relations

The worlds of government, politics and international relations and those who play roles in them wield considerable power and influence.

From heads of state, government minsters, ambassadors and government officials, those who have been educated at British schools and universities have both guided their own nations and conducted relations with Britain and the rest of the world.

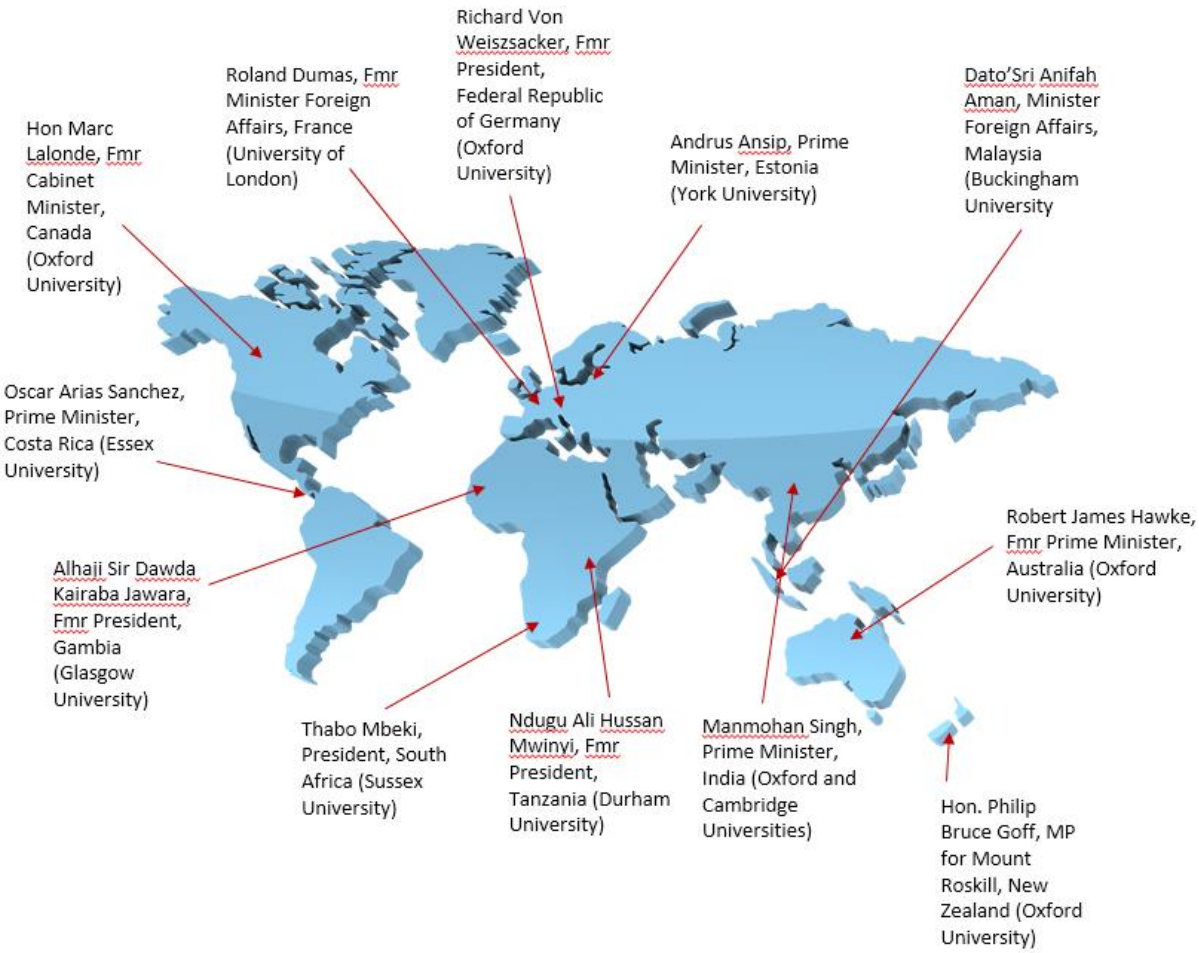
Of the 86 entries in Who's Who who have entered the world of government, politics and international relations, 47 were politicians, 20 were ambassadors or high commissioners and 19 were high ranking government officials.

The nature of these roles means that they are highly likely to both implement and be affected by soft power. Understanding of the workings of government; the nature of power and democracy; how nations come to agreements, and do business are all influenced by contact with education and cultures where certain practices are the norm.



Relationships established with their British peers may bear fruit years later as their roles bring them into the same sphere of action and influence on the world or national stage.

Below are highlighted some of those listed in International Who's Who, who were educated in the UK, who have played (and continue to play) political roles on the global stage:



Finance, Business and Banking

The worlds of finance, business and banking are critical to the conduct of global trade. 35 of the British-educated entries in Who's Who have or continue to play a role in these industries, leading some of the biggest companies in the world, including:

Central Bank Governors

It is noteworthy that the number of entries in Who's Who in this area is surprisingly low. In order to explore this area further we added an additional group to the initial Who's Who list: central bank governors, comprising some of the most powerful economic policymakers in the world. Of the 177 central banks listed in the *Central Bank Directory 2013*, 32 governors (18%) studied at a UK university. Prominent names include Mark Carney, Stanley Fischer, Haruhiko Kuroda and Tharman Shanmugaratnam. Former Federal Reserve Chairman Paul Volcker, who is currently helping to shape global banking reforms, went to LSE.

Summary

This piece of research has only begun to scratch the surface of the extent of the connection between the receipt of education at a UK school, college or university and the nature of the relationship with the UK that that person carries with them into the life they then live.

It is clear that connections exists, what is less clear is exactly how that connection plays out over a period of time and how it benefits the individual, their own country and the UK as a whole.

Whilst this piece of work took existing data around high profile, often privileged and self-evidently successful individuals, as a starting point, these are only a small number of international students who have been educated at UK institutions over the last 20-40 years. Many of those will have played a role in business and other fields in their own countries where their relationship with the UK may have been a factor in their actions or decision making.

Recommendations

Education is an essential component of how we build and extend the value of British soft power. In order to ensure that economic and social policy effectively supports the growth of Britain's soft power, policy makers need to better understand how soft power is developed and how it can be harnessed. However, it is clear that there is little hard data from which to begin and that correcting this should be a prerequisite for refocusing the policy making in this area.

We therefore recommend that the government commission research:

- which sets out a metric for quantifying the extent of British soft power
- which quantifies the current extent of British soft power
- examines how this has been established

This is such a significant undertaking on a subject which affects several sectors that we believe only the government are in a position to commission work of this scale.

This research should form the basis of a 'benchmark' from which to build a process which will focus on the policies required to support the extension of British soft power.

Appendix: List of Nations of Origin (Who's Who in the World British Educated)

Country	No.	Country	No.	Country	No.
Australia	101	India	12	Saudi Arabia	1
Austria	1	Indonesia	1	Seychelles	1
Bahamas	3	Ireland	16	Singapore	1
Bahrain	2	Israel	2	Solomon Islands	1
Bangladesh	2	Italy	2	South Africa	14
Barbados	5	Jamaica	1	Spain	1
Belize	2	Japan	3	Sri Lanka	2
Botswana	1	Jordan	1	St Kitts	1
Brazil	1	Kenya	1	St Lucia	1
Brunei	1	Liberia	1	Tanzania	2
Canada	37	Malawi	1	The Gambia	1
Chile	1	Malaysia	1	Trinidad & Tobago	3
China	5	Maldives	1	Tuvalu	2
Costa Rica	1	Malta	3	Uganda	2
Croatia	1	Mauritius	6	USA	77
Cyprus	2	Mexico	1	Venezuela	1
Czech Rep.	1	Morocco	1	Zambia	2
Estonia	1	Mozambique	1	Zimbabwe	3
Finland	3	Myanmar	1		
Germany	7	New Zealand	23		
Ghana	3	Nigeria	7		
Gibraltar	1	Norway	1		
Greece	5	Pakistan	4		
Grenada	2	Poland	1		
Hungary	2	Rep.Korea	1		
Iceland	1	Russia	1		