

Progressive Foreign Policy after Blair

A Democratiya Symposium

Notes on the Participants

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Introduction to the Symposium

Alan Johnson (Chair)

I would like to welcome everyone. Our theme today is 'progressive foreign policy after Blair.' In London on 21 March 2006, during one of a series of major foreign policy speeches the Prime Minister observed that 'Over these past nine years, Britain has pursued a markedly different foreign policy [and] confusingly, its proponents and opponents come from all sides of the political spectrum.' The democratic and progressive left is certainly divided and the intention today is to begin exploring those divisions.

Our discussions today will range over four questions. What is the future of humanitarian interventionism (or 'the responsibility to protect')? How should we respond to the threat from terrorism? What kind of relationship should we seek between the EU and the USA? What should be the broad outlines of future Labour Party foreign policy?

Session 1: What future for humanitarian interventionism?

Introductory remarks by Alan Johnson

Tony Blair has been a leading proponent of humanitarian intervention as part of a progressive foreign policy. His speech in Chicago on 22 April 1999 set out 'a new doctrine of international community' and the Kosovo intervention was widely supported on the centre-left. In 2001 the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), sponsored by the Canadian government, examined the difficult questions of the thresholds and agencies of humanitarian intervention and produced a widely hailed report, *The Responsibility to Protect*. Kofi Annan openly discussed a possible reinterpretation of the UN Charter to facilitate intervention. Well, we seem a long way from those heady days now. The very idea of humanitarian intervention is mired in suspicion, even dubbed 'the new imperialism.' The chances

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of a rescue of the Darfurians facing genocide are near to zero. How can we make meaningful our commitment to a responsibility to protect? What is the future of humanitarian intervention?

Martin Shaw on Humanitarian Interventionism

First, I assume that we would agree that populations targeted directly with physical violence by authoritarian regimes deserve international solidarity and protection. Second, once actual violence is underway, some sort of international military intervention may be one way to protect that population – we should not disregard other ways. Third, I assume we would agree that international action has the right to override claims to sovereignty by authoritarian regimes.

Those three points – which would have achieved a wide degree of consensus in the past, as Alan has pointed out – are now widely discredited. If we look at the most recent situation which really demanded a serious attempt to protect a threatened population – Darfur – we have to conclude that the response of the international community has been pretty dismal.

It is important to ask why this slip back has taken place, and why there is a continuing failure to protect. There are a number of reasons. Some we are familiar with. First, the resistance of authoritarian regimes to the principle of intervention, including of course the resistance of states like China and Russia on the UN Security Council. This resistance is echoed by what we could call the reactionary left. Second, the timidity of progressive leaders and the international community, as demonstrated in Rwanda. Third, there is the bureaucratic inertia of the UN. Fourth, the fact that although humanitarian interventions sound nice in principle, the reality of putting military forces into any situation is always a lot messier than it looks on the drawing board. The actual implementation of humanitarian interventions has not been free of problems, to say the least.

But there is another factor, newer and more specific, and that is the association of the idea of humanitarian intervention with, and its cooption by, the more ambitious war-making projects of the Bush administration and the neo-cons, and the endorsement of those projects by the Blair government and by some other progressives. And this is where I would want to focus. These projects have ratcheted up the difficulties of achieving effective interventions to protect threatened populations. In Kosovo, the methods chosen by Clinton and NATO did not

best protect the civilian populations but caused a lot of problems. And what has happened in Iraq has made it difficult to conceive of even a limited proportionate military intervention to protect threatened peoples.

So there is a dilemma for the progressive left. One answer to this is to extend the logic of humanitarian intervention into the endorsement of aggressive wars and regime change and the whole radical new agenda that has been opened up by Bush. But this undermines international law, the UN, the principles of democracy and human rights for which humanitarian intervention claims to stand – look at the nature of the bombings, the experience of Guantanamo, and so on. It leads to the cooption of the progressive left. The alternative is not necessarily an easy one. It is to acknowledge that there is a *fundamental* problem with modern war and military power. This is the ninetieth anniversary of the Battle of the Somme. Since that time we have learnt the dangers of war in modern society. War is not compatible with human rights. Opposition to war-making is really a fundamental principle of progressive politics which should stand alongside the commitment to democracy and human rights. This is the dilemma that tears the progressive left and it needs to be resolved before there can be any real progress.

John Bew on Humanitarian Interventionism

I will start with two predictions about the likely future of humanitarian intervention. First, calls for humanitarian intervention are likely to *increase* in the next decade or so – whatever happens in Iraq – as a consequence of globalisation. Second, there is likely to be a reaction against humanitarian intervention post-Blair in Britain, and post-Bush in the US. For progressives it is better America is engaged with the world, with all that entails, than not engaged at all, with its head in the sand. Yes, it is easy to travel along with critics of Bush's foreign policy. But just think where Republican foreign policy was pre-Bush!

Let's look at this from top-down and bottom-up. From a top-down perspective, Gordon Brown, for all sorts of reasons, will feel he must draw a line under what has happened in Iraq. *How* he does that is going to be absolutely crucial for what happens in the next decade or so in British foreign policy. Brown has not been part of the anti-war movement in any sense. George Galloway recently described Blair and Brown as 'two cheeks of the same arse.' However, Brown has hardly been Blair's wing-commander. He has not really shown the same ardour and passion about these issues.

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So, how will Brown draw his line in the sand? One option is to withdraw troops. It seems to me inconceivable that Brown will do that. It would be a recipe for disaster. The second option is that Brown will say something like 'we will not go to war again without the UN.' This is more likely to be his course of action. But to give an unreformed UN, with all its failings, that kind of veto over British foreign policy would be an even bigger mistake. This is the real context for the debate on humanitarian intervention, not Iraq. Iraq poisons the debate. If we think instead about Rwanda or Srebrenica, or about Darfur today, then it's clear that to give the UN any sort of blank cheque to continue in its usual manner would be a disaster.

From a bottom-up perspective, many on the left also seek to draw a line by granting an unreformed UN this kind of power. This amounts to a kind of intellectual masturbation. You can distance yourself from 'the neocons,' as many have done, but how far can we go without piggybacking, so to speak, on other peoples agendas? We do have to piggyback. We can do it in a careful and sensible way. But if you take Darfur, there is a remarkable silence on the British left. We hear nothing about it from swathes of the 'anti-war movement.' Yet, it is the Christian Right in the US who are really pushing for the US to act. So far as the UN remains so ineffective then people have to seriously consider the real options for real action...

Within Britain we have shared cross-party traditions and we should embrace those. If we have a Cameron government, the real enemies to a progressive foreign policy would be those people in the FCO who have been hanging around for twenty years and are hostile to any sort of humanitarian intervention and democracy-promotion. The progressive left has to deal with that body of opinion. So let's build progressive coalitions, let's welcome the fact that people such as Michael Gove MP may have an influence on a Cameron foreign policy rather than the so-called 'Big Beasts' of the realist era who did nothing about Srebrenica. These realists kicked up a stink about Iraq but from a selfish conservative perspective. We must think bigger.

Iraq has poisoned the debate and we need to rescue some crucial ideas from the wreckage, such as democratisation and humanitarian intervention. The example of Sierra Leone, albeit on a small scale, is a good example of what is possible. The idea that it is beyond the United States, or beyond the United Nations, to have some sort of rapid reaction force, a more effective peacekeeping force, is absurd. We have to make ground on that quickly. And we can do it without these debates about the future of Europe, or the future of our relationship to the US. It can be done far more quickly.

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Iraq should be regarded not as the first in a series of military interventions in the Middle East but as the last. The fight can still be won in Iraq, and used as a springboard for the whole region. I really believe this. We have the benefit of such a clearly defined enemy in Iraq. The insurgency is drawing off fascist sectarianism. It is not a popular uprising against American or British foreign policy. That insurgency needs to be defeated. But in the wider Middle East, instead of talking about invasions, we need to listen to the progressives.

The left spends a lot of time complaining about 'the imposition of democracy from outside.' But the left does not really listen to people within these countries. Look at us, today. We don't have an Arab reformer here with us. In Iraq we have seen that pure democracy isn't necessarily the best way to make progress. What we can do is provide intellectual, moral, and financial support for moderate secularists, and moderate Islamic politicians. When the Egyptian reformer Sayid Ibrahim, a man who spent years in jail at the behest of Mubarak, addressed the Henry Jackson Society he said that whether we had a Brown or Cameron government, the best thing we could do as progressives is to push and push until the PM visits Egypt and goes first to see all the reformers and the liberals. That gesture would, he told us, make a tremendous impact.

To sum up. Let's take this whole question out of a narrow leftist terrain. And let's listen to the voices within these countries if we are serious about democracy and liberalisation.

Discussion on Humanitarian Interventionism

Isabel Hilton

There is a fundamental question mark about the notion of war as a 'good instrument' in any sense, and I think it is a profound mistake, still, to talk about Iraq as something that 'went wrong.' Iraq could not have worked. The things that have gone wrong were widely predicted before the intervention happened by anyone who knew about Iraq. This is not a matter of 'mistakes' on the ground. The simple fact is that even if you are hailed as a liberator on day one, you are the occupier on day two.

During *The Fog of War*, the documentary on Robert McNamara, the Vietnam-era US Secretary of State, there is a moment when he talks about dining with someone ten years after the war was over, a leading figure in North Vietnam at the time of the war. Only then did he understand that the Americans had been fighting the wrong

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war. He had thought the Vietnamese were fighting for Communism. In fact, he was told, the Vietnamese were fighting a war for national liberation. It is an illustration of our continuing capacity to project onto an enemy, of whatever sort, our own preoccupations. We have done exactly the same thing in Iraq.

So, what's the future of intervention? For me, military intervention is always problematic for the reasons that Martin set out. War is a terrible thing that has unpredictable consequences. You simply can't control what you unleash. And the aftermath lasts a generation at least – wars don't end when the whistle blows. So, does that mean we should not intervene on behalf of people who are oppressed? No, it doesn't. It's a matter of how and when we intervene, under what rules, and in what capacity. Most of these conflicts are a long time coming and most are characterised by inaction until violence breaks out. We are completely hooked on violence. We take violence as a trigger for our own action and as a measure of the seriousness of the situation. But there is a level of oppression that eventually breaks out in violence which could well respond to an earlier intervention of a non-military kind.

There are many things wrong with the UN but also with the way we talk about the UN. The UN is not a sovereign agency. The reason the UN was ineffective in Rwanda is because the membership of the UN would not act. The UN is not a separate discrete body that sits around filing its nails. In that particular case, President Clinton would not act. It's very easy to blame the UN, and political leaders do this. And we also fall into that trap. But the lack of UN action is only a measure of our own lack of action.

David Clark

The question is about the future of humanitarian interventionism. I certainly hope it has a future. I did my own small bit in the 1990s to shift Labour's policy away from non-interventionism in the Balkans – a policy that was indistinguishable at that time from the policy of Douglas Hurd and the conservatives – to one of active engagement and willingness to use military force to rein in and prevent the ethnic cleansing being used as an instrument of policy by Milosevic and Tudjman. But, I am quite pessimistic about the immediate short-term prospects of humanitarian interventionism. I feel, like Martin, that it has become tainted by association with an agenda that is very different in its origins and priorities and motivations. It will take some time before it can be rescued. But it can be rescued over time, through a

process of generational change, and by the replacement of political leaders by new leaders able to give humanitarian intervention a new direction and to rehabilitate the idea. The sooner this happens the better – the case of Darfur has been mentioned already.

I'm drawn back to look at *The Responsibility to Protect*, the document that was produced by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, which the Canadian government sponsored. It's been used widely by advocates of humanitarian intervention – by those who supported the Iraq war, such as John Lloyd, and by those such as myself who did not. I share a lot of common ground with John and people like him. But I look at the document and I am struck by how few of the criteria set out for legitimate military intervention were actually met in the case of Iraq.

The *just cause threshold* to my mind was not met because there wasn't an actual act of ongoing large-scale violence against a civilian population. It would have been met in 1988. It would have been met in 1991. But in 2003 it was not met. The criteria established in customary international law, and in *The Responsibility to Protect*, do not allow for after-the-fact interventions to punish governments for acts of large-scale violence that took place in the past. There is a very strong case for arguing that it should. And I am open to the argument that the thresholds that trigger intervention should be reduced. But if they are to be reduced they must be reduced universally. They can't be reduced selectively so as to legitimate interventions by governments motivated by anything other than humanitarian reasons.

And in Iraq the precautionary principles criteria were not met. *Right intention?* I don't think that was met. *Last resort?* Not met. *Proportional means?* That's arguable. There is a case that there was no other way to get rid of Saddam – I am open to that suggestion. *Reasonable prospects?* Well, a large number of people, including myself, did argue that there wasn't a reasonable prospect of success in the way the intervention was carried out.

I am not trying to open up an argument about whether Iraq was right or wrong. I am simply saying if there is a future for humanitarian intervention it has to be to go back to some kind of *rule-based* approach. The rules we have may not be the right ones. I would certainly react in horror if any British Prime Minister, Gordon Brown or anyone else, were to say that there would never be any national military intervention without a UN Security Council mandate. That would be far too limiting because

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of China and Russia. Also, the veto system on the Security Council is thoroughly illegitimate. It relies on a post-WW2 mind-set that says there are 'Great Powers' that have a privileged status in the international community. Progressives should work to get rid of that veto system and to construct something that is far more legitimate. Two-thirds of the world's countries now have elected governments. Not all can be really described as democracies (think of Russia, for example) but most of those two-thirds are democratic governments. There is a possibility of constructing a much more legitimate quasi-democratic international community in which the responsibility for political decisions is more widely shared.

Oliver Kamm

Like David, I certainly hope there is a future for humanitarian intervention. I very much regretted at the time the bi-partisanship in the House of Commons on the issue of an aggressive xenophobic Serbian nationalism running unchecked in the Balkans. I have a lot of sympathy with what David says about a rules-based approach to humanitarian intervention.

Let me try and draw out some of the problems, however. Yes, a rules-based approach to international governance is a powerful argument for the progressive left. I – unlike a lot of people on the left – think that in the realm of the global economy it has worked well. The introduction of a rules-based approach to trade disputes, for instance, has – contrary to what the critics of the World Trade Organization believe – generally served the interest of emerging economies. The first major ruling by the WTO in 1997 found in favour of a complaint by Venezuela and against the US for applying stricter rules on the chemical characteristics of imported petroleum than for domestically refined petroleum. Applying rules in an anarchic world order, generally speaking, will protect the position of the weaker, as against the stronger. That is why progressives, in principle, ought to favour a rules-based approach to issues of international conflict in non-political areas – commercial or economic areas. But there is a real difficulty nonetheless for those of us who favour the introduction of rules in international politics. The problem is one that David didn't refer to, but which Isabel did argue about very strongly in *The Guardian* after the Kosovo war. Discussing a Foreign Affairs Select Committee Report she took great exception to an apparent indifference to the illegality, under its own treaty, of NATO's Kosovo intervention. I think she made a valid point but I do not share her belief in the need to gain a UN mandate. In international law the UN is not a sovereign body. It depends upon the implementation of its resolutions by its

constituent member states.

Those who favour a rules-based approach – those who wish to see the constraint of international conflict by universal norms of law and conduct – need to face up to the fact that because the UN does not exercise sovereignty, then international law, in certain respects, *may protect the stronger at the expense of the weaker and the vulnerable*. In the case of Iraq, we saw one of the worst dictators of our lifetimes, if not the very worst, continuing to exercise power through a psychopathic gangster regime while being clearly in breach of a dozen or more Security Council resolutions over the cease-fire agreement of the 1991 Gulf war. And yet Saddam didn't have the force of international will against him because there was no consensus within the Security Council. There is a real problem for progressives there. Clearly we are in favour of the writ of international law. And, as Martin said, the exercise of war creates terrible suffering and injustices which are very difficult to square with progressive and humanitarian values. But sometimes there is no other course.

Session 2: How can terrorism be defeated?

Introductory Remarks by Alan Johnson

The Prime Minister recently set out his views, not for the first time, on how terrorism would be defeated. 'Terrorism will not be defeated until its ideas ... are confronted, head-on, in their essence ... I don't mean telling them terrorism is wrong. I mean telling them their attitude to America is absurd; their concept of governance pre-feudal; their positions on women and other faiths, reactionary and regressive; and then, since only by Muslims can this be done: standing up for and supporting those within Islam who will tell them all of this ... But in order to do this, we must reject the thought that somehow we are the authors of our own distress ... The only way to win is: to recognise this phenomenon is a global ideology; to see all areas in which it operates as linked; and to defeat it by values and ideas set in opposition to those of the terrorists.'

Against Tony Blair's view, many others on the left see terrorism as a form of 'blowback' for the crimes of 'western imperialism,' and view talk of 'freedom' and 'democracy' as fraudulent – the ideology of the 'new imperialism.' This view sees the defeat of terror as a by-product of the defeat of the new imperialism. Some even give tacit support to the terrorists as 'anti-imperialists.' So, what is the threat and what ideas do progressives have for its defeat?

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Isabel Hilton on Terrorism

Ok, five minutes to defeat terrorism. That's not a problem. In fact I can do it in about ten seconds. You can kill everybody or pick everybody up. Or there is a woolly liberal option which is to put everyone on valium. And that's it. This is not an entirely flippant observation. These are the only ways you can *guarantee* to defeat terrorism. So, when we look at the problem of defeating terrorism we are really looking at a cost-benefit problem.

How do we defeat something that we can't define? I would remind you of Joseph Conrad's description in *The Secret Agent* of the diplomat at the turn of the century who tried to analyse terrorism. 'He confounded causes with effects more than was excusable; the most distinguished propagandists with impulsive bomb throwers; assumed organisation where in the nature of things it could not exist. He spoke of revolutionaries one moment as of a perfectly disciplined army, where the word of chiefs was supreme, and at another as if it was the loosest association of desperate brigands that ever camped in a mountain gorge.' If that sounds familiar that's because it is exactly the sort of confusion in discourse that has filled the public space since 9/11.

What is terrorism? The illegitimate use of force, asymmetrical warfare by organisations or individuals who are not recognised as legitimate by the state. The targets vary. Some terrorists target civilians. Other terrorists target state bodies – politicians, security services, installations. Some are part of organised groups and they, at least, regard themselves as legitimate. Some believe that they represent frustrated national aspirations – the IRA, ETA, Hamas, or Jewish terrorists before the state of Israel was founded. Others are loonies – Timothy McVeigh, responsible for the worst terrorist attack on US soil before 9/11.

What can we learn from history? Well, terrorism is always with us. Extreme ideologies, political frustration and denial of opportunity all give rise to terrorism. And until the day that such things are absent from the world terrorism will also be present. Sometimes terrorism works: political gains are made. Negotiations allow organisations once illegitimate to legitimise themselves politically. Sometimes a particular manifestation of terrorism is defeated, or circumstances change and the cause goes off the boil. But the sobering thing about that is that it takes a very long time.

Is today's terrorism qualitatively different from the terrorism that has been around for as long as organised society? Well, one thing that has changed is the nature of

the weapons – they are much more powerful, potentially. I do take very seriously the possibility of very bad weapons falling into the hands of terrorists. I'm not inclined to dismiss it. But we do go back to our cost-benefit analysis. If my two solutions set out at the beginning of this talk are too high a price to pay then the rest is a matter of calibration.

What are the costs of terrorism to us? What price are we prepared to pay to defeat it? The costs of terrorism are actually quite low even in terms of lives. 9/11 was terrible, 2,752 lives. But on the same day more people died on America's roads. If we want to save lives we should ban the car. And of course the death toll that resulted from the reaction to 9/11 is infinitely higher and still climbing. 9/11 was terrible but it was not a threat to the state, nor was 7/7. Any damage done to the principles of the democratic state was done subsequently by the governments of those democracies themselves. Every act of terror is a gift to the authoritarian side of the state. Terror makes it very easy to remove the safeguards against arbitrary detention, illegal acts by the state, and even torture.

The military response to terrorism is entirely inappropriate and counter-productive. Destroying the Taliban government in Afghanistan has not got rid of the Taliban and we are now in a long and probably hopeless war. Destroying Saddam's regime, which was not a major source of terror before, has created a theatre for terrorism, a training ground, a show-case, and an inspiration.

I've just been reading Michael Gove's book, *Celsius 7/7*, in which he argues that the British state has been supine and weak in its response to terror, and that what we need is greater moral clarity. Well, I agree we need greater moral clarity, but I profoundly disagree with Michael Gove's view of how we attain it. There are very few terrorists. Most people don't support them. Given a choice most people would like to live under a government that respected their rights, that allowed them to live their lives in peace, and guaranteed their physical security as far as possible. Most people are happy to leave the monopoly of violence to the state as the lesser of two evils, provided that its use is strictly regulated by national and international law. And this is the traditional argument for the moral superiority of democracy. The moral clarity that has been lost since 9/11 is that of the liberal democracies – by waging war, by dismantling human rights, and by their use of illegal and indefinite detention, extraordinary rendition, and torture. All of these cloud the moral case for democracy and they give terrorist organisations a perfect argument.

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Terrorists are always very few. Even the active service units of the IRA in the last several decades were surprisingly small given the impact that they had. What magnifies the terrorists reach is the support, or at least the tacit acceptance of a wider constituency fed by persistent injustice and political oppression. By abandoning the moral high ground – the rule of law, justice, and so on, the United States and Britain have abandoned the moral clarity that is their most powerful weapon.

I acknowledge that even with the moral high ground such states will always have enemies and some will always resort to violence. How do we tackle that? Well, terrorism is a crime. We fight it with police and intelligence. And I just want to say something briefly about intelligence – a much misunderstood category. There is the sort of intelligence that the Special Branch collects on all of us. There is the intelligence of surveillance – essentially police work. And then there is the dirty stuff. By the time the IRA sued for peace they were so heavily infiltrated by British intelligence that they didn't know who was on what side. It's a very dirty game. But we all understand that it is played, and we probably understand that it needs to be played. It's the underbelly of the state and, like terrorism, it won't go away. An agent infiltrated within a terrorist organisation must act like a terrorist and must himself or herself do terrible things. And it's a very long game indeed. It can take decades as it did in Ireland. But that is the game. And in the end it does have a certain effectiveness. But when any new ideology arises, to fuel a new wave of terror, it takes a great deal of time for any intelligence organisation to learn how to fight it. Some of the more egregious practices that we see, as well as the conspicuous blunders since 9/11, like Forrest Gate, are signs of an intelligence service at a loss, confronted with a new phenomenon. It will take time.

So back to the beginning. We can't defeat terrorism. It has been around for millennium. But sometimes, slowly and with difficulty, we can defeat a particular manifestation of it. Other manifestations will arise. At every point, we must weigh the costs of what we do against terrorism against the benefit of doing it. There are a few rules. First, don't exaggerate the threat. The chances of any citizen in any liberal democracy being killed by terrorism are infinitesimal. As I say, if you want to save lives, ban the car. It's like the chances of being murdered by strangers as opposed to being murdered by your loved ones – very tiny but they do tend to capture the imagination. Second, don't abandon the moral high-ground. The moral high ground is what will keep the wider constituency in your cause. Third, accept that – however hard it is – life carries risks. We should not think of risk as a reason to

abandon rights and liberties that many generations have fought very hard to secure, and which are the long-term foundation of our state.

Oliver Kamm on Terrorism

One often hears the argument that ‘security measures cannot defeat terrorism’ and that ‘we need to attack the underlying political causes.’ But it’s not *true*. The state can defeat terrorism. It just depends on how repressive the state is. ETA terrorism was a feature of democratic Spain. It wasn’t a feature of dictatorial Spain. Terrorism in Soviet Russia was unknown. It is now a periodic threat to the citizens of Moscow. I plainly don’t *recommend* a totalitarian response to terror. I merely point out that if a state is ruthless enough the state can eradicate terrorism. Take the case of Syria in its occupation of Lebanon. It is possible to attack terrorism thorough a security response. If one looks at the liberal democracies – and I do not wish to be misunderstood, I am making recommendations for liberal democracies – there was another way in which the governments of Ireland and the United Kingdom could have reacted to IRA terrorism. The IRA’s campaign from 1957-62 met a very strong security response on the part of successive governments in the Irish Republic, such that it just didn’t gain traction. It is possible for a democratic state, working with its allies, to attack the foundations of a terrorist organisation quite successfully.

Isabel was right to say that the IRA was hopelessly infiltrated and by the time it sued for peace the dirty war had proved fairly successful. It is very important that democratic states can infiltrate such organisations and turn individual supporters. One thing we know about the activities of the CIA with regard to Islamist terrorist organisations is that they have been hopeless at this – both in not getting their own people in there, and in not even *trying* to turn individual supporters of Islamist organisations. There was a case of the Yemeni Americans who had undergone training in Bin Laden camps and who then walked away. They received stiff prison sentences for their activities. Would it not have been possible to turn them, and so undermine the global jihad that way? There are possibilities for intelligence work that are not being tapped.

Regarding the terrorist organisations themselves, clearly the best approach is to win an organisation that has been devoted to violent means to exclusive use of the ballot box. And there are cases where this has been done. The old Official IRA metamorphosed into the Workers Party and became a thoroughly constitutional body and a supporter of the democratic process. There is an argument for saying – I

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don't actually agree with this – 'well let's mount a similar approach to organisations like Hamas to test their commitment to democratic politics.'

My approach would be not to try to differentiate between terrorist organisations. Clearly there may be significant ideological differences between an al-Qaeda-type organisation – whose very *raison d'être* is the supersession of western civilisation by their own preferred mode of governance – and an organisation such as the Provisional IRA that has more specific political ends. It is very unwise to try to differentiate between those organisations while they are still involved in a terrorist campaign, however. When Roy Mason was Northern Ireland Secretary in the mid-1970s he declared his aim of rolling up the IRA like a tube of toothpaste. He had some effect. When Irish governments hit the IRA hard it created a real operational problem for terrorist organisations.

Like Isabel I don't want to exaggerate the threat, but with great respect to her, she did not give the weight I would to the threat of terrorism to democracies. It is not strictly the case that in any liberal democracy one takes, the threat of violent death from terrorism is infinitesimally small. To give anecdotal evidence, one of my friends in Israel, a senior diplomat, has recounted to me that half a dozen of his friends, including his secretary, had been killed in terrorist bombings. Terrorists do not have to mount a threat to the very existence of democratic society. It can be an effective weapon of terrorist organisations merely to spread terror. When you leave the door and say goodbye to your family not knowing whether you will see your family again it can have a serious effect on the workings of a liberal democracy.

I would draw the line in a slightly different place from some others around this table between the balance of allowing rights to terrorist suspects and protecting the citizens of a liberal democracy from the threat of terrorism. To go back to the Irish case: successive governments in the Republic, long before the Troubles started, may not have been particularly fastidious in their concern with civil liberties, but they showed commendable determination in curtailing IRA campaigns. There are lessons to be learned there.

On the wider political issues, there is a dangerous tendency to invoke 'root causes' in discussions of how the West tackles terrorism. I do not believe that poverty is the cause of Islamist terrorism and there is very little empirical evidence to that effect. Were poverty the driving force for terrorism one would expect sub-Saharan Africa to be the main source of terrorism, and it isn't. The driving force is a particular

ideology. There is a danger in invoking causes which, as progressives, we can support – Palestinian statehood, global development – and supposing there are answers to terrorism. There are strong independent grounds for holding progressive views on these matters without complicating them by suggesting they are anti-terrorist measures.

Anti-terrorism is not a particularly clean and pleasant subject, but as progressives we need to support a very forceful state response to it, and I very much welcome the cogency with which Tony Blair has expressed that view.

Discussion on Terrorism

David Clark

When I was listening to Oliver's description of Franco's success in suppressing ETA and the Soviet Union's success in suppressing terrorism during the Cold War I was reminded of the old medical joke – 'operation a success, patient dead.' If our objective is to preserve the liberal democratic order...

Oliver Kamm

Of course it is!

David Clark

... then we must be aware that the degree of authoritarianism used to defeat terrorism can be so great that it is the cure that kills. I share all of Isabel's concerns about the extent to which we have already gone down that road. In Ireland, suppressing the IRA wasn't just a security success. It was also that certain sections of the Republican leadership came to the view that they could better achieve what they wanted by peaceful means than by continuing to pursue an armed struggle. Now, part of that, of course, was a matter of security service successes in preventing the IRA from conducting large scale operations – the infiltration and the seizure of arms shipments, etc. But Oliver described the pre-1969 success in anti-terrorism in the Irish Republic, as due to 'a lack of fastidiousness in respect to civil liberties.' The alternative view is that it was that very lack of fastidiousness that later led to the rise of the Provisional IRA – the lack of concern for the civil rights of Catholics living there, internment, and so on.

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Oliver Kamm

I was talking about the Republic.

David Clark

Ok, fair enough. I am drawn to the point that Alan Dershowitz has made which is that terrorism exists because terrorism works. Actually there is very little evidence that, at a strategic level, terrorism succeeds. Terrorism can succeed in achieving tactical objectives. For example, if the PLO's objective in the 1960s and 1970s had been to get Arafat to the rostrum of the UN General Assembly with a pistol in his hand then you can say the PLO was a very effective organisation. But its objective was actually to achieve a Palestinian state, just as the IRA's objective was to achieve a united Ireland. Terrorism didn't succeed in either case. What often happens is that governments accede to legitimate demands that terrorist movements have been exploiting. In the case of the IRA, the civil rights demands were met, and the repressive machinery of an Orange state was dismantled, and the IRA was brought into the political process.

Terrorism arises when a large pool of disaffected people feel that they have no better option to advance what they consider to be their legitimate demands. Part of the strategy for reducing terrorism has to be to reduce the distance between us and large pools of disaffected opinion amongst Muslims and Arabs, and to increase the distance between ourselves and people like Osama Bin Laden. And I fear that everything that has happened in the last four years in the second phase of the war on terror has achieved the opposite.

It alarms me when I hear people talking about 'terrorist infrastructure.' There is no meaningful terrorist infrastructure when we face al-Qaeda. All the tools they need for conducting large-scale terrorist operations can be procured very easily in the course of normal everyday life. What the 'terrorist infrastructure' actually consists of is a body of people who are willing to go out and kill and be killed. So the only really effective way to fight terrorism is to try to reduce the pool of people who feel that way.

In that light I look at the speech that Tony Blair gave, the third in the series of speeches that Alan circulated, in which he said 'you have to attack not just the methods but its ideas, its presumed and false sense of grievance against the West.' Now, if we really are to presume that their sense of grievance is false then we have

gone down a complete dead-end! We need to recognise that there are grievances that are exploited and which we can do something about, and which we have a responsibility to do something about. I really don't like the idea that we are caught between an ultra-left that sees the West as being able to do no right and a Blairite mind-set which believes the West has and can do no wrong. We are in danger of going down that road if we accept what he says in this speech. We need to be much more humble in recognising that we have contributed to a lot of the circumstances that have given rise to this terrorist threat we face.

Martin Shaw

I agree with David. If there is a problem with the idea of 'root causes' in the sense of abstract things like poverty, there isn't a problem with the fact of grievance. I think the most important thing here is to accept that the organisations that are called 'terrorist,' which use terrorist methods, are political organisations and have political objectives. This is true even of al-Qaeda. In order to defeat them you need to defeat them politically as well as through security means. There is no evidence that a war on terror actually reduces the terrorist threat. On the contrary the war on terror hypes up the terrorists, it makes Osama Bin Laden into a global enemy of the United States, who therefore has enormous pulling-power and a significant constituency among Muslims. We have to adopt a different strategy.

John Bew

There are certain myths that have grown up around the Northern Ireland Peace Process, centred on the relation of the terrorists to 'attacking the underbelly of grievance.' In this regard it is a myth – sold by Bill Clinton, Mo Mowlam, Peter Mandelson, and others – that the Northern Ireland Peace Process is a model to be sold, and that Sinn Fein-IRA were central to it. Actually, what happened fundamentally in Northern Ireland is not that we 'engaged politically with Sinn Fein' – that was, to some extent, a side issue. In Northern Ireland in 1998 you had a moderate consensus between moderate parties in which Sinn Fein-IRA was actually pretty much excluded. They were not even involved in negotiating the agreement to any great extent – I'm talking about negotiating the institutions and the democratic basis of the agreement. In many ways they were a party that had been defeated. But within a couple of weeks they managed to sell themselves as the party of the Good Friday agreement, and of the aggrieved, and were promoted as such. And since 1998 we have lost that moderate consensus between moderate parties. My point – and it extends to the Middle East – is that *the terrorists can't be*

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allowed to present themselves as speaking for the underbelly of grievance or be treated as such, as the IRA have been allowed to do since 1998. The key is to protect the centre ground. The Northern Ireland myth, by the way, is being transported into Spain at this very moment. ETA are saying ‘we have won the peace’ and are being allowed to say this by the Spanish government. Moderate nationalists, people who believe in civil rights and regional devolution are all being sidelined from this narrative because of the obsession with the terrorists. In addressing the grievances behind terrorism don’t let the terrorists define the grievance or present themselves as the representatives of the aggrieved – that’s the key thing. There was a lost opportunity in Northern Ireland. We lost a moderate consensus and instead we have got a nasty Balkanised sectarian carve-up, essentially. And that happened because we allowed the IRA and the extremists to define it since 1998 and it has been a complete disaster. Blair deserves praise for what he did in 1998, but since then he has missed a crucial opportunity precisely for those reasons.

Alan Johnson

I’d like to make a brief point. It’s not that the two frameworks that have been set out – ‘it’s about a blowback against injustice,’ or ‘it’s about developing the correct policing and security framework’ – are wrong. They both contain important elements that any anti-terrorist strategy must take into account. But neither strikes me as the most important framework *at this moment*. There is a danger of trying to project our rationalism onto what are in effect pathological Islamist mass movements...

Isabel Hilton

It isn’t a mass movement!

Alan Johnson

It is. And we don’t say that in the Second World War we fought Blitzkrieg. We fought Nazism. Similarly, today, it is important for us to say that we are not fighting ‘terrorism’ so much as – and I claim no consensus in the room for this term – Totalitarian Political Islam. It is a pathological mass movement, in some senses a death-cult, and we have great difficulty coming to terms with it. We tend to project onto it our own rationalist frameworks, so we discuss it as if it is similar to political and rational movements we have experience in dealing with. In fact it is an ideological movement, a form of totalitarianism with roots in the most profound crisis across the Arab and Muslim world – an organic social and cultural crisis, a failure to come to terms with modernity, the details of which have been set

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out in a series of United Nations Human Development Reports. There has been a blood-red wave crashing across that region for decades. It has involved hundreds of thousands of deaths. And, as Paul Berman has pointed out, what we in the West have experienced since 9/11 are mere flecks of foam from that wave. So it is not relevant that more people died on the roads on 9/11. It is an understanding of the nature of the Islamist threat that we need – a regionally rooted cultural and social crisis that has thrown up a pathological and totalitarian mass movement.

There is no policing solution to that. There must be a long-term battle of ideas, a cultural war if you like, alongside a drive to democratise and develop the region. Obviously, there will be much disagreement about the precise policies and strategies needed to achieve democratisation and development but we can't address the root causes of that blood-red wave of violence without democratisation and development. I think there is a great reluctance to embrace a framework which acknowledges what is new and specific to the threat we face today, as opposed to thinking about that threat by analogy to older forms of terrorism. Isabel, you wanted to disagree?

Isabel Hilton

I want to challenge the notion that Islamofascism is a mass movement. The Nazis came to power at the ballot box. Do you think these guys are going to come to power at the ballot box?

Alan Johnson

Hamas just did.

John Bew

And what about the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt?

Isabel Hilton

To categorise Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood as though that was all they were is profoundly to misread the situation. It's a really serious category error. We can go back over the origins of al-Qaeda, which goes back to the choice to fight a holy war in the 1980s in Afghanistan for reasons that suited the US government at the time. And we can go further back and study the effects of the humiliation of the Arab world by imperialism, and the post-colonialism to which the Arab world sought many solutions in the post-colonial era, including secular nationalism. When you

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have people who feel they can get justice and protection by no other means, well, in the end something nasty comes up.

Session 3: Europe and America: what relationship should progressives seek?

Introductory remarks by Alan Johnson

Tony Blair has sought the role of a bridge between Europe and the USA and a translator of each to the other. Speaking in Canberra recently he said the problem with America today 'is not that they are too much involved. The danger is they decide to pull up the drawbridge and disengage. We need them involved. We want them engaged. The reality is that none of the problems that press in on us can be resolved or even contemplated without them.' But he also took his distance. 'Our task is to ensure that with them, we do not limit the agenda to security. If our security lies in our values and our values are about justice and fairness as well as freedom from fear, then the agenda must be more than security and the alliance include more than America.'

However, voices from both the right (Robert Kagan's talk of Europeans coming from Venus and Americans from Mars, or President Chirac's talk of the need for a European 'counterpower' to the US 'hyperpower') and the left (speaking a language of 'American imperialism' and 'Yankee go home') have often left the Prime Minister an isolated figure, seeking to reconcile what everyone seems intent on telling him are irreconcilable. Are Americans from Venus and Europeans from Mars? Can the big issues be tackled without America? What kind of relationship should progressives seek between Europe and America?

Ziba Norman on Europe and America

Iraq has overshadowed everything. We are no longer looking at these issues in terms of our progressive values because we are constantly looking to what went wrong in Iraq. We need to look beyond Iraq to how we can support our values in the wider world. We should be looking, for example, at what is going on in Central Asia, what's going on in the Caucasus, at what Russia is and is not doing. Europe and America really do need to stand together as progressive forces in the world.

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We have got to redefine what we mean by democracy. We can't be so lazy with this term. It is not just about regime change. It is about independent media, the rule of law, judicial systems, human rights, freedom of expression. It is about giving individuals within given societies the tools that they require before we go in and radically intervene. And I think Europe can – both as individual countries and as the European Union as a whole – be very effective in this because it doesn't have the same associations that the US has. If US-backed NGOs go in to a country such as, for example, Uzbekistan, there are associations attached to that. The European NGOs can be more effective in doing that type of work. We need something like a European National Endowment for Democracy. Also, we have to look at how progressives can work to alter the structures within the UN. A lot of people have talked for years about the reform of the Security Council. Let's get on and see that it is done, if we are going to look to the UN for legitimacy. Also, progressives have to stop fighting against themselves, stop being ashamed of their values, stop being guilt-ridden.

David Clark on Europe and America

I agree with a lot of what Ziba has just said, especially with the need for Europe to ensure the pro-democracy agenda does not go by default to America. It is something that Europe also needs to take an interest in and responsibility for.

My first principle is that a close alliance between Europe and America remains absolutely essential. For all the undoubted differences that exist between Europe and America – and in this context I regard Britain very much as a European country – there is far more that unites than divides us, especially the commonality of our liberal democratic values.

But an equally important principle for me is that the relationship between Europe and America should be a balanced one. Just as there is the need for checks and balances in any healthy democratic society there is also a need for checks and balances within the international community and within well-functioning international alliances. This is particularly true of the transatlantic alliance and there are two reasons for this. First, the absence of peer restraint can lead governments and countries to make serious policy errors. Again, I would highlight the example of Iraq. But we could also mention the US governments position on climate change, and international institutions more generally. Second, everyone needs to be kept in line. There are dangers in any society or international community in which any particular

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individual or group of individuals get too much unchecked power. Although European and American interests and values overlap to a considerable extent, they are not identical. European preferences need to be given due consideration in transatlantic policy making. There are differences of preference on economic and social policy which we, as progressives, should be more aware of than most. And there are also differences about what kind of international community we want. As a confederation of small and medium sized nation-states, Europe has considerations that America as a large unitary state and the world's strongest power, does not have.

I don't see Europe as divisible into an 'old' Europe and a 'new' Europe. You can't sustain the argument that there is a values divide between European populations. It was notable that although several European governments supported the US decision to go to war they did so, almost in every case, against the wishes of their own population.

The conclusion that flows from this is that progressives should favour Atlanticism but oppose American unipolarity – not specifically because it is American but because unipolarity is a bad thing in itself. My major strategic criticism of Tony Blair's foreign policy is that he has acted deliberately to prevent a rebalancing of the transatlantic relationship to sustain unipolarity, to perpetuate European weakness. This is against the interests of Britain, the rest of Europe, and it is also against the real long-term interests of America. He has attacked the idea of rebalancing as being 'anti-American' – as if the only motive for power-balancing could be a hostile one rather than a benign one. And Blair has also weakened Europe's ability to define a common position, especially over Iraq, by prioritising the UK's special bilateral relationship with Washington. This is an example of post-imperial vanity in the sense that it significantly overstates Britain's ability to influence Washington, especially given the state of mind of American policy-makers at the moment.

A progressive transatlantic strategy would look very different. Firstly, it would take seriously the new conservative critique articulated by Robert Kagan, and others, about European weakness and would seek to address that, and it would seek to build Europe's independent capacity in the fields of foreign and defence policy, not because Europe would seek to act independently of Washington necessarily, but because the ability to act independently carries with it certain assumptions about America's need and desire to take Europe seriously. This implies a greater degree of integration than Tony Blair has been willing to argue for, but it would not necessarily be out of step with public opinion in UK. Surprisingly, although we as

a country have a reputation of being strongly euro-sceptic, the opinion polls seem to indicate that defence and foreign policy is one of the few areas where the British public is willing to consider more integration rather than less. And that's true of almost all EU member states. This is not something that has been properly explored in the British debate.

Second, progressive transatlantic strategy would recognise that we are moving towards a multi-polar world whether we like it or not, so the case for sustaining unipolarity is weak in practical terms. It would be far better all round were there to be more than one democratic pole in a multi-polar world. You can posit a situation where there is a democratic America working alongside a democratic integrated Europe, and a more integrated Latin America which has moved decisively in a democratic direction in the last couple of decades, and a democratic India. You have there the basis for a very solid and largely democratic world order. That's a very attractive option for the future and its one that British policy makers should be trying to bring about, rather than prevent.

Third, a progressive transatlantic strategy would involve a willingness to confront taboos. In particular we should confront the taboo that the special relationship is the most essential thing to preserve in British foreign policy. It would involve challenging the American taboo about caucusing within the Atlantic alliance. America has always had conflicting attitudes to European power – demanding greater burden sharing and promoting European integration, but not wanting to share any more influence. The attitude has always been 'more pay, but no more say.' Although the neo-conservatives complain about European weakness it would be a mistake to believe that they want to do anything about it. In fact that weakness is a neo-conservative objective. If you look at neo-conservative writing – going back to the Defence Planning Guidance document of 1992 – it has been an objective to perpetuate European weakness in order to sustain American primacy. I don't doubt that the short term effect of the rebalancing approach would be the deterioration in relations with America in the short term. That is inevitable, given the premium that American policy-makers put on maintaining American primacy. But the longer term gain of a more functional transatlantic alliance means it would be worth the price.

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Discussion on Europe and America

John Bew

I agree with a lot of that. The Henry Jackson Society has hosted a wide-ranging debate on these questions. Britain's closeness to the United States and its role in the future reshaping of Europe means that Britain is the link between Europe and the United States. That role should be embraced. Tony Blair started to do this but lost momentum in the last couple of years. It needs to be taken on by whoever becomes leader.

My problem with your presentation is that though you pointed out Robert Kagan's argument that the lack of European military capacity is a weakness, which is correct, you then implied the problem comes from the US. I think the problem comes from Europe.

Oliver Kamm

I agree with much of what David says. The transatlantic alliance is the basis of our security, and it has been weakened over the last four or five years owing to profound disagreements about foreign policy. I also agree with David that the unipolar moment in US foreign policy has largely passed, and insofar as it remains it will not persist.

Where I differ from David is that there was scarcely a word of balance, if I may say so, in his criticisms of either party in the transatlantic alliance. You might have dwelt a little on European culpability. No-one writing in the press on this side of the Channel is more pro-German than I, but the fact is Germany has been particularly badly governed over the past few years, up until the present administration. It was absolutely disgraceful for the last German Chancellor to fight two election campaigns largely on anti-Americanism. It's far outside the tradition of German social democracy. It's one of the great achievements of the Atlantic alliance that it established a stable German democracy after the barbarism of Nazism – it was liberal, it eradicated xenophobia and it was profoundly pro-Western in its approach. The United States has a lot of genuine and justified grievance with regard to some aspects of European diplomacy over the last four or five years.

Yes, we should criticise the gratuitous unilateralism of some US diplomacy. Look at its economic diplomacy. The contempt of the Bush administration for institutions

of supranational governance, its lack of interest in the World Trade Organization, and its indifference to the economic imbalances, has been a model of how not to run policy. You can see in the outcome the lack of respect the US Treasury now has internationally. So, sure I can agree with the principles, but we need to be perhaps a little less brusque ourselves in trying to promote Europe, or other areas of the world, as a counter-balance to the United States. I don't think that's in anyone's interest.

Martin Shaw

We have an American administration which is trying to create a global politics based on a 'war on terror' – really an extreme sort of militaristic politics. So it is understandable that at least one European government adopts the opposite extreme position. And I don't think it's been particularly helpful to set up these sort of counterpositions. What we see here is a West in crisis and you can see symptoms of this crisis on both sides of the Atlantic. One of the tragedies here is that Tony Blair – perhaps much more than other Western and European statesman and other British politicians – clearly saw the strategic importance of this relationship but then blew it. He subordinated Britain's position to the United States, rather than, at a crucial moment, setting himself at the head of a coalition which could have reshaped the Atlantic relationship over Iraq and shifted the balance in American politics. Progressive Europeans need a different sort of regime in the United States. This brings me to the present situation. With the increasing unpopularity of Bush, and the manifest failure of many of his policies, we are edging towards another moment of opportunity in American politics. And do we have in Britain, and in the rest of Europe, political leaders who are going to engage effectively? There is a big question mark over Gordon Brown.

John Bew

I fear there is going to be a reaction in British politics but that reaction will pale into insignificance compared to the reaction there will be in the US against Iraq. Iraq is another Vietnam in American politics. The gravest danger is that we will see a return to a pre-9/11 Bush-type President – America looking after its own interests, without any engagement in the world, regarding humanitarian interventions as 'social work.' I think that's the big danger.

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Session 4: Labour's foreign policy after Blair – continuity or change?

Alan Johnson on Labour's foreign policy after Blair

A social democratic foreign policy should be a policy for parties and movements as well as governments, and it should seek to advance two goals. First, the security of the British people in the context of new and deadly threats. No progressive government is going to get elected, or deserve to get elected, that can't get that right. Second, the pursuit of social democratic values in a world rendered one by globalisation. I think the prize is a successful response to the threats that, in part at least, advances the values. The underlying idea: idealism is the new realism, or as Michael Walzer puts it, 'justice is the key to victory.'

A social democratic foreign policy should adopt the notion of 'the responsibility to protect' as something like a Kantian categorical imperative. As set out in the ICISS report that David referred to, the 'responsibility to protect' is an umbrella concept much more capacious and political than people think. It refers to the responsibility to prevent, the responsibility to react and the responsibility to *rebuild*. It is a far cry from some of the reactive and military responses to catastrophe and conflict that we're disagreeing about. The 'responsibility to protect' should be adopted by modern social democrats as a categorical imperative not just in regard to acute humanitarian catastrophes and crimes against humanity but also to the chronic conditions of global poverty and environmental decay. As such, the notion of 'a responsibility to protect' could form the basis for a new agenda for 21st century global social democracy.

I would propose five general kinds of policies we need to pursue, at this political moment, under that broad umbrella concept of 'the responsibility to protect.'

Step 1. The doctrine of the international community. The defeat of the enemy we face, Totalitarian Political Islam, will be the work of an international community. The internationally co-ordinated humanitarian interventions of the late 1990s, and the partnership at its heart – strained but real – between Europe and America, must be restored. We social democrats will have to do this in the face of both a US tendency to unilateralism, set out in the 2002 National Security Strategy which – with its talk of US hegemony and preventive war – was a disaster, and European

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tendencies to anti-Americanism and unserious bluster about Europe becoming a 'counter-power' to the USA.

The creation of an international community is going to require urgent reform of global institutions. One criticism of Tony Blair is that – until recent speeches – he does not have a great track record of engaging with that debate. To pick out one much-needed reform – an international community that aspires to rescue will require a military force capable of rescue. I do not think the United Nations is capable of creating such a force. The community of democracies needs to urgently discuss the creation of such a force and the means by which it can be rendered both compatible with international law and effective.

Step 2. We should have faith in and adherence to our own constitutional identity. We must respect the rule of law, the Geneva Convention, fair trials, oppose torture, extraordinary rendition, and so on. Why? First, it's morally right. Second, it's how we are going to win. Here again, idealism is realism. Martin Shaw's notion of 'global surveillance warfare' is useful. That's the kind of warfare we fight now. The Islamists understand this. What the Islamists seek to do is to intimidate, demoralise and detach democratic public opinion from democratic governments. We should not help them.

Step 3. A global battle of ideas against Totalitarian Political Islam. I do think there is an intellectual appeasement going on. I do think there's an ongoing betrayal of Muslim progressives and democrats. I do see the problem differently than some other people. A YouGov poll taken after 7/7 found that six percent of British Muslims thought the murders were 'fully justified.' That translates to 100,000 British Muslims. Now, even if we relate to that statistic sceptically, as I think we should, there is plainly an ongoing cultural crisis that cannot be tackled by policing alone.

I may not have consent in the room for this, but I think the 7/7 terrorists emerged from a crisis *within* a stultifying traditionalist world that unless it is reformed threatens us all. We democrats should aid those who seek an historic reformation of Islam. Salman Rushdie says '[we need] nothing less than a reform movement to bring the core concepts of Islam into the modern age.' Islam, says Rushdie, must be prised free from 'the hands of the literalist Islamofascists' who have imprisoned Islam in their 'iron certainties and unchanging absolutes' (*Times*, August 11, 2005). I agree with that and that is why I don't agree that I made a category error in the

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earlier discussion. If you look at the writings of the Islamist theoretician, Sayd Qutb, for instance, and you trace the influence of those writings on the Muslim Brotherhood, and the influence of the Brotherhood's ideology around the world, and the relationship of that ideology with al-Qaeda-type organisations, you understand you are dealing with one world. Yes, it is a world with various elements, some engaged in violence, some not, but it is a world that has to be tackled in the round. The idea that we can separate off the people who are prepared to make the bombs, and deal with them separately from the social and cultural base they come from, separately from the organic crisis in their societies, or separately from the deeply reactionary ideology that blocks any coming to terms with modernity, well, I just don't think that's right.

My complaint is different. My complaint is that we are not getting the back of the progressives. The Iraqi unions funds are frozen while the Islamists intimidate the democrats across Iraq, and it's often worst in the British-controlled areas. At home, while the Prime Minister gives a speech arguing the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood is at the heart of the threat we face, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office seeks to solve that problem by reaching out to... the Muslim Brotherhood. Blair often appears to be a dissident within the government let alone the party.

Step 4. Urgent global international solidarity with democrats in the Muslim and Arab world. This is *the* task of our political generation. If there's not always to be another terrorist to interdict then civic cultures have to overwhelm despotic cultures. Regimes really do have to change. That doesn't mean we become the new Jacobins. It does mean, however, that the left, as currently constituted, is in large part *irrelevant* to what has to be done. Solidarity has been shamefully lacking in Iraq. And the current international 'anti-war movement,' as it is currently constituted and led, is actually an obstacle to the kind of international solidarity movement we do need.

Step 5. Pursue global economic development-as-freedom and economic justice. This is the social democratic strategic framing of democratisation and development. Once more, idealism turns out to be realism. Our deepest social democratic instincts turn out to be a form of *realpolitik* because the defeat of Totalitarian Political Islam is ultimately inseparable from the pursuit of global economic development-as-freedom, to use Amartya Sen's happy phrase.

These series of five steps need to be adopted from below, by movements, and from above, by governments. They stand in continuity with much of Tony Blair's policy. But they also imply some significant changes. We need to argue much harder in any future coalition of the willing for *our terms* and for this social democratic agenda. We need to *become unwilling* if necessary. For Labour Friends of Iraq I used to write a series called *Bush Doesn't Get It*. There was Part 1, Part 2, Part 3, Part 4, Part 5, and on and on. The 'doctrine of the international community' is simply incompatible with much of what has been done by the USA before, during and after the invasion of Iraq. If social democracy is not going to be an appendage to somebody else's agenda we do have to be willing to become unwilling. The Labour Party should sponsor a wide-ranging public discussion about a British National Security Strategy, one that takes into account both the threat we face, and our European and Atlantic alliances. This might help regain the intellectual legitimacy and the popular understanding in the country which would empower governments to sustain public support for an active internationalist foreign policy and for the long war against Totalitarian Political Islam.

Second, while it is absolutely right to talk of economic justice in the way Blair has – as an important part of the fight against terrorism – and it is true the Labour government has led the way, we need a step-change in the radical reform of the architecture of global economic governance. And we need much more emphasis on the role of global trade unionism in any future global social democracy. At a recent conference I asked a question of several government Ministers: 'What is the progressive labour agenda for modern trade unionism?' There was a slightly non-plussed and ad hoc quality to the response. Social democracy needs to renew an older understanding of the importance of trade unionism and from-below civic society organising to the pursuit of social democratic values.

A last point. There needs to be a change in *sensibility* in the Labour party and on the wider liberal-left. This change in sensibility will require us to see the threat plain. It would be very healthy if we were able to say things like 'Michael Moore is an idiot.' Let's stop projecting these cartoonish figures as if they're profound thinkers. Michael Moore wrote in one of his books, 'there is no threat, repeat after me, THERE IS NO THREAT.' We need to stop being merely negative, reducing politics to the performance of identity by waving ridiculous placards that say 'Bush is the Real Terrorist!' We need to get positive and make practical solidarity with Egyptian bloggers, Iranian students, And Iraqi Trade Unionists.

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My fear is that over the next period we will see the McGovernisation of the Labour Party. American radicals in the early 1970s flocked to Democrat George McGovern's disastrous Presidential campaigns, so alienated that they saw themselves as internal exiles, living not in America but in 'Amerika.' They were trounced at the polls. Today the danger is of 'Pilgerisation' or 'Chomskyisation.' Those who want a different future had better start making their case.

David Clark on Labour's foreign policy after Blair

There needs to be quite a lot of change in Labour's foreign policy, even if there is also continuity. There are things this government has done which I completely agree with, not least in the international development arena. And, specifically in Labour's first term, obviously, in the Balkans, where I doubt I will be in my lifetime associated with anything that will make me feel prouder. But the assumption of power by the Bush administration with an aggressive America First ideology, has posed challenges to Labour which it hasn't responded to correctly. There have been major errors and there needs to be a lot of change, not just at a practical level but at a philosophical level, in the way Labour sees the world.

Progressives really need to focus on the policies that are required to develop Europe's capacity in the fields of foreign and defence policy in order to ensure a more balanced transatlantic alliance. That balance is the answer to the danger that the next phase of American foreign policy will be isolationist. The existence of a European partner that was capable of acting effectively in the international arena with America, and not just at America's instruction, would inform American policy and engage in a meaningful exchange, and would compromise over a joint strategy. That's one answer to a risk which I also absolutely recognise. Nobody should imagine that American isolationism will be a comfortable thing for the world, and we certainly shouldn't indulge in that idea as a way of overcoming the problems that we've experienced in recent years. Rebalancing is also the key to devising effective strategies for tackling some of the major political issues that terrorism thrives on. In particular, Israel-Palestine. There have been huge problems arising from America trying to fulfil a dual role – honest broker in procuring a settlement and Israel's main strategic ally. It hasn't worked. If there is to be a solution it does require a greater internationalisation of diplomacy. A more united European foreign policy ought to be a key element of that. And a stronger Europe is a way of overcoming or pre-empting what Alan described as the danger of the 'McGovernisation' of the Labour Party, which I accept is a risk. The kind of people who paint the placards

you describe don't really consist of much more than the ultra left, but some of those attitudes are being pumped up by John Pilger and Noam Chomsky – that the West can do no right and that we're irredeemably sinful and the more we stay out of the international arena and other countries' business the better. I don't like that style of politics at all. The idea that there can be a better future for the transatlantic relationship, one that doesn't imply any conservative American unipolar direction is one that would attract a lot of progressive left sentiment that might have been tempted by that style of oppositional left politics.

Now, is any of this likely to happen? Probably not to the extent that I would like. There is very real danger in perpetuating this idea of Britain as a bridge between Europe and America. John referred to Britain's ability to fulfil that role. That perpetuates European weakness. Europe is already finding it so difficult to formulate common positions and so any attempt by Britain to prioritise its relations with Washington, or even see itself as a broker between Washington and Europe, is a mistake. It perpetuates European weakness. What progressives in Britain ought to be thinking of first and foremost is formulating a common position which Europe can then use to negotiate with Washington. That, for me, is the only game in town for pursuing the progressive outcomes that we want. Unfortunately this notion of Britain as a sort of bridge, the notion of the special relationship, will persist.

We are of course assuming that Gordon Brown will be the next Prime Minister and that's right barring something unforeseen. We don't know an awful lot about Gordon Brown's views on foreign policy it's fair to say, but what we do know draws me towards the conclusion that there will be more continuity than change. On Europe he displays a very high degree of scepticism about the benefits of European integration. He has shown a high level of identification with North America. Temperamentally and emotionally he's much more attracted to doing business with America than Europe. It's likely that his relationship with America will dwell much more on economic issues and less than Tony Blair's on military matters, but the overall thrust of his foreign policy, all things being equal, will be pretty much the same.

On globalisation, Gordon Brown's position is far too laissez-faire. I was very heartened to hear what Oliver had to say about the problems that we are experiencing with America's refusal to take responsibility for ironing out global economic imbalances. We desperately need a discussion about a political framework for managing globalisation, one that performs tasks that are analogous to the tasks

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performed by the Breton Woods system after the Second World War, which did ensure a much more equitable model of international economic development. I get from Gordon Brown no sense he's interested in that. He seems to believe like an unreconstructed 19th Century Liberal that simply extending markets is enough.

I was very disturbed by Brown's intervention on Trident, not because of the policy as such – I think there's an arguable case for maintaining Britain at some sort of nuclear capability – but it was the politics of it that I found disturbing. It was the intervention of a man who is trapped in the political framework of the 1980s. There's no real evidence that the electorate sees the replacement of Trident as being a litmus test of Labour's fitness to govern. The fact that he felt the need to announce this in order to shore up his credibility with certain sections of opinion was quite disturbing.

If I can just conclude with a couple of things that might point in a different direction. One, which has already been referred to, is the need for Gordon Brown to draw a line under Iraq and the foreign policy of the Blair era, in order to reach out to progressives who have defected from the Labour Party. This could have a positive effect and mean Gordon Brown would take a more independent foreign policy line from George Bush. It could equally have very negative effects if it meant he was reluctant to authorise military force even when it was necessary, in Darfur for example. Second, there are developments which might lead him to reassess his position on Europe. Brown was historically quite pro-European. In some of his statements in the early 1990s he staked out a Euro-Keynesian position and saw further European integration as having significant benefits in delivering Labour's agenda. It's not impossible that if the facts change then, like Lord Keynes, he will change his opinion back. I see the possibility of that. Germany is experiencing a tentative recovery and, who knows, if they win the World Cup that recovery may gather momentum because as we all know, the real problem with the German economy is not a dysfunctional labour market, it's a lack of consumer confidence and as a lack of spending. German consumers are saving whereas British consumers are borrowing to spend. Something in the middle might help to get the Eurozone moving and transform British perceptions of the advantages to Britain of being more closely integrated with Europe. And it may also transform the attitudes of Gordon Brown.

And there is a new generation of leaders emerging in Europe. Not all of them are particularly good but there is a nevertheless a wind of change sweeping through

Europe. What direction that takes is yet to become apparent, but there's a possibility it will produce a more effective generation of European leaders. All of that may converge to produce a change of mind on Brown's part. Of course the Brown that we know now, or we think we know now, won't necessarily be the Brown that we experience once he's in power. It's worth bearing in mind the kind of leader we thought Tony Blair was going to be in the mid 1990s, and the kind of Tony Blair that we have now. It's only once Brown is in power that we will really know the answer to the question of whether there's going to be more continuity or change.

Oliver Kamm

I'll do it the other way round to David: what is likely to happen and what I think ought to happen. I largely agree with David's point on Gordon Brown, even with our caveats that a leading politician may change completely in foreign policies as Tony Blair did once he became Prime Minister. I agree with David that the Atlanticist instincts of Gordon Brown are apparent. He really is devoted to the US liberal tradition. He holidays in Cape Cod, his friends are on the liberal wing of the Democratic party, his economic discussions take place in the United States, he is a friend of Alan Greenspan. All his instincts are toward a traditional Atlanticist tilt in foreign policy with which I am largely in sympathy.

On the question of what ought to happen, well I've already said I'm largely in agreement with Blair. This is where I disagree to a certain extent with David. The more I hear about David's proposal for rebalancing international relations with a greater role for Europe, the more worried I become. We haven't discussed the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on which I'm certain David and I would agree on the ends of a secure Israel and an independent Palestinian state. But I do promise you David, the reason that outcome has not occurred up till now is not that there are too few European governments meddling in the process. I would be rather wary of extending a role for the EU in that conflict.

On the issue of Trident, again I disagree with David, I'm absolutely delighted by what Gordon Brown said. I take the view that the case for the British independent nuclear deterrent was always marginal in the Cold War but is significantly stronger now. I haven't got time to make the argument for that view but that's the position I hold.

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I'm worried that the post-Blair foreign policy debates in the Labour Party may well be raucous and destructive. Brian Brivati made the point the other day that, if the Labour Party loses the next election – which is unlikely but conceivable – then on historical precedent the Labour Party might shift quite sharply to the left. The sort of cartoonish visions of foreign policy that Alan referred to may become quite vocal. I recall speaking at a Labour Conference fringe meeting in 2004. I was agreeing very strongly with a campaign by Oxfam on the trade in small arms – much the most destructive and unverifiable aspect of the arms trade – and I made an incidental remark to the effect that I supported the government's position over Iraq. A gentleman at the back got up and said, 'The comments from the gentleman from the Murdoch press are an insult to Labour Party members.' As I was defending the position of the Labour government I thought this was a little rich, but I'm sure there will be more of it.

Notes

[1] Many thanks to Ziba Norman and William Arthurs of the Transatlantic Institute for hosting the symposium.

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