

CROSSBOW - The Bow Group magazine

The
BOW
GROUP

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BOW

April 08 EDITION



**'What lies
abroad'**

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Editor's Note



How foreign. The editor lets the deputy editor be editor for one edition. Je ne comprends pas. Which ambitious Bow Grouper would turn down the chance for shameless self-promotion? A coup d'état orchestrated by moi in the new Bow Group offices in Southwark perhaps? Nothing of the sort. Quite simple really. Busy body Charlotte Leslie has been marching down the streets of Bristol North West to turn it blue in 2010. And she's been attracting Guardian readers to Cameroonism on her new political blog. So instead of claiming ownership for this magazine, she's let her faithful deputy step into the spotlight. Admirable.

Charlotte epitomises the new ultra-consensual attitude in the Bow Group. Sub committees, beavering away at the most unsociable hours, have sprung up from nowhere. Nowadays, the council is forever meeting to discuss future plans

over a bottle of wine. Or four. Administrator Irene Harris is sure it's the new offices. Deprived of its own meeting room for so long, the Bow Group has fire in its belly thanks to flip boards and marker pens.

But as the Bow Group becomes more united, the world seems to be going in the opposite direction. How we tackle the world's problems seems to evoke polarising viewpoints. On the environment, either we have to act immediately or we simply won't exist next year, or we should let the authorities triple the size of Heathrow because the only people who believe in global warming- in the words of American media pundit Ann Coulter- are nutty, religious fanatics. Say you want to withdraw troops from Iraq, and you're a namby-pamby liberal. Think we should stay in Iraq? You must be an imperialist.

Hurt by the unilateralism of the Hawks in the White House, America has not just enraged foes but traditional allies too, and is more isolated and impotent than ever before. The world now waits with anticipation for a President who bridges intra- and inter-national division. There is the hope that the world can come together to solve the most urgent problems we now face.

Still waking from the nightmare of 9/11, people six years ago would have said that terrorism is the biggest threat to the global order. James Forsyth reminds us that it is still as much a danger to

the civilised world than ever before. But high on public consciousness is the threat of climate change and global poverty. Problems in Afghanistan and Israel also cause worry, especially for the families of our brave service men and women. Contributors to this edition, including most of the Shadow Foreign Affairs team, offer their perspective on how we might address these international problems. The spectre of an increasingly powerful EU also causes deep concern.

Squeamish at the sight of our bank statements, we look at the world-America in particular- and hope that recession does not cause job losses and negative equity over here. These days, if you look across the sea, it's all doom and gloom. One thing is for sure, however: we are in a stronger position to take on these threats when international powers are united rather than divided. Harriet Harman, in her debut appearance at PMQ's talked about the eyes of the world being on Zimbabwe. Spot on. CrossBow sincerely hopes Zimbabweans will finally be free of Mugabe. But as eyes, quite rightly, have turned south temporarily, it is west that people will be looking in the autumn. For the new President in the White House offers a chance for change, for a world more united and confident about working together to solve the biggest problems.

Ryan Shorthouse
Deputy Editor, Crossbow

The Bow Group - Council 2008

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McCain's the Man

by James Forsyth



The 2008 presidential election will turn on national security just as the 2004 one did. Iraq remains the biggest dividing line between the two parties. Indeed, the past four years has seen this line become ever more distinct as Democratic support for the war has dripped away.

John McCain, the Republican nominee, believes that it is imperative that America stays in Iraq until success—a functioning, pluralistic Iraqi state—is assured and is relaxed about the possibility of a permanent American presence there. By contrast, both Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama are committed to beginning the process of troop withdrawal within months of taking office and opposed to a long-term American presence in the country.

Iraq will dominate the debate because of the dynamics of the campaign. McCain is more passionate about Iraq than any other issue and will drive the debate there at every opportunity. Hillary Clinton or Barack Obama will not be able to duck the subject as both will know that they have to pass the commander in chief test, albeit for different reasons. Clinton as the first serious female presidential nominee

would have to reassure voters that she can deal with issues of war and peace; it is no coincidence that of all the committee assignment she could have had in the Senate she chose Armed Services. While Obama, who was just a State Senator in Illinois four short years ago, would have to demonstrate that he is experienced enough to handle these challenges. If this was a domestic change election—like 1992 or 2000—Obama would be unstoppable. But with America engaged in two wars and leading a global struggle against Islamist extremism, voters might balk at electing someone with virtually no foreign policy experience. His surrogates have sometimes been reduced to citing his undergraduate major in international relations as proof that he is ready for this part of the job, which is hardly likely to allay voters' concerns on this point.

McCain is the best possible advocate for the pro-war cause. He was one of a handful of Republicans to call for more troops from almost straight after the invasion and to be consistently critical of the appalling way that the war was handled from the invasion in 2003 to late 2006. More importantly, he was the key political supporter of the surge which has done so much to pull Iraq back from the brink—it has now secured 90 percent of Baghdad and more than halved civilian casualties nationwide—and has provided the conditions for national reconciliation there. It is also impossible to accuse McCain—a veteran who survived more than five and a half years in the Hanoi Hilton—of being a chicken hawk or to allege that he is indifferent to the human costs of war when his youngest son has just returned from a tour of duty in Iraq.

Up against this is the fact that America has been involved in Iraq for

more time than it spent fighting World War II. The American public is war-weary, 63 percent of voters want all troops home within the year and paradoxically, an improving situation in Iraq might be seen as a reason to leave by many.

Given the way that the war has gone a candidate who opposed the war from the outset, as Obama did, starts from a strong position; 64 percent of the electorate are now against the war. Obama, though, has thrown away his trump card. He used to argue that “we have to be as careful getting out as we were careless getting in”; positioning himself perfectly for a general election where most of the electorate favours withdrawal but worries about the consequences. But the political needs of a primary campaign have pushed him to the left on the issue, he now argues for a withdrawal starting in early 2009 which will be over within 16 months—a dangerously short period of time—and has even argued that preventing genocide is not a reason to keep US troops in the country. Here, he might just have given McCain the opening he needs to portray Obama as an advocate of surrender to an evil foe—and if you can not call an enemy evil that uses mentally retarded women as the delivery mechanism for its bombs then we should expunge the word from the dictionary.

The candidate who is most vulnerable on Iraq is Hillary Clinton. She voted for the Iraq war, but was critical of the surge. To anti-war voters her first position was wrong, to those who take the opposite view her second one was.

On other foreign policy issues there is less difference between McCain and his Democratic rivals than one might expect. Certainly, all of them will travel better than George W. Bush does.

However, it would be a mistake to think that all trans-Atlantic tensions will ride off into the sunset with Bush.

The recent National Intelligence Estimate which declared, to everyone's surprise and contrary to prior reports, that Iran had ceased work on developing a nuclear weapon has taken the military option off the table for the foreseeable future. Of the three remaining contenders, McCain is the most hawkish on Iran. But like Clinton or Obama he would embark on a new diplomatic push early on in his presidency. McCain would seek to use his diplomatic capital to ensure a tougher set of sanctions. Although given the Russian and Chinese positions, any new sanctions would likely not come via the United Nations. Interestingly, this trio are all on the record as favouring a strike on Iran if that is what it takes to stop it going nuclear. While it is tempting to dismiss this as mere campaign rhetoric, the geo-political realities of the Middle East will probably keep whoever becomes president in line with this position. Given America's security interests, the prospect of Iran becoming the de facto regional hegemon by virtue of its nuclear status is simply not acceptable to Washington regardless of who is sitting in the White House.

Afghanistan will almost certainly be the first issue to cause a run-in between the new president and his European counterparts. Whoever is inaugurated on January 20th, 2009 is going to demand a stepped up commitment from the European Nato members there. If Europe fails to oblige, any new president is likely to take a dim view of its military relevance in the world. If the Europeans aren't prepared to fight in Afghanistan, then it is hard to imagine a situation outside of their backyard where they are prepared to commit forces.

We already know that the next president will move on from the disastrous Bush era positions on torture and global warming. However, if a Democrat wins protectionism

might become the new stumbling block in trans-Atlantic relations. While even a President McCain would be severely constrained by Congress in his ability to broker new trade agreements.

“It is almost impossible to accuse McCain of being a chicken hawk when his youngest son has just returned from a tour of duty in Iraq”.

The Bush presidency is spluttering towards an uninspiring end so 2008 will be a hard year for the Republicans; 1988 is the only time that a two term president has been succeeded by a member of his own party since the war and that was after a remarkably successful presidency. But the Republicans have nominated the candidate with the best chance of winning and someone who will at least save them from their own worst instincts. Anyone other than McCain would likely have run a campaign that focused heavily on immigration alienating Hispanics, the fastest growing voting bloc in the country, from the party for a generation.

It seems increasingly likely that the Democrats will also nominate their strongest general election candidate, Obama. Obama has done things throughout this campaign that are not meant to be possible in politics any more. He has drawn huge crowds everywhere he has gone, persuaded young voters to go the polls in record numbers and shown that rhetoric can still move people. For all this, though, there has been little policy boldness. It is hard to say what, on a concrete level, the Obama presidency would change.

A McCain Obama race would be fascinating as both men pride themselves on their appeal to independents and neither are exponents of the fifty plus one politics

of the 1990s. If McCain is to compete with Obama, he will have to provide a policy agenda to counter Obama's charismatic appeal. Expect to see a new electorally appealing brand of Reform Republicanism rolled out by the McCain campaign which draws heavily from the political successes of popular Republican governors like Arnold Schwarzenegger. If the Cameroons are smart, they will adapt much of the language and many of the ideas for their own ends. Indeed, McCain has already found a pro-growth way to talk about green issues that David Cameron would do well to copy.

If the choice is between McCain and Obama, who America chooses will reveal how it sees the next phase of the war on terror. An Obama victory would reflect a desire to be inspired at home and loved abroad again; a belief that America's soft power is ultimately more effective than its hard power. However beguiling that view may seem, it does not match up to the harsh realities of the world today. The greatest criticism of Obama you can make is that he fails to adequately distinguish between the soft anti-Americanism, which would be all but eradicated by an Obama triumph in November, and those whose enmity for America is implacable.

A McCain victory would show that America is committed to seeing the mission through in Iraq despite the missteps of the past and the challenges ahead. Given the consequences of an American defeat in Iraq—sectarian violence on a hideous scale that is likely to result in a regional war, the strengthening of both Sunni and Shiite extremists and a terrorist safe haven in the heart of the Middle East—that is reason enough to think that a McCain victory in November would be the best result for America and the world.

James Forsyth is the web editor of The Spectator

Scrap these immoral subsidies

Andrew Mitchell MP is Shadow Secretary of State for International Development



I would normally visit Marks and Spencer's to stock up the fridge or buy some socks. In early March, however, I was at the M&S store on Oxford Street to meet Mr Makandianfing Keita and members of the Fairtrade Foundation. Mr Keita was visiting Britain as part of Fairtrade Fortnight: normally he can be found at home on his cotton farm in Mali. Some of the cotton he and his family produces is used to make clothes for M&S's Fairtrade range.

Fairtrade is a thoroughly Conservative concept: we believe in using our purchasing power to send a signal to the market – just as, in the Mitchell family, we only buy free range eggs. Access to the Fairtrade market has been fantastic for Mr Keita. His community has benefited greatly: sinking a well, starting a primary school and improving healthcare facilities.

The success of Fairtrade, with growing sales and the engagement of major

companies such as M&S and Tate and Lyle reflects the extent to which people in the UK care about trade issues. As Harriet Lamb of the Fairtrade Foundation put it, “consumers in Britain are voting with their wallets”. Many local Conservative Councils, too, are choosing to go Fairtrade – something that we encourage.

However, Mr Keita's message is clear: “Cotton farmers in Mali can compete with farmers in rich countries. But we can't compete with their subsidies.” While life has improved for his community, in poor countries producers of agricultural products, particularly cotton, are often priced out of the marketplace by heavily subsidised goods from rich countries.

While British and European consumers have been quick to act on fair trade, their governments and trade negotiators have been slow. In 2004, the World Trade Organisation ruled that the US should cut its cotton subsidies. When I visited Mali in 2005,

many cotton farmers were hopeful that things might finally improve. But three years on, little has changed. And the EU continues to subsidise cotton production, though to a lesser extent. As Ms Lamb says, “reform of the immoral Western cotton subsidies, which are so destructive for marginalised producers, is long overdue.”

Furthermore, these subsidies are a crucial cause of the logjam at the world trade talks. Now is the time for a real push on this issue: there is real opportunity for progress but the window of opportunity is small. Many negotiators have given this round of trade talks at the World Trade Organisation a 50-50 chance of success - the best odds that have been reported for some time. But if Ministerial agreement is not reached, political changes in the US and India will militate against a deal being implemented.

There is a huge amount at stake here: the safeguarding of the integrity of a pro-poor, rules-based multilateral trading system. Our Government must engage closely with key players in the EU, US, and Latin America to help reach agreement.

If we allow the talks to collapse at this time of global economic uncertainty, we face the grim prospect of recession and a retreat to protectionism. Cotton farmers like Mr Keita and those buying Fairtrade jeans from Marks and Spencer's both have a considerable stake in the negotiations of the next months.

Andrew Mitchell has made a short film about cotton producers in Mali. It can viewed at:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPnpdRYLPoE>

Footage of his meeting with Mr Keita can be found at:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9z1qVKpJ1gY>

A benchmark for political unfairness. In three acts

by **Asheem Singh**

We are the arbiters of democracy but are we then the arbiters of global electoral fairness?

This tragic plot runs as follows. Kenya's President Mwai Kibaki is sworn in for a second term after the Electoral Commission declares him the winner of closely-fought elections. Opposition leader Raila Odinga rejects Mr Kibaki's victory, accusing him of electoral fraud and demanding a recount.

The announcement triggers riots around Kenya. The count was already badly delayed, sparking violence in which at least 13 people are reported to have been killed. Things proliferate. Police shoot dead five opposition protesters in two separate incidents in Mr Odinga's strongholds in western Kenya. The Kenyan government suspend all live television broadcasts amid fulminous post-election violence. Inside sources place the latest body count at a round five-hundred.

“The time has come to move towards a better stage-managed western intervention in electoral situations”.

And what is our part in this dire vaudeville? We did our best. A team of observers from the European Union said the Electoral Commission of Kenya failed to ensure the credibility of the poll. "We believe that... the ECK... has not succeeded in establishing the credibility of the tallying process to the satisfaction of all parties and candidates", chief EU observer Alexander Lambsdorff said.

The opposition went marginally further, alleging that the ECK was "packed full of [Kibaki's] cronies". David Miliband said London had "real concerns at the irregularities reported by the EU observers and others". In Washington, US State Department spokesman Tom Casey declined effectively to comment: "Regardless of the eventual winners of this election, we call on Kenyans across the political spectrum to work together to advance democracy and national development."

What of the World Bank? Former head, Paul Wolfowitz, had allegedly made grants to Kenya conditional on the continued freedom of the press. "Corruption", he once declaimed, is the "biggest threat to democracy since Communism". He lost his job amid charges of corruption.

His replacement, the increasingly effodient Robert Zoellick, has- in his short spell at the top- lost a high profile colleague in the fraud department to - yes, you've guessed it - corruption charges, and has had to defend himself against increasing clamours for the Bank's privatisation.

The astute reader may sense the worth in this proposal.

As a free-market liberal, I am unsurprised by the failure of the twin leviathans of the EU and the World Bank to play a decent role here. Surely the time has come to move towards a better stage-managed western intervention in electoral situations, to evince precisely what fairness means in volatile areas and have experts help manage it more efficiently, preserving lives, markets and all the rest of it.

This would be better, certainly, than the monolithic approach of incentivising, threatening and fire-fighting. As Kibaki said during his victorious campaign, "Elections will come and go, but our country must remain. We must be more than peace lovers; we must be peacemakers." So you see there is even a moral to this story: in the greatest of tragedies, irony is seldom absent.

Asheem Singh is a Research Fellow in Democracy and Governance at Policy Exchange



Towards a two-state solution

**David Liddington MP is the Shadow Foreign Minister and
Chairman of the Conservative International Office**



The recent savage violence in Gaza threatens to undermine the fragile hopes for peace brought about by Annapolis. Yet despite all the anger and mistrust, opinion surveys on both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian divide show there is a yearning for peace and a recognition that the only realistic way forward is towards a two state solution. It is a formula which negotiators and honest brokers from all parts of the world agree should be the final outcome of the Middle East peace process: an Israeli state secure within agreed borders and living alongside a Palestinian state which is a sovereign, contiguous and both economically and politically viable.

The question is whether there is the political will, in both Israel and among the Palestinian leadership, to implement such a deal. Despite all the difficulties, there are some reasons for hope. For a start, the alternatives to the two state solution are clearly unacceptable to one or both sides in the conflict. There is the single state option. As Palestinian politician Saeb Erekat put it to me on a recent trip to the region: "I would be happy to live in a country called Israel which stretched from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River, provided that I had the same civic rights and responsibilities in that state as everybody else". I suspect that the majority of Palestinians long for such an outcome, but the political reality is that Israel has existed as a democratic Jewish state for 60 years.

Or there is a continuation of what we have at the moment: Israel ruling by force over territory and people conquered in 1967. It is not a sustainable state of affairs. It is already obvious how hatreds and resentments are festering. In about 2010, the number of Palestinians born each year will start to exceed the number of newborn Israelis. Demographic trends will start to impose their own logic. Both Ariel Sharon and Ehud Olmert, neither

exactly renowned in the past as doves, recognized that it was not going to be possible for Israel indefinitely to maintain its rule over a growing Palestinian population, one which eventually could outnumber the Jewish population of Israel, while still maintaining the character of Israel as both a Jewish and a democratic state.

In spite of all the caveats, doubts and subsequent disappointments, the Annapolis conference marked a step forward. The US administration deployed its political muscle to get the Middle East peace process moving again. Almost every Arab country, including Saudi Arabia and Syria, was represented at a relatively senior level. Perhaps most important, it was clear to me from my conversations last December in both Ramallah and West Jerusalem that the Israeli government and the Abbas-Fayyad administration on the West Bank saw one another as partners in a genuine push for lasting peace. It seems to me that if Israel and the Palestinians are to move towards a deal, there needs to be early and visible progress on other matters in order to strengthen the fragile confidence on each side that the other is acting in good faith. In the immediate future, what is needed in Gaza is a de facto truce that might, over time, allow political engagement to start. The Arab powers, who have no wish to see Hamas become ever more closely linked to Iran, should persuade that organisation to stop the attacks upon Israeli territory while, in parallel, the United States and other friends of Israel try to secure a relaxation of the state of near siege which has been imposed on the Gaza Strip.

Secondly, a revitalisation of the Palestinian economy is vital in securing a long term agreement. I don't normally agree with Tony Blair, but in his role as the envoy of the Quartet he deserves full, cross-party support. Investment and jobs are not going to flow into the West Bank while road closures and

checkpoints impose a stranglehold on the normal movement of people and goods. Any Israeli government will be reluctant in the extreme to take the risk of dismantling these controls while they fear that the consequence would be an increase in violence directed at Israeli citizens. Economic development and assurances on security go hand in hand.

Third, the role of the wider Arab world is vital not only to resolve the crisis in Gaza but also to reassure public opinion in Israel. The Arab League Peace Plan of 2002, an initiative led by Crown Prince (now King) Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, represented an historic offer by the Arab world to Israel. But any democratic politician knows that it is only when you are feeling exhausted at constantly repeating a message that the general public, who for the most part have other things to think about than politics, realise that you are saying anything to them at all. I hope that moderate Arab leaders repeat again and again the message of reconciliation and permanent regional peace embodied in the 2002 plan.

Prince Turki al-Faisal, brother of the Saudi Foreign Minister, recently told Reuters that "the Arab world, by the Arab peace initiative, has crossed the Rubicon from hostility to Israel to peace with Israel". He spoke of how Israel and the Arabs could co-operate in many areas of mutual advantage including water, agriculture, science and education. I hope that in the weeks and months ahead we hear more Arab leaders speaking publicly in this way. The late King Hassan II of Morocco used to say: "Just think of the combination-the wealth of the Arab nations coupled with the brains of the Jews! Together we could transform the entire Middle East into a garden of Eden!" Amidst the bloodshed, violence and despair which in recent years have all too often characterised the Middle East and the Israel-Palestine conflict in particular, we need to hold on to that vision.

By the time you read this, 210 children will die

by Dr. Jaykar R. Panchmatia

Despite ten years of Brown controlling this country's finances and ten years of rhetoric, very little progress has actually been made towards making global poverty history.

According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), in 2006 the ratio of overseas development aid to gross national income in the United Kingdom was only 0.51%. This falls well short of the 0.7% target suggested in 1969 by the influential Pearson Commission and is similar to the proportion that we gave in 1979. Even more shameful is that many of our neighbours such as Denmark regularly meet the target set by the Pearson Commission.

The figure that we contribute towards international development (\$12.5 billion) may at first appear large but must be put into context by comparing it to recent episodes of fiscal mismanagement such as the \$50 billion spent supporting Northern Rock. Imagine if just an iota, say \$2.2 billion, of that \$50 billion had been spent on the prevention and treatment of malaria. A report presented at Davos this year on behalf of the Roll Back Malaria Partnership predicted that spending \$2.2 billion on malaria prevention and treatment annually for five years in thirty African countries that account for 90% of global deaths from malaria would yield astounding results. Two and a half million lives would be saved and 430 million cases prevented.

Supporters of the government no doubt claim that great strides are being made to increase the amount we contribute to international

development. I suspect that the parents of the 210 children aged under 5 that will die from preventable causes in the ten minutes that it takes you to read this article may beg to differ.

As the world's fifth largest economy, we have a moral obligation to help the world's poorest countries. Just as we famously stood shoulder to shoulder with the United States in its hour of need, so we should have the humility to stand shoulder to shoulder with the people of nations trying to tackle the scourges of infant mortality and malaria. It is often forgotten that some of the world's poorest countries are also amongst our staunchest supporters. To this very day, for example, three thousand Gurkha's from Nepal and five thousand men and women from Commonwealth countries such as Fiji continue to serve in our armed forces.

Aside from the undeniable moral arguments, there are also pragmatic reasons for increasing aid. Mass tourism, the internet and television mean there is no longer a veil that shields the rich from the poor. Those not benefiting from the dividends of globalization are no longer oblivious to the opportunities available to their fellow man. Not only does this foster resentment and political unrest, but it is also one of the reasons why each year many millions risk their lives and make treacherous journeys in an attempt to migrate to more wealthy nations.

Tackling global poverty is also central to tackling the drugs trade, climate change and the rise of diseases such as HIV. It is estimated that 1 billion

people live on less than \$1 a day. Until this is resolved farmers across the globe will continue to grow opium; men and women will continue to turn to prostitution and acres of rainforest will continue to be destroyed in the search of quick profits.

However, increasing the amount of aid that we give is not alone sufficient. We need to promote the idea of a partnership between the UK and those nations that receive aid. Aid must be increased but in return both donor and recipient nations need to ensure that this aid is being spent effectively. This concept of good governance and partnership form part of the 2005 Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness, an international agreement between many of the world's largest aid donors and recipients.

In recent years, the call for more to be done regarding global poverty has been loudest in this country- whether it be the millions who supported Band Aid in 1984 or the hundreds of millions of pounds donated to help those affected by the Tsunami. The Conservative Party, a party which has championed numerous other causes- such as the environment- with great success, needs to take a similarly robust stance on global poverty.

The approach to international development needs to be two pronged. Firstly we need to argue the case for increasing the amount of overseas development aid that we give as a nation. Secondly, we need to promote the idea of aid effectiveness. By adopting this approach, we will ensure that ten years from now, 210 children will not die in the time that it has taken you to read this article.

'Love-bombing' Iran?

Some say that the Iranian regime denies the holocaust, wants Israel "wiped off the map", and is about to acquire nuclear weapons, and we should therefore consider a military attack on Iran's nuclear facilities. Well, think again.

If you speak to its oppressed citizens, you initially get the impression that they might actually welcome such a move. "You are British? Why does your foreign secretary Jack Straw always bow to the mullah's every wish and whim when he comes to Teheran? He should tell the mullahs to get lost!" These were the words of an elegantly dressed businessman I met when visiting Persia in 2003 – three months after the US invasion in Iraq. Sentiments like these were shared by nearly all people I met. To be fair, they were mostly middle class and educated. But then again, Iran's educated middle class is large: over two-thirds of the population is urban and 24% of young Iranians have a university degree [the same level as in the UK only a few years ago].

Yet, there is a paradox: in the same breath that people told me how much they detest the Islamic state, they also passionately dismissed any idea of outside interference to bring about regime change. Iranians are fiercely patriotic. Centuries of attempts by India, Russia and, later, Britain to subject Persia to their own sphere of influence has left enormous distrust towards 'superpowers' in the national psyche. There is little disagreement with the Government's semi-declared policy of seeking to acquire nuclear weapons: they are seen as an object of national pride.

However, this apparent paradox of Iran being a country of 'educated patriots' presents a great diplomatic opportunity – one that has not been seized by the West. President Ahmadinejad certainly plays the patriotic card. But he does not appeal to Persia's middle classes and the people I met on my visit. Why? Despite having the world's second largest oil reserves and benefiting from record oil prices, Iran's economy is anachronistic by Middle Eastern standards. 1% of the population subscribes to a mobile phone, against an average of 4% for the whole Middle East and northern Africa. 1% own a personal computer, against 2% for the region. Just 100 miles across the Persian Gulf in Dubai, mobile phone and personal

computer ownership are at Western levels. This picture is confirmed by walking around the cities: most cars are licence-copies of the 1960s Hillman Hunter – hardly the finest piece of British engineering. Nearly all aircraft predate the revolution of 1979, and spare parts are becoming just that: spare. Most pathetic of all, due to the lack of foreign investment in refining capacity, Iran is a massive net importer of fuel. The hostility of Iran's middle classes towards the regime is at least partly explained by these basic economic failures (which are compounded by the restrictions on personal and political liberties).

At the same time, Iran's working-age population will have grown by 10 million people between 2001 and 2011, adding to already high levels of unemployment. Inflation stands at just under 20%, as Ahmadinejad tries (without much success) to buy popularity through heavy government spending. A drop in oil prices could cause serious economic pain. That could also turn the rural poor against a regime they have so far largely supported. That is why Britain and the U.S. are right to push for further economic sanctions in the UN Security Council. But these sanctions will be worthless if the accompanying rhetoric from the West ignores the 'educated patriotism' of Iranians. 'Axis of evil' rhetoric, especially from America, only strengthens Ahmadinejad's narrative as defender of his country against Western aggression. Far from turning people against the regime, a military intervention would greatly increase Ahmadinejad's legitimacy.

Instead, Britain and the U.S. should try a radically different approach: they should adopt the current political fashion for 'love-bombing' rather than demonising your opponent. The next U.S. President should declare publicly, ideally in Farsi, that they have no quarrel with the Iranian people and offer a 'grand bargain': in exchange for abandoning its nuclear programme and funding for terrorist groups such as Hezbollah, Iran will receive full diplomatic relations with U.S. and a security guarantee for its borders. If Iran rejects the bargain, the U.S. could threaten to tighten economic sanctions sharply. This might even win over Chinese and Russian reluctance in the Security Council,

especially if the UN offer comes with a commitment to increase foreign investment and support for WTO membership.

Such a move would force the regime to accelerate a currently timid programme to privatise Iran's largely state-owned industry and boost Iran's liberal middle classes. It would also threaten the position of the many bonyad – semi state-owned 'special status' firms controlled by charitable religious foundations in which the regime clerics have a vested economic interest. Improving diplomatic relations with Iran might also have the helpful side-effect of reducing the oil price, and thus putting further economic pressure on Iran. Would it work? Ahmadinejad would be deprived of his main rhetorical weapon and would no longer be able to cast himself as the sole defender of his country. People would focus more on the economic mismanagement over which he has presided. A 'love-bombing' strategy would therefore pass the important test of popular support inside Iran: the West would be seen to respect Iran as a great country while also undermining the regime's claim to its legitimacy. But in a country which can at best be described as semi-democratic, there could be an even more important effect: 'love-bombing' might encourage the more moderate elements in the highly factional political leadership to seize the initiative against the extremist president. Pragmatic members of the elite are known to be appalled by Ahmadinejad's policies and might well try to sideline him in time for the presidential elections next year. That really would change the political dynamics. I can already see my elegantly dressed businessman praying for the 'love-bombing' to start.

Fabian Richter is the Conservative Parliamentary candidate for Bath



What will the Lisbon Treaty mean for foreign policy?

by Helen Jackson

Amidst all the calls for a referendum on the Lisbon Treaty and objections raised to how little parliamentary scrutiny it is receiving, the details of what its material implications might be for any particular policy area can sometimes be lost. So it is worth recapping what the Treaty means for foreign policy (and with the apology that there is no alternative to using terms which may make some readers' eyes glaze over).

Most noticeably, it will extend the current role of the EU's High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy to effectively create a European foreign minister with, for the first time, his own diplomatic corps (the European External Action Service). The Treaty confers a "single legal personality" to the EU which would allow it to sign international agreements on foreign policy.

A permanent foothold would be secured for the EU to express its standpoint to the UN security council

The Treaty will also remove national vetoes in favour of qualified majority voting in several areas of foreign policy, such as providing macro-financial aid to external countries and the establishment of a core of member states for the purposes of "permanent structured cooperation" in defence. Foreign policy remains in the policy areas where further vetoes could be removed without, according to the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, "specific Parliamentary approval".

Most importantly, there will be no national veto on decisions relating to proposals made by the High Representative following a specific request from the European Council. This means that when member states unanimously ask the High Representative to tackle a particular issue, they may not veto the details of the proposal he then presents. A member state would therefore have less power over what the plan of action entails in practical terms than in conveying the vague message that "something must be done".

The Government is quick to point out in its rebuttal of 'Lisbon Treaty Myths' on the Foreign Office website that international organisations like the EU cannot be members of the UN, but also implies that the role of the High Representative, who "can already address" the Security Council, will not change with respect to the UN. However, the Lisbon Treaty states that when the EU has a defined position on a subject which is on the agenda of the Security Council, "the member states who sit there shall ask that the High Representative be invited to present" this position. By these means, a permanent foothold would be secured for the EU to express its standpoint to the UN Security Council. This text was previously considered unacceptable by the Government, a fact now ignored in its attempts to portray the Treaty as universally unobjectionable.

Such nonchalance is, it seems, the order of the day. In a report specifically dealing with the foreign policy aspects of the Lisbon Treaty, the Foreign Affairs Select Committee concluded that "the Government risks underestimating, and certainly is

downplaying in public, the importance of the new foreign policy institutions established by the Lisbon Treaty" and further recommended that it "should publicly acknowledge the significance of foreign policy aspects" of the Treaty. In the light of this, the Government's statement that "the UK has maintained national control over key areas" such as foreign policy seems more aspiration than enduring certainty. Those opposing a referendum claim that the mechanisms of representative democracy are better placed to come to an enlightened and satisfactory resolution of such complicated matters. Given the prior Government objections to the text of the Treaty which are now inconveniences to be glossed over, and the lack of opportunity for Parliament to properly scrutinise the Treaty's impact, they may have their work cut out maintaining the validity of that argument.

Helen Jackson is a freelance economist



Taking on the Taliban

by Keith Simpson MP



Much has been achieved in Afghanistan since the overthrow of the Taliban in 2001. In the words of the Former Commander of Coalition Forces in Afghanistan, the country has “introduced one of the most moderate constitutions in the Islamic world, registered 10.5 million Afghans to vote, voted President Karzai into office in their first-ever presidential election with 55% of the vote among eighteen candidates, selected a cabinet and conducted a peaceful inauguration, elected a parliament a year later, and have continued to fight off Taliban encroachments. During this time the Afghan people have not only tolerated but welcomed foreign military forces for the first time in their history – with the understanding that only through foreign assistance would Afghanistan be able to move forward and prosper.”

The UK has been playing a leading role in supporting the Afghan government including a significant deployment of British troops who have been fighting the Taliban in Helmand province. Members of the Foreign Office and the Department for International Development have been working hard to secure civilian infrastructure in Afghanistan.

But seven years later, Afghanistan has yet to decisively move forward and prosper. If anything, there are concerns that Afghanistan will slip back

Over the past few months there have been a series of reports that indicate that the situation in Afghanistan has reached a “tipping point”. These include Oxfam’s ‘Afghanistan: Development and Humanitarian priorities’, the International Crisis Group’s ‘Afghanistan: The need for International Resolve’, and the Report of the UN Secretary General ‘The Situation in Afghanistan and its Implications for International Peace and Security’.

Conclusions drawn include:

- Lawlessness pervades the country, and Afghanistan lacks judges, lawyers, and a competent police force.
- The Afghan government is unable to provide rule of law and services, it is plagued with widespread corruption and an ineffective Ministry of Interior and has declining legitimacy in the eyes of the Afghan population.
- Security has deteriorated and the insurgency is strengthening. Unlike Iraq, the insurgency in Afghanistan has safe havens outside the country’s borders. Taliban attacks have increased in scope and number over the past two years with their fighters adopting some of the tactics, such as roadside bombs, used by insurgents in Iraq.
- Opium production has hit all time highs in Afghanistan; Afghanistan now supplies 93 percent of the world’s opium.

The difficulties faced by those involved in reconstruction and development in Afghanistan are formidable:

- Afghanistan is larger than Iraq in both population and land mass (31 million Afghans as opposed to 27 million Iraqis, over 647,000 sq compared to only 437,000 in Iraq – Afghanistan has an over 40% larger landmass).
- Afghanistan has been embroiled in decades of civil war.
- Where we are working in Iraq to restore a nation’s economy, infrastructure, and standard of living - in Afghanistan, by contrast, we are working to create capacity where virtually none has ever existed.

The operations in Afghanistan remain one of the most challenging tasks NATO has ever taken on. Our troops

have done an outstanding job there, always prevailing militarily in some of the most difficult terrain on earth. But unless there is a strengthened and better co-ordinated drive to deliver long-term strategic success in Afghanistan, those hard-won tactical successes will ultimately have been in vain.

Beating the Taliban requires military muscle. But the Conservative Party has long argued that it also needs a carefully thought through programme of reconstruction and institution building – so that Afghans experience the practical benefits from the international presence in their country in the short term, and to allow their country to stand on its own feet in the longer term.

At present, most of UK aid is being delivered through the government of Afghanistan so there is limited development resources to directly link to the security delivered by our armed forces in their area of operations.

One element that combines the military with institution building is our training of the Afghan National Army. With relatively few UK troops we are helping to train hundreds of Afghan officers and ncos and training small military formations. This is crucial work because any long term success in eliminating the Taliban will depend upon the effectiveness and capability of the Afghan National Army.

We need to be more realistic and hard-headed about what we are trying to achieve in Afghanistan, and how long it will take. We must get away from the notion that we can impose a fully-fledged Western democracy in a deeply traditional society.

As things stand, the US Congress receives far more extensive evaluations and reports, and can hold far more informed debates on a

regular basis than is possible in our Parliament. When so much of our foreign policy, our national reputation and, above all, the lives of our servicemen and women are at stake, parliamentary scrutiny should be extensive and habitual, not limited and sporadic.

We have called for regular quarterly statements to Parliament on Afghanistan, accompanied by the Government's definition of the military and political objectives in view, and our success, or otherwise, in meeting them.

We also think there is a case for an immediate high-level independent assessment of the state of Afghanistan, similar to the Iraq Study Group in the United States and the Afghanistan Study Group which reported in January.

We need a Privy Council Inquiry on Iraq – so mistakes can be learned and lessons applied in Afghanistan. Recently the Prime Minister has

conceded the need for such an inquiry but not until UK troops have left Iraq. Too little, too late. We first called for the appointment of a senior co-ordinator of the international effort in Afghanistan in June 2006. A new envoy has now been appointed, after an acrimonious and long-drawn-out process. We wait to see if his mandate is sufficiently strong to make the changes needed.

We have also called for a renewed effort to bring together the different military commands in Afghanistan and to remove more of the national caveats that lead to differing tiers of commitment from NATO forces there.

Finally, we have called for consideration of alternative approaches to combating the spread of poppy cultivation. Other approaches, such as the licensed growing of opium for legal purposes, have been discounted, but it may be time at least to consider pilot projects in the future.

We are still winning tactically in

Afghanistan, but we risk losing operationally and strategically. If we fail to turn the situation in Afghanistan around, it may revert to a failed state that is a terrorist haven for Al Qaeda and affiliated terrorist networks.

As David Cameron has said about our commitment in Afghanistan: "As the cradle of 9/11, preventing a relapse into Taliban control matters fundamentally to Britain's national security." But we should remember that such a commitment means our armed forces will suffer casualties. The process of stabilizing Afghanistan and effectively denying sanctuary to terrorist groups is not a quick process – but making the decisions to start to improve our efforts there can be taken quickly, so that our military efforts are immediately followed up by reconstruction and development activities. The two must go hand in hand.

Keith Simpson MP
Shadow Foreign Office Minister

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Strange, but true

Deputy Editor Ryan Shorthouse shares some interesting stories from around the world

Germany, 1938

Paranoid that some children in the Third Reich would not be successfully indoctrinated, Hitler passed a law in 1938 which banned home-schooling. Weirdly, that law has still not been repealed. German parents are banned from teaching their children at home. There are strong reasons why parents may prefer home-schooling- their child is being bullied or struggling to cope in a school environment. But the German state denies parents real freedom of choice.

800 German families are believed to educate their child at home illegally. Many families have just fled: in 2007, 78 home-school children left the country with their parents. The Isle of Wight, with its extensive home-schooling network, is a popular destination. Many families report being blackmailed and threatened with the loss of their children by the authorities if they do not send their children into mainstream education. The UN recently reported that Germany needs to reform its laws to accommodate the wishes of some parents for their children to be taught at home. But German and EU Courts are having none of it. I thought the only controversial thing coming out of Germany these days was a picture of Angela Merkel's breasts. Worrying.

Smoking in the States

Minnesota is the home-state of Bob Dylan and Prince, so Minnesotans are used to rebellion and eccentricity. So it should come as no surprise to hear that many are resisting the smoking ban passed last October, but by rather unconventional means. Legislation allows actors to smoke cigarettes when in plays. Cunningly, 100 bars across Minnesota have started holding theatre nights. Ashtrays lie on prop tables. Entrances have notices saying "Stage Entrance" pinned to

them. Customers are encouraged to speak with projection and- of course- articulation, dear. Cleverer still, one bar has produced a play called "Before the Ban", where customers re-enact life pre-October 2007.

The state authorities are not amused; they've threatened bars with fines up to \$10,000 and the removal of licenses. I'm not sure which I find funnier: the sheer ingenuity of the bars, or the prospect of the regulars, Bob and Derek types, acting all thespy.

Don't cry for me, Guardian columnists

A Guardian columnist is peeved about, well, not being able to pee. Let me explain: they don't have a biological problem. It's a supply-side, not demand-side, issue. You see, there's not enough free public toilets in the UK. Argentina is close to economic meltdown and can still manage to provide its poor, desperate, crotch-holding citizens with free loos. We, on the other hand, are left with those toilets you always have to pay 20p for, typically resulting in the situation where you fume, "Bloody hell, I wish I hadn't used all my change on that sausage roll". And the anger just triggers a deeper desperation for the bog. A nightmare. Let me first remind Guardian columnists that we do lots of other things better than the Argentines. Oh yes, we beat their junta in the 80s. And Margaret Thatcher lived longer than Eva Peron. And, and, and, Mary Poppins is a much better musical than Evita. Huh.

Anyway, I don't want to pay more council tax to get the council to install and maintain more free loos. I'd rather keep that money to upgrade my poor Armitage Shanks, assaulted these past years by wandering pee and early-morning vomit.

I want to give some advice to Guardian columnists for these times of crisis: go to good old Marks and Sparks. If it means spending a few minutes after you've been to the toilet pretending you like chit-chatting to yummy mummies or clothes which make you look like you're from the 1950s, grin and bear it. Least you won't piss yourself.

Postcard from Amsterdam

Dear Denise,

Malcolm and I are having a lovely time here. Still got the giggles from last night when we tried some new cigarettes at this trendy coffeeshop. The teenyboppers who gave us them were talking about the quality of the leaf - so the only thing that comes to my mind is that we were smoking those weird Marlboro menthol lights that Marjorie likes.

We've decided to have a relaxing day today- a stroll round the Vondelpark. They've put this code of conduct up, as soon as you go in, saying that two, you know, men can do it behind the bushes. Can't believe it. But I said to Malcolm it's not that bad because it specifically says they have to keep all their instruments away from children's playgrounds. Good, I thought. Can you imagine the fright that a little one would get if he saw two men touching lips.

Malcolm said it was worse than I first thought- just read further down he said. So I did. And guess what it said? Dogs, yes dogs, can't be let off their leads. Shocking! Two poofters are allowed out to dangle their bits in the middle of the park but dogs can't even have a ramble in the bushes. You're little Toby would hate it, not being free to run around.

Anyway, will see you next week and we'll have a catch-up and a coffee. Love to Toby. Oh, and I hope that plonker of a son of yours Julian isn't causing trouble for you again.

Lots of love.

Melanie xxx

The death of International Relations?

by Tim Johnson

The long, slow collapse of the NATO mission in Afghanistan has become impossible to ignore. Only the United States and Britain have sent more than 5,000 troops, and soldiers from Germany and other NATO members are prevented from serving in the more dangerous zones. This is both serious and alarming. Canada and the United States have made public their disquiet over the lack of support offered by many NATO members. The growing technological gap opening up between the United States and the other members serves further to exacerbate matters. NATO, which has been the strongest line of Western defence for more than fifty years, seems to be falling apart.

The United Nations, in its current form, is palpably unfit to do the job for which it was created. The sole purpose of the General Assembly now seems to be to pass motions condemning Israel; the sole purpose of the Security Council appears to be to allow the United States to veto them. The UN's inadequacies as a decision-making body were brutally exposed during the build up to the war in Iraq. Its inadequacies as a peace-keeping body have been highlighted by the lack of meaningful action taken over Darfur. Its moral authority has been severely undermined by both the scandal over underage sex-trafficking in the Congo and the massive fraud involved in "Oil for Food".

The continuing insistence by many across the political spectrum that the United Nations offers the consummate, indeed the only, moral authority for foreign policies ranging from international aid to the declaration of war is baffling. This supreme moral authority depends absolutely on the approval of

authoritarian China and Russia. To leave such an institution as the absolute global moral arbiter is a derogation of responsibility. The UN even appears to recognise this state of affairs itself, appointing Zimbabwe as Chair of the Commission for Sustainable Development and putting Saudi Arabia and Libya on the Human Rights Commission.

It is not only the UN and NATO that are suffering such problems: the entire edifice of international relations is in a state of increasing deadlock. The EU has turned in upon itself to wrangle endlessly about constitutional change, and havers about the possibilities of further enlargement.

The Commonwealth, humiliated over Zimbabwe and powerless over Pakistan and Kenya, is now little more than a glorified talking-shop. After the bright hopes at the creation of the African Union (AU), it now seems little better than the corrupt dictators' club of the Organisation of African Unity that it replaced. For evidence of the failure of the current system of international relations look at the situation in Darfur where the UN appears both unwilling and unable to act, and where the AU provides little more than a fig leaf for international action.

The United Nations, indeed the 'international community' as a whole, hasn't got the ships, it hasn't got the men and it hasn't got the money too. But what is the alternative? The increasing willingness of the United States, above all, to sideline the United Nations, most notably over the Iraq war, has recalled the failure of the inter-war League of Nations: an isolationist America, the theory goes, is a disaster for global security. But the United States has not, in fact,

become isolationist even as it turns away from the established conduits of international relations. It has, instead, begun to put its faith in ad hoc coalitions for specific purposes. The phrase 'coalition of the willing' has now become inextricably linked with the war in Iraq and its aftermath. It is seen as little more than a cover for American unilateralism - a phrase that conjures over 30,000 hits on Google.

Could there be a viable framework for future international relations within it? In the aftermath of the tsunami in South East Asia, the United States formed a local coalition with India, Japan and Australia to co-ordinate relief efforts. The aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln and the medical and helicopter ship HMAS Kanimbla, in addition to helicopters and ground troops, more than 15,000 in all, were committed within three days of the catastrophe. It was a quicker and more immediate response than has ever been possible through the UN and underlines the ultimate truth of modern international relations. What matters is the capability to exercise hard power: to put boots on the ground and ships in the water.

Sheltered by the American nuclear umbrella and further reassured by the collapse of the Soviet Union, most of the rich countries of the world have deliberately run down their armed forces. If they want to prevent a world where America is able to ignore the frameworks of international relations, they ought to be ensuring that their co-operation is militarily, as well as diplomatically, desirable.

CROSSBOW AGM & NOMINATIONS

Notice of Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given of the Annual General Meeting of the Bow Group which will take place on Wednesday 4th June 2008 at 7 pm at the Bow Group Offices, CAN Mezzanine, 32-36 Loman Street, Southwark, London, SE1 0EH.

NOTICE OF ELECTION

In accordance with the Group's Constitution, this notice invites nominations for the elected positions listed below:

Chairman	Research Secretary	Political Officer
Commercial Secretary	Treasurer	Membership Secretary
Social Secretary	Elected Members of Council (5 vacancies)	

A valid nomination requires the signature of the candidate as proof of willingness to serve, proposed and seconded by any two members. Nominations should be delivered to the Group's office at 1A Heath Hurst Road, London NW3 2RU no later than 6pm on Monday 12th May 2008, and members may use the tear off slip overleaf. Nominations may be accompanied by biographical notes of up to 150 words, which should be enclosed with the nomination form. Any fully paid-up member who has joined the Group before Monday 3rd March 2008 will be entitled to be a candidate and/or to vote.

MOTIONS FOR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Any member may bring a motion before the AGM. Motions must be received by the Returning Officer at the Group's office by Monday 12th May 2008.

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

Copies of the Annual Report and Accounts will be available from the Group's Office from 30th June 2008. They will also be available at www.bowgroup.org and at the AGM.

Nomination form

Please return this form to:

Irene Harris, The Bow Group, 1a Heath Hurst Road, London NW3 2RU

You are reminded that the close of nominations is 6pm on 12th May 2008 and that your nomination may include a biography of up to 150 words.

I, _____ wish to be proposed for the position of _____

Chairman / Research Secretary / Political Officer / Commercial Secretary / Treasurer / Secretary / Membership Secretary / Social Secretary / Council Member (delete or circle as applicable).

Signed _____ Date _____ 2008

Proposed _____ Print name _____

Seconded _____ Print name _____

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I declare that I hold Conservative views and understand that if I cease to support the Conservative viewpoint, I shall be expected to resign my membership of the Bow Group.

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Signature Date

Please return this form to: **The Bow Group, 1a Heath Hurst Road, London NW3 2RU**
 If you have any questions, please telephone us on **020 7431 6400** or email **office@bowgroup.org**

The Lure of the Cuckoo Clock

by Mark Nicholson



Successive British Foreign Secretaries have been taunted and challenged by Acheson's pointed remark that "Britain has lost an empire and is looking for a role". Attempts to find a new role have varied from auditioning as Greece to America's Rome, to tentatively embracing the European project under its various guises to exploring the vagaries of an 'ethical foreign policy'.

Yet before we can decide on a role to play, perhaps we should instead ask what we aim to achieve through our foreign policy. Many of the traditional ends of foreign policy- conquest, national aggrandisement, gaining trading rights or preserving balance on the continent- are either no longer pursued or can now be better achieved by alternative means.

Aims of Foreign Policy

In 1902, Joseph Chamberlain declared that the age of nation states was over, and that the age of empires had arrived. Big (and self-sufficient) was beautiful. Yet today we can reverse his dictum. The age of Empire has passed and even many of the

advantages of being a large state seem to have passed in an increasingly pacific western world. Perusing the lists of states with the highest per capita income and quality of life, most are small.

The advantages of size, military strength and economic self sufficiency have largely now dissipated. The lists of the richest states and those with the highest quality of life are dominated by countries with smaller populations, even among the developed countries within the EU.

Incidentally, the EU itself has not heeded this lesson and its recent expansion to the east has encompassed states notable only for their demographic and geographic scale rather than their economic development or utility.

Even the most powerful states do not seek to extend their power further by conquest, the burdens of colonial rule now outweighing the advantages since the rise of self-deterministic feeling across the globe.

Britain's key strategic foreign policy objectives down the centuries, the maintenance of the balance of power in Europe and the keeping of major powers away from the deep water ports of the low countries seem redundant now that the prospect of war between the major European states is remote, as much through their embracing of democracy (democracies being statistically highly unlikely to go to war with each other) as through the agencies of the EU. Whereas the EU may present a threat to British self-government, it seeks to achieve this aim through political suasion rather than military means. More positively, the EU rules out two of the other major causes of

past British wars. It carries the guarantee of at least nominally free trade with most of Britain's major trading partners and latter day Don Pacificos can now have their cases reviewed in the European courts.

Even where our trading partners and raw material suppliers are not liberal democracies, jaw-jaw remains decidedly superior to war-war. The establishment of free trade is achieved more through negotiation, the costs and number of gunboats being required to constitute a negotiating aid having risen unreasonably high. Even if the motive for the invasion of Iraq had been to obtain oil supplies, the end could have been achieved much more quickly, easily and cheaply through rapprochement with Saddam Husain rather than through invasion.

Domestic Challenges and Foreign Policy

In so far as western nations face external threats to their integrity, they come not from overt military invasion, but rather through the steady demographic challenge of immigration. It could be argued that pacifying overseas trouble spots would reduce the flow of refugees and economic migrants, however overseas interventions in Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan have not led to the return of many immigrants to those countries, nor has overseas aid abated the flow. Moreover, the challenges of immigrant integration affect all states including those such as Switzerland and Sweden which have pursued far less active foreign policies than the UK in recent centuries. Such military threats which the UK faces take now the asymmetric form of terrorism.

One could argue that a less activist

foreign policy could have prevented the upsurge of home-grown Islamic terrorism. However, I would not wish to advance this case as the Government should remain free to act in the wide national interest rather than be cowed by dissenting radicals.

Nor is it obvious that we can draw lessons from the Cold War in confronting the challenge of political Islam. We can indeed face down radical states and movements overseas, however whereas during the Cold War the principal threat was external, with the ideological struggle at home being secondary, this is reversed in the present struggle in which home-grown terror has posed the greatest threat.

The domestic ideological struggle against communism during the Cold War was also easier to win than the present argument, for whereas the efficacy of communism could be disproved in this world, and was with the fall of the Berlin Wall, spiritual questions can only be resolved in the next. Moreover, the growth of Islam in the UK owes more to family tradition and immigration than proselytism.

The answers to the challenges of immigration and terrorism therefore essentially lie in the realm of domestic policy, not foreign. A parallel is with the threat of Catholicism in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Although there was also an international dimension to the struggle, through trade disputes with Spain, it was through domestic policy and a mixture of carrot, stick and (above all) time that integrated British Catholics into the political mainstream.

Likewise today, the actions which we need to take to make our borders less porous and root out radical agitators and terrorist cells are essentially domestic and defensive in nature. These domestic actions are at best independent from and probably in resource terms an alternative to military intervention overseas.

To consider a modern example, the recent success of Israel wall in defending its citizens against suicide attacks has been achieved through defensive measures, including the much-criticised border fence, rather than through external engagement in the West Bank and Gaza. Indeed since the withdrawal of Israel from part of the occupied territories its security has improved.

Ethical Foreign Policy

Recent locations of UK military intervention- Bosnia, Sierra Leone, Kosovo, and Macedonia, even Iraq and Afghanistan- were archetypal 'far-away countries of which we know little', where the combatants posed no direct threat to the UK and were of little economic or strategic interest. Intervention here was justified rather by reference to Tony Blair's 'ethical foreign policy'.

Although not a new concept, foreign policy ethics have traditionally been concerned with the relationships between states, the underlying code being that states should not intervene in each others' internal affairs.

It should not take a more active role than any other mid-sized European country such as Sweden or Switzerland

Since 1919, this standard of non-intervention has been buttressed by the principle of self-determination, the importance of which was reinforced in the waves of decolonisation from the 1950s onwards and which is now enshrined in the UN Charter.

The most clearly articulated definition of an 'ethical foreign policy' widens the traditional definition to argue that states owe a duty of care towards the inhabitants of other states and that developed countries should intervene in 'failing' states, possibly even establishing a UN mandate until order and human rights are restored and

the inhabitants deemed capable of governing themselves. However the pervasiveness of the doctrine of self-determination makes it much more difficult for such foreign intervention to work effectively.

If foreign powers intervene in the affairs of another county, whether through military action or economic aid, the recipient country can easily lapse back into its earlier disordered state unless there is fundamental change and development in its political culture.

Although such changes were successfully implemented in Germany and Japan after 1945, they have proved more difficult to implement in Afghanistan, Somalia, Iraq and other developing countries. The political systems in these and other less developed countries may need more time to mature. However, the required period of lengthy foreign occupation is less likely to be tolerated by the local population in an overtly post-colonial age.

Conclusion

Although Britain has a long history of intervening more widely in world affairs, the UK's present more modest position in the world would not dictate that it should take a more active role than any other mid-sized European country such as, say, Germany, Sweden or Switzerland.

Of course the UK will require a foreign policy in the future. However we should ask whether the benefits of pursuing so active and far-ranging a foreign policy as we have in recent decades has always justified the expenditure in blood and treasure that it has required or improved domestic security.

Perhaps we should seek in the future to emulate the Swiss approach to foreign affairs. Surely remaining "the most armed and the most free" while enjoying "five hundred years of peace, brotherly love and democracy" would seem to have something going for it.

Whither Moldova?

**Nicholas Hillman, Chief of Staff to David Willetts MP,
considers whether the EU should expand further Eastwards**



A wine fountain at Mileștii Mici in Moldova

Moldova is the poorest European nation and, according to one survey, its population is the unhappiest in the developed world. Little wonder, perhaps, given that it was part of the Soviet Union until the early 1990s and then descended into civil war. Yet the country, which lies between Romania and the Ukraine, is well worth exploring, not least because it throws up a number of questions about what it means to be European in the 21st century.

There are some striking differences between Moldova and the EU states. The most notable is that Moldova has a Communist Government (though it is democratically elected and looks west rather than east). Another important difference is the continuing influence of Russia, hence the capital is widely known by both its local name Chișinău and its Russian name Kishinev.

Entering the country by train shows the lingering impact of the Soviet Union. Because Moldova was part of the USSR, it has a different railway gauge to neighbouring countries – the Soviets thought this would deter invasion. So trains entering Moldova have to go through a lengthy bogie change in which all the wheels are replaced. It is an eerie sensation to feel the train being raised and having new wheels run underneath,

particularly when you know the whole procedure is a relic of the Cold War.

Despite these differences, there are some striking similarities between Moldova and the rest of Europe. The majority of the population are essentially Romanian, and many have dual citizenship. Moldovan culture is western in many respects. In the capital, there is a thriving youth culture and dance music scene, and a vibrant café life. And forget vodka. In Moldova, they have been making wine for around 5,000 years. At Mileștii Mici, one of the many wineries in the country, they have the world's largest collection of wine (1.5 million bottles), which is stored underground in limestone tunnels.

When I was in the country last year, I visited Soroca in the north-east of the country, which is famous for its beautiful but dilapidated sixteenth-century fortress. It sits on the west bank of the Dniester River and looks threateningly across at the Ukraine on the other bank. The multilingual guide who showed me round argued that the fort stands at the very edge of Europe because it is where, throughout history, the locals have protected the rest of Europe from attacking hordes, such as the Ottomans and the Russians. To him, this places

Moldova indelibly within Europe: it identifies Moldovans as European and provides an obligation on other European nations to treat the area in the same way as the rest of Europe.

This raises a number of important questions. Where, precisely, does Europe end? Should the EU embrace the bits of Europe that remain outside even if, like Moldova, they retain communism and are suspected of having high levels of organised crime? Moldova even has a breakaway region called Transnistria – in his most recent travelogue, Michael Palin had the surreal experience of witnessing Transnistria National Day even though Russia is the only country that recognises it as an independent state.

There is another important question too: if areas like Moldova do have a claim to be within the EU, what mechanisms could get them there? Given the EU's recent expansion, which is still settling down, as well as the existing entry rules, a young and somewhat unstable country like Moldova is unlikely to be welcomed with open arms. But, what if Moldovans were to become part of Romania again? Some of the locals I met thought it was simply a matter of time before a referendum produced this outcome. Would this lead to EU entry by the backdoor, as it did years ago for East Germany? And are there other places that could gain entry to the EU in the same way?

I have no answers to these tricky questions. Time will tell. But I sense that countries to the south, such as Serbia and Turkey, are not the only ones with a strong case for joining the EU. The future of Moldova may or may not lie within Europe, but the country's history and culture provide a persuasive case for not permanently slamming shut the door of EU membership. The previous round of EU expansion may not be the last time its boundary needs to shift eastwards.

The divisiveness of diversity

by Oliver Haiste

“The dew of compassion”, Byron effused somewhere, “is a tear”. One need not enjoy such glutinous prose to agree that compassion and tolerance are fine and noble qualities which the world needs badly.

Those whose countries are sunk in war, pestilence and totalitarianism deserve sympathy and such assistance as Europe, in its privileged socio-economic position, sees fit to bestow through a fair immigration and asylum system.

It is difficult to express reservations about mass immigration from the developing world, without being accused of unsavoury intentions, but it is every conservative’s mission in life to play Cassandra to the socialist’s childish Candide.

This is a topic that must be discussed openly and moderately without recourse to xenophobic hyperbole, but neither with an appeasement of an overly sensitive and vociferous left-wing minority who cry fowl at every mention of border-control.

It is immigration from Islamic countries that will most determine the nature of European society in the decades to come. This is because the majority of immigration into Europe will come from North Africa, Turkey and the Middle East.

Quite simply, the more the Muslim population grows, the more likely that Islamic principles will affect public policy. But will this be a problem?

Firstly, the issue should not be monopolised by talk of terrorism.

As many patronising politicians keep repeating ad nauseam, it is only a tiny minority of Muslims that are terrorists and the vast majority are law abiding citizens. This is obviously true and

understood by all, but the most Neanderthal. Neither are Muslims a monolithic group aligned only to the teachings of militant Wahabism and female subjugation. But this does not mean that all is well.

The issue is whether Europe can survive as a socially liberal, politically secular entity if more and more of its people adhere to theological principles which are at odds with a Western culture of social, sexual and economic freedoms.

A Guardian commissioned ICM poll in 2005 found that a clear majority of British Muslims want Islamic law introduced into this country. Some 61 percent want Islamic courts - operating on sharia principles for civil disputes.

58 percent of those polled agree that despite the right to free speech, in Britain people who insult or criticise Islam should face criminal prosecution. Contrary to what some would intuitively imagine, the younger second and third generation do not seem to be assimilating. If anything there are signs of a reactionary counter cultural shift to hard-line Islam.

This is the most worrying trend, since it places in doubt the emergence of a transitional Western Islam adopted by Muslim youth who are more tolerant of such issues as religious criticism, for example.

A Populus poll published by The Times in 2006, almost a year to the day after the London Underground bombings, reflected this phenomenon.

In the survey of 1,003 British Muslims, 37 percent of 16 to 24-year-olds said they would prefer sharia law in all courts and nearly a third believed that those converting to another religion should be executed.

These type of figures are repeated many times in similar polls conducted across Europe and reflect a fundamental incompatibility of cultural attitudes.

The consequences of these incompatibilities are hard to predict exactly.

A creeping Islamicisation of a decadent Christendom is one conceivable result: while the European population grows older and their religious faith weaker, the Muslim colonies within their cities get larger and more overt in their religious observance.

Nor can we rule out the possibility of a happy fusion between rapidly secularised second-generation Muslims and their post-Christian neighbours.

Indeed, we may conceivably end up with both: situation one in France and situation two in Britain.

Alternatively and more sensibly, European electorates should ask that Europe fully integrates its existing communities and restrict non-essential immigration from the developing world.

Europeans can take pride in sharing a continent, where for the large part, freedom of speech and fundamental human rights are universally applied and valued by the vast majority of citizens. But these values should not be taken for granted and we have become too complacent about their protection.

If Europeans wish to preserve their culture of free-thinking, we must not allow an excessive tolerance and apathy to sow the seeds of our own cultural destruction.

**Oliver Haiste is a
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Climate Change: a foreign policy approach to saving the planet

by Suella Fernandes

After four years of violence, 200,000 deaths and nearly two-and-a-half million people displaced from their homes in Darfur, a proliferation of armed militia groups has brought about a new wave of violence that is hitting the millions inside this region's refugee camps.

The conflict started in 2003 when a rebel group began targeting Government officials, maintaining that this arid and impoverished region was being deprived of resources, funding and aid by the ruling administration based in Khartoum.

The lack of available resources led to pressures based on ethnic (Arab versus African), social (pastoralists versus agriculturalists) and political lines. What is clear is that the roots of the conflict can be traced to clear tensions relating to land and grazing rights at a time when scarcity of arable land and water compounded the pressures. All this a consequence of global warming. In short, Darfur is a glaring example of how climate change is a security issue, not just a green one.

And Darfur is no exception. Katrina flooding in New Orleans, separatist conflicts over oil in the Niger Delta and Aceh; the economic losses caused to Kenya by flooding and drought in the late 1990s are just a few examples of where environmental pressures have led to a breakdown in civil order.

And yet, despite the death rates, the economic losses and the threat to peace and security, political parties in the developed world fail to adopt a

strategic and preventive foreign policy to deal with global warming and the threats of climate change. Instead, reacting to problems which have reached terrifying levels is the norm. Whilst immediate and tangible threats linked to terrorism attract strategic policy, policies designed to tackle environmental threats and consequent conflict are less forthcoming.

Granted the effects of climate change may take longer to manifest themselves but it seems that governments of the day fail to appreciate their seriousness until it is too late. In times of rising scarcity of resources, it will become imperative that environment and resource management issues are incorporated into conflict prevention and development policy. Policies based on cure rather than prevention will be insufficient.

The problem: global in nature

Claiming more lives than terrorism, it is hard to disagree with Sir David King,

Chief Scientist to the Government: climate change is the single biggest threat facing the world. As apocalyptic and sweeping as this may sound, all the main authorities on the subject support this view unwaveringly.

In *The Economics of Climate Change* Sir

Nicholas Stern concluded, inter alia, that unless immediate action is taken to reduce global emissions, the overall costs and risks of climate change could amount to a permanent reduction in annual global GDP of up to 20% by 2100. However, taking steps now would cost just 1% of global per capita consumption per year.

Winning the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize and widely considered to be the definitive authority on all things green, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is an international body made up of leading climate scientists and government advisors from around the world. In its 2007 report, the IPCC was unequivocal in its finding that the world is heating up because of dangerously high levels



of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases and that human activity is the cause of such levels. If left unabated, billions of people will face environmental and social disasters.

Environmental pressures - violent conflict

The impact of rising global carbon emissions on conflict zones world wide is not a new phenomenon. Geopolitical roots of conflict are myriad: fights over food production, land use, fights over water, changing patterns of rainfall. It is no coincidence that the countries hardest hit by climate change are also those in which there has been a recent, serious breakdown in civil order.

As natural resources dwindle, the politicised allocation of water and land acts as a catalyst for low level conflict, which can escalate into major genocide when linked to ethnic or national divisions. Climate migration away from environmentally degraded regions thereafter impacts on developed countries, both economically and socially.

Ray of light

Despite Stern's gloomy outlook, none of the worst-case scenarios are

inevitable [Stern, 2006]. Mitigation is achievable through a combination of stronger national environmental management and international coordination. Technology, knowledge and experience are all available. The primary goal is to generate the political will to address these issues. This can be done by identifying the costs of inaction, which will rise the longer the action is delayed; and also focussing on real benefits that could accrue from better environmental management.

What to be done?

The UK should position itself as a broker for stability in the international community, facilitating co-operation between nations, for example:

a. Promoting a policy of interdependence and greater democratic accountability on a coherent international environmental strategy incorporating policies on climate change and sustainable development;

b. Facilitating dialogue on sustainable development with emerging economies such as India, China, South Africa and Latin America. The aim should be to foster a global politics of environmental responsibility.

c. working with susceptible countries to better manage their environmental capital and services, e.g. as suggested by Nick Mabey in "Progressive Foreign Policy: New directions for the UK", reform of land tenure and water allocation systems, energy distribution and forestry-use rights.

The way in which climate change is dealt with at a global level will be a leading indicator of the world's capacity to manage globalisation in an equitable and sustainable way. A UK foreign policy should articulate a detailed strategy to fight this ongoing war.

Suella Fernandes is a Barrister specialising in planning and environmental law. She stood in Leicester East at the 2005 General Election.



Upcoming Events

Bow Group Annual Dinner with Fraser Nelson, Political , Editor of the Spectator

**30th April 2008, 7 for 7.30pm
Bank Restaurant, Westminster. Dinner will cost £45.00.
Places must be booked via Chris Skidmore
(skidmorec@parliament.uk)**

An Evening with Chris Grayling, Shadow Secretary for Work and Pensions

**6th May 2008, 7.30pm,
House of Commons.
Book your place with Jonathan Newton
(jonathan.newton@usa.net)**

A policy discussion on Childcare with Polly Toynbee, Guardian Columnist, and Maria Miller MP, Shadow Minister for the Family

**10th June 2008, 7:00pm
House of Commons
Book your place with Ryan Shorthouse
(shorthouser@parliament.uk)**