

GLOBAL  
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FORUM

**FAREWELL TO DRIFT**  
**A New Foreign Policy for a Network World**

by  
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*Foreword by Peter Osborne*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# **FAREWELL TO DRIFT**

## **A New Foreign Policy for a Network World**

## FOREWORD

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**FOR** the first decade of the 21st century British foreign policy has been at best a muddle and at worst a disgrace. On the one hand the Blair and Brown governments asserted that they stood up for British ‘values’. On the other hand there is now a compelling volume of evidence that through much of this period, Britain was complicit in torture and studiously neglectful of human rights. Meanwhile British interests around the world were often forgotten and sometimes abused.

There was a reason for this. Between 1997-2010, New Labour either could not or would not pin down what Britain was for. It viewed Britain’s historic role, what remains of it, as post-colonial and therefore bad – which meant that it could only accept the projection of British power so long as it was not used in the British national interest.

This was especially bad because the Blair government had two fundamentally contradictory objectives. On the one hand – to use his own words – Tony Blair was determined to place Britain ‘at the heart of Europe.’ On the other hand nothing whatever should be done to offend the United States. There was no sense of a distinctively British foreign policy, let alone a distinctively British set of interests, just a scarcely concealed power worship.

Indeed it was worse than that. There was a strong tendency to dismiss traditional British allegiances and identities as xenophobic or even racist. The Commonwealth was neglected, while in the decade of Cool Britannia there was no sense of the virtue, let alone the magnificence, of British history.

So there is a crying need for a new foreign policy under the new Liberal Conservative coalition. To their credit David Cameron and the new Foreign Secretary William Hague have already set a new tone in British foreign policy. They are not so embarrassed about the past, and not so afraid of talking about the national interest. This approach has yet to translate into meaningful policy, however, while there are signs that the new British government is still subject to the same structural constraints which did such damage to Britain’s international reputation in the first decade of the 21st century.

For these reasons the publication of this pamphlet by Michael Ancram is exceptionally refreshing. He has the intellectual courage to engage with the colossal problems facing policy makers in a clear-sighted manner, to re-examine the issues afresh, and come up with original and bold solutions. It is obvious to Ancram, for example, that our independent nuclear deterrent is a colossal waste of resources in the post-cold war world. He makes the glaringly obvious point that we ought to talk to non-state actors such as the Taliban in Pakistan and Afghanistan or Hamas in Palestine. He says that it is time to ditch our aircraft carriers, another cold war relic. On the other hand, he urges building up further our Special Forces and intelligence capability.

Ancram understands that the world is becoming more and more complicated. This means recasting our relationships with Europe and ending the situation where the ‘default position in British foreign policy remains uncritically to follow that of the US.’ And no organisation with which Britain is associated is more relevant to the flexible and networked world in which we now live than the Commonwealth. Treated with benign neglect by New Labour, it can be revived, with its headquarters in due course shifted to India.

With the collapse of New Labour, and with it George Bush’s War on Terror, we have reached a turning point in British history. Never has it been more urgent to re-examine Britain’s bankrupt foreign policy. Since 2006 Michael Ancram’s Global Strategy Forum has provided a vehicle for heretical discussions around our foreign policy objectives.

This pamphlet deserves to set in motion an urgent national debate.

***Peter Osborne***

*October 2010*

## INTRODUCTION

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Any attempt to construct a new foreign policy must start with a definition of what a foreign policy is. It is in fact easier to start by defining what it is not - not an adjunct to domestic policy, not a contingent strategy to deal with external challenges, nor some glorious game to be played by aspiring modern day Metternichs and Talleyrands.

It is first and foremost a definition of who we are in the world, an outward expression of how we see ourselves and how we wish to be seen by others. It is a central part of the concept of nationhood and the underpinning of our values. A nation without a dynamic foreign policy is a nation in decline, one which has lost its confidence and its courage. A coherent foreign policy is a celebration of national self-interest, looking outwards as much as it looks inwards. The prevention of catastrophes abroad whose knock-on effects can wash up against and ravage our shores is as important to our national interest as averting and managing crises at home.

The biggest enemy of a comprehensive foreign and security policy in a modern democracy is the erroneous belief that there are no votes in it. A foreign policy which fails to deliver or causes concern is a potent political liability. Engaging in unwinnable wars and the grandstanding which so often precedes them can indeed have lethal political consequences. As my friend David Howell<sup>1</sup> has commented: “Foreign policy is not about ‘foreigners’ and remote international issues or abstruse diplomatic questions. It is about our democracy, our law, our national identity and purpose and priorities.” Concern about and interest in Britain’s role in the world is now well established in the public mind because so much stems from it; environmental concerns, terrorism, energy security, immigration and its concurrent domestic impact - and of course, our legal and constitutional relationship with Europe.

The United Kingdom aspires to be, and should be, a modern dynamic nation. This requires a proactive and dynamic foreign policy just as much today as in the past. It should be based on principle as much as pragmatism, it must be comprehensive as well as comprehensible and it must play to our strengths rather than simply seeking to mitigate or disguise our weaknesses.

For a long time Britain hasn’t had such a foreign policy, although we do now seem to be taking tentative steps towards one today. Forty-five years after US Secretary of State Dean Acheson opined that “*Great Britain has lost an empire and has not yet found a role*”, our role remains obscure. Recent foreign policy has been marked by a sense of drift. We have largely just followed America or been pushed around by Europe. We either seem to be reacting to events without any sustainable strategy or just engaging in a series of damage limitation exercises. Hopefully that can now be changed. Foreign Secretary Hague’s recent speeches do seem to be reaching out in that direction in a way that has simply not been evident for the last twenty years or more.

What follows seeks at least in part to chart a course which allows us finally to bid farewell to drift.

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<sup>1</sup> Lord Howell of Guildford

## BACKGROUND

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We need first to recall the recent past. Since 1991 and the end of the Cold War, the world contrary to expectations became a more unstable and dangerous place: wars in the Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan; flashpoints in the Middle East and in various parts of Africa; and the development and growth of Islamist fundamentalist terrorism. The West's response to these events was effective but only in the short term. We came together under the umbrella of a unipolar and supremely powerful USA to deal with those various crises as they arose.

Yet even from the start there was only the most rudimentary strategic basis for the hard-power way in which the West responded; bombing Belgrade, toppling the Taliban Government in Afghanistan, overthrowing Saddam Hussein in Iraq, and rooting out Al Qa'eda wherever we could get close to them. Even less strategically thought through was the West's policy of seeking to install a patina of democracy from which we naively believed would flow justice, peace and stability.

Initially the West's hard power appeared to work. Whether exercised legally or illegally in terms of international law, it seemed at the start coherent and effective; and then it got bogged down.

After fifteen years in the Balkans, while the bloodshed has reduced, we are still unable to leave for fear of a resurgence of sectarian and ethnic violence. After six years in Iraq a fresh and large scale backcloth of terrorist bombings is bringing an orderly exit by the US into question. (We British got out arguably later than we should have, but in the event, just in time). We are still stuck in Afghanistan, torn between escalating our military presence and reducing it, increasingly uncertain as to what our role and longer-term purpose is. The Government's messages on this are now distinctly mixed, the product of past (opposition) rhetoric and economic and military reality. What was only recently 'a war we cannot afford to lose' is now a conflict from which we wish to extricate ourselves as soon as possible. Even more troubling, the NATO presence there is under growing internal strain as individual countries take different views as to the nature and extent of their continuing involvement. And we remain in danger of chasing the shadows of Al Qa'eda wherever they may flit, from the Maghreb to Yemen and Somalia, and from the Gulf to the mountains of the Afghanistan/Pakistan border, apparently oblivious to the fact that our military efforts are at least in part responsible for spreading this virus across an ever wider area. We should never forget that there was no Al Qa'eda Iraq until the West invaded and gave them a new target at which to aim.

The truth is that the post-Cold War doctrine of unipolar hard power combined with democratic/liberal interventionism is no longer working – if it ever really did. What appeared only a decade ago to be the beginning of the 'American Century' - with us in tow - has faded in the face of what is fast becoming a 'Network World' in which hard power no longer works.

## ***a) The Ending of Blocs and the Growth of the Network World***

This change is most clearly seen in the emergence of new power centres and associated groupings: China, India, Japan, South East Asia and now the sleeping giants of Latin America. The somewhat naïve reaction of the West has been to seek the development of new power centres without fully understanding what we were seeking to compete with. Nowhere has this been clearer than in the efforts to achieve the further integration of the European Union, purportedly as a countervailing bloc alongside the US driven by the theory that only strength can talk to strength. Simultaneously it has been based on the desire to balance the renaissance of Russia alongside the emergence of China and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. It is a misjudged and misdirected aim, for while the USA remains a massively powerful nation with an enormous contribution to make, the days of either going it alone or dominating a world of blocs have passed. The day of ‘top dog’ has gone. Team leadership is giving way to team cooperation.

## ***b) Asia***

It is now possible to identify how power has shifted from the Atlantic axis towards the emerging power centres in Asia. This has not been through hard power, although the growth of Chinese military strength should neither be overlooked nor underestimated. It has come about through economic and social developments. Together the so-called JACIK countries, (Japan, ASEAN, China, India and Korea) have a GNP equivalent to the EU. Measured on purchasing power parity terms they are much larger than either the EU or NAFTA. The combined official reserves of these countries are bigger than those of the US and the EU combined. The greatest global source of cash and influence is now with them.

In the development of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and through heavy investment in Africa, China in particular is showing signs that it understands the challenges of the network world, and is leaving the West in its wake. Chinese technology and advanced scientific research, especially in nano-technology, are racing ahead. Their standards in business and scientific education are now so competitive with ours that we are beginning to see the east-to-west flow of business students starting to reverse. Cultures in the East are proving more suited to the information age than ours. This in turn is propelling not just Japan, China, India and Korea to the centre of global events but also smaller nations such as Malaysia and Singapore. If we are serious about addressing global issues in the years ahead we will need to recruit their cooperation. Yet there is little sense that this message has even begun to percolate in the West. The ‘rise of Asia’ must require more than just lip service. It requires a change of outlook and the realisation that we may need them more than they need us.



### **c) Technology**

These trends have been compounded by the growing effects of technology within the network world which have made the so-called global village even smaller and the public knowledge of events within it more instantaneous. Communication between nations is now so immediate that it leaves little time for strategic subtleties. The ordinary citizens of the world no longer wait to be told by their leaders what to think but can instantly comment via an ever-growing plethora of programmes and gadgets.

In the network world leadership is no longer vertical but increasingly horizontal, based on cooperation rather than conscription, on encouragement rather than direction. It is a world where control over communication has slipped from nation states and their governments. More than one and a half billion people now use the web to register their opinions and make their immediate mark on events. China now monitors its millions of domestic blogs to take the temperature of its people. This is now a world of electronic networks, of soft power, of sub-governmental and non-governmental linkages between states and societies. It therefore requires completely new diplomatic machinery at the state level.

The phenomenon of people-power generated by these advances in communication technology is still in its early days. Yet there are few signs that the West has seriously begun to examine the implications of this quasi-revolution. We still seem to think that foreign policy is about intergovernmental relations and treaties, higher authority and rules. This ignores the reality that under the influence of globalised communication the whole fabric of international relations is already changing. Increasingly international standards and rules of conformity are being set not by government-to-government negotiations but through common agreements freely entered into by regulatory authorities and professions. Furthermore, the influence of multinational corporations continues unabated.

## HARD POWER

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The first implication of this change is the need urgently to re-examine the principles of our foreign policy. We need to cut through the verbiage that passes for international and security policy and return to basics.

For a start we need to look closely at the whole concept of hard power as an instrument of policy. There may well be times when the judicious and qualified use of military force is required, but the criteria for its use need urgent review.

The lessons of both Iraq and Afghanistan are stark. The days of using hard power for ‘nation building’, or for simply ‘bashing the bad guys’, are well and truly over. There has to be a more sophisticated national rationale. Moreover, in future military commitments must be matched by adequate resources and not undertaken if these resources are not assured. Such commitments should only be in pursuit of clearly desirable and achievable outcomes, and they should reflect clear British national interest, whether as a matter of security or of humanitarian catastrophe.

Had these criteria been in place over the last decade we would not have gone to war in Iraq and our involvement in Afghanistan would have been more circumspect – aimed solely if intensively at preventing the Taliban from taking control of Kabul again. Future foreign policy should never again involve us in the quasi-civil wars of innately unstable states. In each case we should ask ourselves the simple question: whether our national security would be compromised or our national stability undermined by failure to act. The final battles in Iraq had little to do with defending Western security and almost everything to do with getting sucked into sectarian conflict. In Afghanistan the coalition aligned itself with the Tajik, Uzbek and Hazara factions against the Pashtun community. The ensuing attrition suffered by our forces owes more to involvement in an essentially civil conflict than in defending our own interests, whether counter-narcotic or counter-terrorist. We must be careful not to make the same mistakes in Yemen or elsewhere.

Hard power still has a place in international affairs but it is increasingly qualified and constricted. The West needs urgently to begin to understand what these qualifications and restrictions entail and to factor them into future policy.

## ENGAGEMENT

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In reviewing the use of hard power we must also examine its relationship to soft power and what the US describes as ‘smart power’, in particular in the context of the potential for peaceful engagement. One unfortunate corollary to the bogging down of hard power in recent years was the development of the practice of what can loosely be termed ‘confrontation and isolation’. Friend or foe, with us or against us, nothing in between. The damaging effect of this doctrine has most clearly been seen in the Middle East and wider region, with Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Israel with us and Syria, Iran and the Shia Lebanese against. This polarisation has succeeded in driving those ‘against us’ closer together and into a common cause. The West’s attitude to Iran over these last years has not only failed to achieve its constraining objective, but has inadvertently and crassly handed to Iran the mantle of the leadership of growing anti-western sentiment within the region.

Our defence policy must now be to plan not so much for large-scale hard power exercises but for more incisive actions overseas and for security at home. As part of this we must begin to reach outside our blocs and our comfort zones to engage with others who previously we would have held at arm’s length but whose involvement in the end we will need if we are to achieve a lasting solution.

Turkey has been the first to realise this. While remaining a longstanding ally of Israel in the Middle East, in 2009 Turkey broke ranks with the rest of the West and reached across the Middle East divide to hold dialogue with Syria, Iran, and even Hamas. What Turkey saw was that the isolation and confrontation practised by the West were not only counter-productive but also achieving little; the time had come to engage. They realised that in this increasingly network world the rules had changed and those who wished to retain influence had to change with it.

Confrontation should no longer be the first option. The prime objective today has to be engagement. Our attitude now has to be built on respect, encouragement and cooperation. It is not enough, like hostile neighbours, to talk nervously to each other over the garden fence. We must develop a sense of common purpose. We need to open dialogue with our so-called foes, whether they are the distinct sets of Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan, or Hamas in Gaza and the West Bank.

While military intervention may sometimes continue to be required, it is increasingly evident that there can be no comprehensive outcomes that do not, in the end, include those essential elements to any deal that are currently ostracised and excluded. We can’t stabilise Afghanistan in the long term without involving the Taliban, who are an innate part of Afghanistan’s political DNA. We can’t create a viable and autonomous Palestinian State living alongside Israel without involving Hamas who represent a large section of the Palestinian people. Dialogue is what networking is about. If we don’t get involved in it, others will.

## NATIONAL SECURITY

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The implications of such a change on our defence strategy and capability would be profound. For a start, in a world where blocs have given way to concentric circles of influence, the relevance of the UK retaining and renewing weapons of mass destruction urgently needs reviewing, particularly when it so spectacularly consumes scarce resources. Our nuclear deterrent, Trident, is at best a blunt and increasingly more vulnerable package designed to fit the Cold War concept of Mutually Assured Destruction. Future requirements are much more likely to be for ‘smart deterrence’; whether in the form of more tactical and flexible nuclear weapons than Trident or new ‘smart’ non-nuclear and more credible armaments currently under research.

To meet the basic criteria of national security, which primarily must mean the security of the homeland, we must urgently reconsider whether sophisticated and inordinately expensive aircraft carriers are relevant to those needs, or whether scarce resources would be better invested in providing a navy that can protect our islands from physical attack, infiltration, smuggling – or even piracy against our shipping. The answer is increasingly self evident in a world where foreign adventures on the current scale are less and less likely.

In the current Defence Review, we also need to look closely at the role and capabilities of our Special Forces in promoting and protecting our national interests both overseas and at home. Counter-terrorism constitutes a clear and present threat that must be combated and Special Forces will continue to play a major role in so doing. Their effectiveness is recognised worldwide, both in terms of their hard power and soft power capabilities. Investing further in our Special Forces should therefore be a top priority. It should not however, be at the expense of our regular forces from whom in any event our Special Forces are recruited. While they should no longer be used for regime change or nation building, both of which have become euphemisms for internal conflict and civil war in foreign lands, there will be occasions when a failing state is in danger of imminent collapse with ramifications that will inevitably affect our national interests and security. Using our armed forces to prevent such collapse and to reinstate the rule of law in these instances would be a proper use of hard power. Our military must therefore continue to be configured and trained to undertake such a role, both independently and in cooperation with others. Moreover, the army in support of the civil police force can, as was seen in Northern Ireland over many years, play an important role in combating domestic terrorism.

Our Intelligence Services too are undoubtedly going to have an increasing role to play in protecting our national security. We cannot afford to cheese-pare. We must continue to provide them with the resources adequate to do so.

In summary, at a time of severely limited resources our defence and security budget must concentrate on the basic tasks and the primary responsibilities. Totemic objectives must be jettisoned. The days of not ‘being sent naked into the Conference Chamber’ are past. It doesn’t work like that anymore. Our defence and security strategy needs urgently to move from nostalgia to realism, from spin and governmental self-aggrandisement to the cold reality of today’s world.

## EUROPEAN UNION

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Over the last two decades the European Union has succeeded in dividing those who sought ever closer union from those who wished to preserve national sovereignty. That division is fundamental and unresolved. However, a further and more pressing issue has more recently emerged, namely whether the present direction of the EU is any longer relevant to current international developments. Today's EU, the EU of the Lisbon Treaty, was designed for the world as it was eight years ago. It is a European Union for a world of blocs where it was necessary to be big and strong to deal politically, economically and militarily with other superpowers. That was never a realistic objective for a collection of member states that was unlikely ever to come to a common view on international affairs. It is not necessary to look any further than the failure to achieve any meaningful EU response to 9/11, or than the continuing internal tensions on both the Balkans and the Middle East. Today in a world of dialogue, of concentric circles and spheres of influence, the integrated concept of the EU is increasingly irrelevant. In this new world it is not size or strength which will count so much as flexibility and actual influence. The ever closer union of the Lisbon Treaty, an increasingly monolithic and bureaucratic institution, is the antithesis of the elasticity and flexibility which the EU will increasingly need to display.

In a slightly different context, the recent economic travails of Greece and the continuing concerns about the economic stability of Spain and Portugal have cast serious doubts over the stability of the Eurozone and the future viability of the Euro as a single currency, at least without fiscal union which would be anathema to many of the EU's smaller members. The Single Currency looked good at a time of economic growth, but as the world economy faltered and the deficits in various European countries grew out of control, it increased the strains and tensions within the Eurozone. Once again it demonstrated how the integrationist drives of both the Treaties of Maastricht and Lisbon – and to a lesser extent the Treaties in between – never took sufficient account of the varied nature and aspirations, not to mention levels of genuine economic activity, of the various member states of the EU. This recent experience should, if wisdom and commonsense prevail, lead the whole EU to reconsider the direction in which it is currently travelling, not in a spirit of aggressive euroscepticism but rather – even if late in the day – in a genuine attempt to build a Europe which is fit for the purpose of the emerging network world.

What the United Kingdom should strive for is a Europe of nations rather than a nation of Europe. Those who wish to unite or coalesce should be allowed to do so, while those who wish a more flexible relationship should be permitted to achieve that too. This has sometimes been described as a Europe of variable geometry, with a unified central core constructed around France and Germany and more relaxed affiliations outside that core. Current economic strains relating to the Euro have made the case for this even more compelling. Such an EU would have the advantage in the network world of providing different European countries with the ability to engage with those outside the Union in ways best suited in each case. It would allow for enlargement in a way that could envisage Georgia, Northern Africa and even Russia becoming part of a Greater Europe within which individual states could where desired retain their sovereignty while others might wish to merge theirs.

It would also allow for a Europe of ‘bridges’ whereby certain members could act as dynamic channels to build and enhance external relationships. These could dispel the uncertainties created through ignorance and distance, and motivate contact and dialogue where currently there is ostracisation and isolation. Those bridges must not be passive crossing points but rather creators and boosters of relationships. Ideally they should not be fully integrated members of the EU but have a more flexible status which would better allow them to act as the dynamic bridge envisaged. The UK could become such a bridge reaching out from Europe across the Atlantic and into the Commonwealth; Turkey reaching out from Europe to the wider Middle East and Caucasus regions; and Ukraine reaching out towards Russia. These bridges would not only be conduits of communication but active tools of diplomacy and conciliation. It would allow the EU itself to communicate with its neighbours in a more sympathetic manner, in each case through the most appropriate interlocutors. It would answer the often-posed American question, ‘if I want to speak to Europe, who do I call?’ In terms of meaningful dialogue with the US or the Commonwealth, it would be the UK; for Russia, it would be Ukraine; and for the wider Middle Eastern Region and its Islamic elements, it would be Turkey. Such a role would enhance Turkey’s position as part of Europe just as it would the UK’s as the bridge through the Atlantic Charter with the US alongside the Commonwealth and eventually more widely with the emerging South American continent. In neither case would it preclude being part of the EU but rather would define and activate a new and hitherto unfulfilled role within it. And where the retention and preservation of national sovereignty was desired it would provide for that too.

This would create a Europe of different tiers and different levels of commitment to the concept of ever closer union. It would be worth it. Britain would regain control over our own destiny, our own relationships and our own international commitments, while at the same time retaining our links with the EU, if on a new level. This New Europe would be far better suited to the requirements of the emerging network world than the Europe of Lisbon and of ‘ever closer union’. It would be a Europe within which the UK could work comfortably, but which would not dictate to member states what their role and status within the EU should be.

It would not be an EU driven by conflict and bedevilled by rancour as it has too often been in the past. It would be a Europe created by courteous consensus reflecting the new international realities and working in partnership in the best sense of the word. It is a Europe which must happen if the EU in the longer term is to survive. The days of ‘one size fits all’ are well and truly over. The time for incremental tinkering with Europe has passed, as has the time for blindly marching towards ever closer union. It is time to construct a new more flexible outward looking Europe for the 21st century, and it is in the interests of all members of the EU to work towards it.

In Britain we can really lead the way, not as ‘euroscptics’ but as the architects of a more dynamic Europe which in the years ahead will prove ‘fit for purpose’ in a way that the current EU is singularly failing to do.

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## ENERGY, FOOD AND WATER

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The British national interest will be affected not just by our need for security from external physical threats but also by pressures on commodities essential to our general wellbeing. Chief among these are energy, food and water. As our North Sea resources of gas and oil continue to diminish, security of supply from overseas becomes ever more important. The fact that the sources of these are geographically situated in parts of the world that are frequently unstable, if not openly hostile, poses immediate challenges. Russian gas to Europe flows with increasingly complex arrangements through the Ukraine. Oil from the Caspian Sea and Central Asia is piped through Azerbaijan and Georgia to Turkey. The Gulf always has the potential for disruption, not least because of the continuing failure to resolve the enduring conflict in the Middle East. Alongside the problems of access there are now growing issues of availability.

A BP Statistical Survey in 2008 showed that, for the first time in history, the energy consumption of the OECD countries fell below that of the rest of the world. Countries such as India and China are chasing supplies wherever they are to be found, and in China's case appear prepared to play hard ball to secure them. Indeed, the international politics of energy are affecting British vital interests. China's increasingly investment-led interest in Africa is driven by her need for energy and other basic resources, as is her inconsistent engagement in international efforts to restrain Iran's nuclear ambitions. The growing influence of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, while currently benign, has the potential to challenge Western interests. These factors demand a far greater emphasis on engagement and cooperation in addressing global energy requirements than has hitherto been the case.

British foreign policy must clearly address these energy-related problems, even where the immediate target may be at one remove. A world freely and aggressively competing for finite resources of fossil fuels will require a degree of networking to protect our interests. We will need to form cooperative and mutually advantageous alliances with suppliers and conveyors. Once again the old bloc mentality would be counterproductive. New and more flexible relationships will need to be formed. In the course of this we will be unable completely to avoid involvement in regional conflict resolution, not least in the Middle East to which I will return later.

Nor can British foreign policy ignore the implications of the growing global demand for food and the likelihood of regional, if not global, shortages. It is not enough for Britain just to return to a domestic agricultural policy of self-sufficiency in food. Food shortages have historically been the cause of major population migrations which have changed the faces and characters of nations. Hunger-driven humanitarian disasters in one part of the world will have a knock-on effect on other parts as well, not least on Britain. The pressures of the potential migration and the economic and social consequences could become unupportable. We need to pursue a foreign policy that will mitigate such disasters and lessen the consequent pressures upon ourselves.

Regarding water, the outcomes are less predictable but no less threatening. China has increasing requirements on diminishing supplies of water, as do growing swathes of countries in the African continent and the Middle East. The resulting international pressures could shortly become enormous. It is in our interests to work with others to find a solution to this looming crisis. We need urgently to enter into cooperative international discussions to agree fair ways of sharing and distributing the earth's water resources. It is a matter of great concern that at the moment we have no policies to address these challenges; and there are none in prospect.



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## COMMERCIAL AND BUSINESS NETWORKING

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One of the most increasingly effective means of diplomacy in a network world will be through business and commerce. In the days of hard power, the sale of defence equipment was seen as a natural concomitant. As hard power makes way for soft, our commercial outreach must vary and adapt as well.

Much of this will be within the private corporate sector, increasingly multinational, and therefore largely outside the direction or even influence of governments. Some of it will almost inevitably run counter to the policy objectives of the government. The skill of government in a network world will be, however, to harness the momentum and the relationships being created by such private enterprises and initiatives to enhance the influence the UK can bring to bear in crucial parts of the emerging network world such as China, South East Asia, Central Asia, Russia, the Indian sub-Continent and increasingly South America.

One of the commercial consequences of hard power and the pre-network era was the risk aversion of British companies to bid for contracts or to invest in the emerging economies for fear of incurring unforeseen liabilities and thus demonstrate weakness. Thus Shanghai's high-speed overhead train went to German contractors and the New Delhi Metro to Japanese contractors, in both cases with no competing bids from UK businesses. The UK interests argued that the corporate legal frameworks were either not in place or were too complicated and therefore too risk laden.

In future, the UK government should devise means of giving comfort to such potential bids to allow UK business, not least manufacturing and engineering, to gain footholds in these vital emerging markets. One good example is Iraq where the argument of instability – which cannot be denied – is used as an excuse by too many British firms for holding back on investment. Yet other countries, not least China, are investing in what – once stability is established – will (given Iraq's known oil reserves) become one of the largest and richest investments markets in the world, a golden boat ride we are on the verge of missing and one which will carry with it enormous influence in a crucial part of an energy-hungry world.

We often talk about our global economic interests in terms of what we buy and sell. Too much of our global business is that of purchasing and not enough is in selling – partly because from our low manufacturing base and our relatively high labour costs we have not got enough to sell. What we have got to sell, and must increasingly through education augment, is expertise - a tradeable commodity that we have failed fully in the past to exploit. We need strategically to plan to change that.

Nor will it be enough for us just to buy from and sell to the rest of the world in general. We need to define our strategic markets and deliberately set out to meet their requirements.

This is an area of activity for both diplomats and intelligence. If we are serious about using business and commerce as a tool of foreign policy in a network world, we need centrally to coordinate such an approach, to harness the private sector to the plan, and strategically set about delivering it. Other countries are already doing so highly effectively, to our detriment. Again, take Iraq as an example. If it is to become – as it will – a modern technological and prosperous economy, we should even now be identifying the telecommunications systems, the general and industrial infrastructure (not least on the oil front), the housing and commercial and cultural developments that the Gulf States have already demonstrated are part of the growing of a petro-economy, and we should be planning strategically to be at the forefront of providing the expertise, the contractors and engineering facilities which will soon be required. We should be ahead of the game. Sadly we are already in many ways behind it.

One of the financial and commercial tools of foreign policy has always been within our aid programme. Yet a cynical aspect of previous international aid policy has been the tendency to provide development grants in the expectation that the recipients will spend the money ‘in our shops’. That is not only morally questionable but also counter-productive. We need to look at this in a different way.

The economic world is changing. With the emerging economies it is increasingly difficult to talk about geographic definitions of what was once known as the Third World. China makes and buys more cars than any other country in the world, yet it still regionally suffers from severe socio-economic divides and areas of great poverty. India at one end is an enormous wealth producer, able to send rockets to the moon, yet contained within that country are areas of grinding deprivation. Many of the so-called developing countries of the end of the last century are now prosperous, self-sufficient and increasingly influential within the network world. Malaysia is a good example.

Consumer demand in Africa is growing especially for basic consumer goods such as food and soap. Yet we are still stuck in the past hard power concept of the G8 giving enormous grants to African governments conditional on ‘good governance’, only to see many of those grants being used to purchase the consumer requirements from those same G8 countries, leaving nothing permanent to show for the aid in the long term. More constructive and productive would be to encourage private investment in developing countries to set up their own means of production whereby their basic consumer needs can be domestically met with a good return to the investor. This type of investment would be mutually beneficial, particularly in certain African countries, and would, while giving us commercial and business bases in these countries, allow us to build up constructive relationships at the same time.

There would still be need for some direct aid to help create the infrastructures of transport and communication that will be required, but by and large the needs of development would be increasingly met by genuine commercial investment which again would create the links so essential to our ability to make the most of the opportunities provided by the network world.

## THE INTERNATIONAL TERRORIST THREAT

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It is undeniable that the threat of Islamist terrorism at home is fuelled if not created by the perception among many young Muslims in the UK of Islamophobic tendencies in our military actions overseas. This has been exacerbated by the 24-hour news coverage of our military engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan, where the perception is that Muslim lives are cheap in comparison to Western ones. Ill-directed targeted assassinations of Muslim fundamentalists resulting in collateral civilian casualties and deaths carried out by ‘unmanned aerial vehicles’ (drones/predators) have been a cause of deep and genuine resentment, not just in the areas where they are being carried out but at home as well. The essential balance between removal of threat and unnecessary attrition is currently tilted against our best interests. To a far deeper level however, domestic Islamic resentment is fired by the failure of the West to resolve the Israel-Palestine problem. We therefore have a direct national interest in promoting a resolution to this longstanding running sore.

While British Governments have paid lip-service to the Middle East Peace Process, when push has come to shove we have always managed to give the impression that it isn’t essentially our problem and that we can leave it to the Americans to make the running. On both counts we have been wrong.

It is our problem because it radicalises Muslim youths at home. The Gaza conflict of 2009 with Israeli use of phosphorous weapons and the inordinately high level of civilian casualties mirrored the July war in Lebanon in 2006. In both cases the West stood by and did nothing to restrain Israel before the worst of the damage was done, confirming in Muslim minds both within the region and domestically in Britain the partisan nature of our involvement. This perception is seriously harmful to our national interest. We need to re-establish our even-handedness in relation to both sides and to be seen proactively supporting genuine progress in advancing peace. This must undoubtedly mean telling our Israeli friends truths that they would rather not hear, such as in relation to the illegality of the settlements in and the occupation itself of the West Bank.

It is also wrong to continue to hide behind the US, leaving them to make all the running. As in so many areas of conflict in the world today we were in the historical driving seat when the original lines were drawn, leaving us with a legacy of moral responsibility. It would certainly be hard for us to maintain our international integrity if we ignore this urgent imperative. Moreover our history gives us a far greater knowledge and understanding of these areas than the US can ever hope to acquire in the short to medium term. While wasting no opportunity to blame us for past grievances, many people in the Arab world acknowledge that we understand them in a way that the Americans simply do not. Indeed, this has personally and somewhat nervously been relayed by, among others, members of the Gulf ruling families. They cannot understand why we stand back from involvement in a peace process that, if successful, will markedly reduce tensions within our own country as well.

## FACILITATION

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We therefore need a foreign policy of engagement in the Middle East based on dialogue and bipartisanship. We need to demonstrate that it is possible to be a friend of Israel and of Palestine at the same time, reinforcing the fact that this is the only possible basis of underwriting a two state solution. To achieve this we will have to discard a lot of recent historical baggage. We should start now.

We must demonstrate that we are prepared to support and encourage the development of a viable and autonomous Palestinian state within internationally recognised boundaries. Its independence and freedom from incursion, not least from Israel, must be guaranteed, by NATO if necessary. At the same time we must assure Israel that we will underwrite its freedom from attack with a similar NATO type guarantee. And we should use our influence with other Arab states to mirror those positions in the converse direction.

We must make clear that the continued legal existence of the State of Israel within agreed borders is non-negotiable. At the same time we must demonstrate that we understand the basic aspirations of the Palestinian people for self-determination and should actively support them in seeking to achieve this. We should cast off any remaining feelings of post-colonial guilt and present ourselves as facilitators, providing the framework within which first dialogue and then genuine negotiations can take place.

We learned how to do this in Northern Ireland where the initial suspicions of the nationalists/republicans about the British were dispelled by the determined provision of a genuinely dispassionate facilitation process. Indeed, facilitation should become part of our foreign policy armoury, the cutting edge of the exercise of soft power. Once we have established our ability to deliver facilitation we should be prepared to use it in other areas where confrontation needs to give way to dialogue – not least the Caucasus, East Africa, and the Indian sub-Continent in relation to Kashmir. Where it is also in our national energy supply, commercial or immigration interests for stability to be achieved, other areas of conflict or dispute should similarly be offered our services of facilitation and mediation.

In a world where we are still looking for a role and where the bigger stage is less and less available to us, we could do worse than to establish ourselves as a major player in this increasingly important field of conflict resolution.

## NATO

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In view of the ending of the Cold War which gave NATO its purpose sixty years ago, and in view too of the failure of NATO to deliver effectively in Afghanistan as a result of the disparate levels of members' commitment to it, there are significant question marks over its future purpose and role. It was born of the need for cooperative solidarity and mutual self-defence in the face of a real and present threat of Soviet aggression. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall it has lost its original purpose and is still seeking a meaningful role. The moment it moved from being a defensive pact to a proactive external intervener its credibility was brought into question. By what legal right did it intervene in the Balkans in general and Kosovo in particular? What is the defensive justification for its leading role in the anti-insurgent war in Afghanistan? Should we accept that NATO's intended role has effectively been fulfilled and that it has now become an expensive appendage to our national security requirements?

Using NATO to defend the West against potential aggression from Iran or North Korea seems at best far-fetched. Equally the use of such a massive deliverer of force to combat the threat of international terrorism verges heavily on overkill. If NATO is to retain its credibility it must return to its main original purpose, namely to be ready to come to the defence (Article 5) of any member attacked from outside; and that must mean no more and no less than it says. If, say, Georgia becomes a member, any future aggression from Russia would have to be responded to by NATO as a whole. If that is not deliverable, then Georgia should not be allowed to become a member. Likewise, if it is envisaged that Russia should become a fully fledged member then the rest of NATO must sign up to the concept of coming to the aid of Russia against any external aggressor and vice versa. These are high hurdles, but if NATO is to retain credibility as a military pact then they must be jumped; they cannot and must not be skirted around.

We need therefore to reconsider the purpose and nature of NATO today. In terms of our own national interest it is important that we should seek to preserve it. Without NATO, European defence would be required to stand on its own feet both in terms of boots on the ground and money, and all the indications from our European colleagues suggest that the commitment to do so is not there and is unlikely to be so in the future. NATO is the vehicle by which we can look to the US to underwrite – and sometimes overwrite – our national security requirements. We cannot afford to throw that away, particularly when it is evident that the concept of a European alternative is a dangerous daydream.

We need therefore to consider what, in today's circumstances and for the foreseeable future, NATO should be doing.

NATO is and must remain a defence alliance including the US. It is not and must never become an international talking shop. If it is to have a meaningful military role beyond its natural boundaries it must be on the basis of agreed action in defence of the national

interests jointly or severally of its members. The starting hurdle should be deliberately set high. Moreover, if it is to survive as a Treaty Organisation it must demonstrate that all its members are fully committed to it, both in terms of the resources they are prepared to give and their readiness to participate fully in the actions which it undertakes. Failure on either count should become a reason for loss of membership. A half-hearted NATO is in many ways worse than no NATO at all. It is either dynamic and committed, or it should throw in the towel. NATO in Afghanistan has posed the question. This should be our answer.

It should also lead us to look again at our so-called special relationship with the US, the foundation stone of NATO and the pivot of our foreign policy for the last sixty years.

## REVISITING THE ATLANTIC CHARTER

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The Atlantic Charter was signed in August 1941 by British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and American President Franklin Roosevelt, while secretly on board a warship off the coast of Newfoundland. It is hard to think of a more evocative image of two allies, facing a single, coherent enemy and determining to create a new world order for when the battle was over and the war had been won.

Over the years since the birth of the Atlantic Charter, much has been made of the ‘Special Relationship’ between the UK and the United States. Many fine words have been spoken and written about shared values, traditions and common language. While this relationship has never been quite as robust or constant as its protagonists would have us believe, it has served us well on important occasions. During the Cold War in particular, mutual interest largely ensured that it flourished. Even today the UK receives more US defence and special intelligence than any other country and vice versa. We remain America’s closest and most reliable military ally.

Yet since the fall of the Berlin Wall the consistency of our relationship has been markedly less certain, and with the ever closer integration of the European Union perceptively less relevant too. The implementation of the Lisbon Treaty and the creation of a distinct European foreign policy identity mean that the US now inevitably seeks a more direct relationship with the EU as a whole. Today it is not just Britain, but a large majority of European states who believe they enjoy a ‘special relationship’ with the United States. All are overstating the position and must also now adjust their perceptions.

America in general is not looking to its traditional allies as it used to. A consequence of Obama’s embracing of a multilateral world order appears to be a concurrent demotion of London’s significance.

Yet the cross-party default position in British foreign policy remains uncritically to follow that of the US. This default position no longer serves us well. It constrains our ability to pursue our own real national interests or to deploy our own particular strengths in the changing world around us. Moreover, there is a growing general sense that Britain is no longer able to hold its own with America and is insufficiently rewarded for its steadfast friendship.

Some of us who have called in the past for a new Atlantic Charter, a revived and more reciprocal relationship, now concede that this option is gone. The choices are simple and straightforward: to continue being merely a downstream element of US foreign policy, or to grasp the nettle and cut the umbilical cord.

From the standpoint of Britain’s best long-term interests, the latter must be the way forward. We need to return to focusing on our own national interest. When it coincides

with American policy, fine; when it doesn't, so be it. The Special Relationship as such has had its day. Like Monty Python's notorious parrot, it is dead. We must now learn to live without the comfort blanket it has provided for so long.

This is no lone view. On the specific matter of the Special Relationship, the Foreign Affairs Select Committee recently concluded that, *"the use of the phrase 'the Special Relationship' in its historical sense, to describe the totality of the ever-evolving UK-US relationship, is potentially misleading, and we recommend that its use should be avoided."*

This sums up the essential truth of our relations with the United States. We need to realise that, *"when you survey the world from the White House, Europe is still a small part of what the US sees, and Britain is just a small part of Europe"* (Tomas Valasek, Centre for European Reform). We can't expect much from America when it is clear that the US needs and wants to concentrate on furthering its relations with other countries. It also looks as though Obama is keen for the US to live within its means when it comes to foreign policy. A more realist school of diplomacy, taking the world as you find it, recognising the reach and limits of power and utilising persuasion, is an appropriate starting point for US foreign policy and for ours too. From this position Britain could follow its own national interests while still providing valuable friendship to America.

We need to see our alliance with the US not as mutually exclusive and unconditional, but as one of many. Only in continuing to share intelligence, which is mutually recognised as of particular value both ways, should this alliance be special. Otherwise we should become more proactive in pursuing our national interest by strengthening our alliances with other countries as well as maintaining our ties within Europe. None of this should be to the detriment of our friendship with America, but carried out in conjunction with it. We do well to remember that it is not just our ties with Washington that give us clout in Europe, but other way round as well; the relationships are triangular. The Europe *or* America proposition is an unnecessary one. The truth is that Europe needs the US and the US needs Europe; likewise, we in the UK need both and both need us.

None of this seeks to promote or reflect in any sense the anti-Americanism which pervades the popular attitudes of so many of our European colleagues. Nor is it to turn our back on America even if we could afford to. Closeness in co-operation is no less relevant and important than it was eight years ago; terrorism is as likely to impact on either country as it was then. Our economic interaction with the US would in any event make a break impossible. Our emerging role should be as stated previously, a dynamic bridge, the premier link between the US and Europe and between the US and the Commonwealth.

In the modern world, or perhaps it was ever thus, countries tend to dominate, integrate, subjugate or bridge. The UK's days of global domination are past and in today's world they will not come again. Integration is not in our DNA and subjugation is not in our psyche. Mediation, working the confluences of the concentric circles, influencing within the spheres of influence are at the heart of our historic and prevailing skills. These are the elements of bridging with which we can replace the obsolete special relationship.



This is not about becoming a go-between. It is about identifying areas where progress is possible between the various spheres of influence and constructively building on them. It is about using our intermediary and facilitation skills to dissipate the growing anti-Western sentiments of much of the rest of the world and to create new international partnerships and joint ventures. In this specific regard we can begin to operate at the very least as equals with America and in some cases as her vanguard. The ‘critical friend’ can become the discriminating advisor and, where the occasion demands, the proactive partner can become the blunt adversary. Honesty rather than sycophancy might in the short term be regarded as hostile; in the longer perspective it will be seen as more sincere.

Lord Palmerston famously stated: *“We have no eternal allies and we have no perpetual enemies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual and those interests it is our duty to follow.”* That sentiment should be the only default position we hold in the 21st century, as it was in the 19th.

We have spent the past decade conjoined to the foreign policy of America Presidents, and it is time that we looked to our national interest once again. We therefore need a British foreign policy allied with, but not dependent on, the United States of America. US foreign policy should no longer be our default position. We must begin to cast our diplomatic net wider.

## THE COMMONWEALTH

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The Commonwealth is and has been for some time one of the most shamefully under-utilised and wasted international associations. It shouldn't and needn't be. In a network world, an organisation like the Commonwealth is tailor made and Britain's interest in it should be pre-eminent. A free association of 53 sovereign independent states, consisting of over thirty percent of the world's population, from every major continent and encompassing all the world's major religions should be a dynamic vehicle for proactive and constructive diplomacy. With no charter, treaty or constitution, its association is helpfully articulated through less prescriptive but no less compelling aims: collaboration, mutual support and discussion. This is particularly evident when it comes to constitutional and judicial matters, such as democratic elections, the rule of law, sustainable development and human rights. These are just some of the core principles by which Commonwealth countries are expected to govern. It is a readymade vehicle for positive action within the network world.

Too often the Commonwealth is scorned internationally as antiquated and irrelevant. Nothing could be further from the truth. Over half of its 1.7 billion members are under 25 and the principles it espouses are those that modern and progressive leaders the world over seek to propagate and support.

While problems of fostering democratic states in the Middle East and South Asia have left a vastly diminished international appetite and capacity for similar exercises, there is still a need for budding democracy in developing countries to be encouraged and supported. Other initiatives seem to be withering on the branch. 'Dropping democracy from 10,000 feet' thankfully seems to have run its course. Extending EU membership appears almost to have reached stalemate. The global community in any event cannot be dogmatic or squeamish about democratic principles as often the most pressing matters of international business involve un-democratic nations such as Russia and China. The disagreements that so regularly paralyse the Security Council would afflict any group of leading democracies.

The quiet promotion of democracy is therefore one of the major roles that the Commonwealth can undertake. The exclusion of both Fiji and Pakistan from the Commonwealth provided much-needed incentive and momentum for a return to democracy in those countries. The "badge of respectability" that Commonwealth membership bestows can add to internal pressures towards democracy.

The EU has influenced positive changes through its own commitment to democratic values, positively encouraging Serbia and other countries to make further democratic progress in order to attain membership. The Commonwealth could encourage a similar response. It also has the weight, the expertise and the accumulated strength to be a genuine force for good in the world, and Britain can play a full part in that.

The pieces are there but they need re-organising and re-energising. Without losing influence, Britain should accept that centring the Commonwealth in London leaves it open to accusations of carrying the shades of Empire. It should be re-based in India, which itself has the potential to become a powerful inner core of a living network of relationships that cross continents and have unparalleled global reach.

One of the great strengths of the Commonwealth is not only its diversity but that it contains within its membership some of the most significant countries in the world. India, Canada, South Africa, Australia, Singapore, New Zealand, Malaysia and of course Britain are economic and military powers within their own rights. Working within the Commonwealth as a powerhouse core, and bringing the rest of the membership with them, they could create an organisation of enormous strength and influence in the network world. Enabling this core to distance the Commonwealth from the erstwhile and damaging concept of the ‘white commonwealth’ would be to its advantage.

That it would be largely English speaking would be no disadvantage. English is increasingly the common language of communication in the 21st century. Where the UN is structurally deficient and the EU regionally limited, the Commonwealth could offer a unique opportunity. It could become a real counterbalance to the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation for a start. It could also balance the US in dialogue and diplomacy, helping to fill the dangerous vacuums left when America’s hard power strategy has collapsed – a role which the Chinese have increasingly performed.

For too long the Commonwealth has been under-funded and under-appreciated by many of its members, including the UK. For us it costs only 20p per person per year, while the EU costs £52 per person per year. It urgently needs, with British help, encouragement and involvement to become a bolder organisation that recognises its own strengths. It could have associate members as well as new members; indeed some of the giants of the world like Japan could become interested especially if it is based in the emerging powerhouse of India. It is in our interest to encourage such countries to become involved in the Commonwealth in one way or another.

In any event the Commonwealth should play a much more central and comprehensive role in British foreign policy. There should be a dedicated minister for the Commonwealth as there is for the EU. Europe, particularly after recent economic events, is no longer the world’s most prosperous and dynamic region and we should constantly be looking to build links elsewhere. Invaluable partnerships with Asia and Africa are where our Commonwealth involvement can take us. Within the Commonwealth we could develop a real role in encouraging stability, prosperity and dynamism across the network world – and it would be in our national interest to do so.

## THE FCO

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Crucial to all the foregoing is to have the institutional capability to carry it out. We need to look at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office as we find it today and to ask the essential questions: Are our diplomatic dispositions best set up to meet the emerging challenges outlined? Do we have the right ministerial systems in London?

The answer to both these questions is 'No'. The Foreign Office has been emasculated by the creation of the Department for International Development (DFID), which veers dangerously close to setting its own foreign policy at times. DFID's budget overwhelms that of the FCO, further undermining the former.

The FCO suffers from the same culture of targets that has afflicted all government departments over the last decade or so. Nothing is less appropriate for target-based measurements than diplomacy, which is a subtle art. It is crass and damaging to run the Foreign Office as one would the Department of Health or Home Office. In reality, as Sir Christopher Meyer has recently pointed out, the qualities that make a good diplomat have not changed in 500 years.

The recent creation of the National Security Council, including the Secretaries of State for International Development, Defence and the Foreign Office among others, is a step in the right direction. Joined-up government then needs to filter down so that British soldiers, aid workers and diplomats work in tandem and never again at cross-purposes.

## CONCLUSION

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Britain's lack of a coherent foreign policy over these last years has condemned us to drift, being swept wherever the currents of international events take us, and even worse being carried beneath the skirts of an equally drifting USA. It has meant that until now we have not sought to develop a proper strategy for serving our own national interests in this network world.

The art of foreign policy and security should be to assess and define our strengths and capabilities and then to structure our policy to meet them in the light of available resources. We have to accept that in today's world we are no longer a major naval power or a conventional military one either. In our increasingly desperate attempts, despite a lack of adequate resources, to play hardball along with the big boys, our diplomatic clout has been sorely neglected.

We need to think afresh about our foreign and security policy. It must be based strictly and exclusively on our national interest with a fully coordinated foreign, security and international aid policy, properly resourced.

What this paper seeks to suggest is a new approach with four key elements. First, Britain should be the dynamic bridge between the EU and the USA, and between both the EU and the US with the Commonwealth. Second, Britain should actively propagate a reinvigorated and refocused NATO. Third, Britain must act as a credible facilitator in the world of conflict resolution. We should use our historical experience, often learned the hard way, to facilitate and influence conflict resolution in the Middle East, Afghanistan and elsewhere. We should retain the capability to back up such efforts where required with hard power, but it should in future largely be delivered in the form of Special Forces operations rather than heavy deployment of men and machinery on the ground. And fourth, Britain should be an active member of an increasingly dynamic Commonwealth.

For all the reasons set out in this pamphlet, it is in our national interests to be regarded as a positive rather than a negative force within the international arena, engaging rather than confronting and seeking cooperation rather than rivalry. Where we no longer have the might to secure our interests by force we can do so by persuasion and friendship. By playing to our strengths our involvement in international affairs can become more credible again, and the sense of drift can give way to one of purpose. And by working to our skills and within our means we will be much more likely to achieve our ends than we have been for the last twenty years or so.

A successful and dynamic foreign policy requires clarity and definition, not indecision, damage limitation and drift. If we can reverse those insidious trends in the ways this paper has set out, if we can once again discover our sense of identity and purpose on the international stage, then we will know once more who we are and where we see our place in the world. Then once again we can be proud to be British and to hold our heads up high.

## THE AUTHOR

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Michael Ancram was born in 1945. He was educated at Ampleforth College; Christ Church, Oxford (MA) and Edinburgh University (LLB), was called to the Scottish Bar in 1970 and practised until 1979. He took silk in 1996

He has been a Company Director to several companies including industrial (paper), Corporate Communications (Chairman) and Parliamentary Consultants. He is a partner in a tenant farm.

Michael won Berwickshire & East Lothian in February 1974 – the only Conservative gain from Labour at that election. He was Member of Parliament for Edinburgh South from 1979-87. He was Member of Parliament for Devizes from April 1992-May 2010.

He was Chairman of the Scottish Conservative Party from 1980 until 1983 and became Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Scottish Office in 1983, holding that post until 1987. Michael was a member of the Public Accounts Committee and Chairman of the Backbench Constitutional Affairs Committee from 1992 until May 1993.

In May 1993, Michael was appointed Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Northern Ireland Office. In January 1994, he was promoted to be Minister of State at the Northern Ireland Office responsible for the peace process. He was made a Privy Counsellor in January 1996. He was appointed to the Shadow Cabinet with responsibility for Constitutional Affairs in June 1997. In October 1998, Michael became Chairman of the Conservative Party. In 2001 he stood unsuccessfully in the Party leadership contest. In September 2001 he was appointed Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Shadow Secretary of State for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs.

Following the 2005 General Election Michael remained as Deputy Leader of the Party and became Shadow Secretary of State for Defence. On December 6th 2005, in accordance with his speech made at the Party Conference in October, he stepped down from the Front Bench. He was subsequently appointed, by the then Prime Minister Tony Blair, to the Intelligence and Security Committee. He retired as an MP at the May 2010 General Election.

He is Chairman of Global Strategy Forum, an independent, non-party political forum, dedicated to the promotion of fresh thinking and active debate on foreign affairs, defence and international security issues, which he founded in May 2006.



**The Rt Hon Michael Ancram QC**



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