

“A View from Britain”
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The British Prime Minister defined the new set of problems we face in the Post 9-11 world when he said last month, “I believe we have correctly identified the security threat of the early 21st Century. It is the combination of terrorism and the development of nuclear or chemical or biological weapons of mass destruction. September the 11th showed the world that this new form terrorism knows no limits to the innocent lives it will take. WMD are the means by which that terrorism could destroy our world’s security and our way of life unless that threat is eliminated.” The Prime Minister positioned Britain along side the United States in his “shoulder to shoulder” speech and he stood in the gallery as your President made his address to Congress after the atrocities of September 11th. It was a clear expression of the enduring friendship between our two nations. And it also demonstrated joint determination to defend our common values of freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. These are the values that bind our people together. These are the values that men and women everywhere aspire to. These are the values which previous conflicts have taught us on what the war on terrorism teaches us to value. We should be ready to fight to safeguard them for ourselves and extend them to others.

So how have we performed on making and sustaining peace in the post 9-11 world? We began by removing the Taliban who was shielding Osama Bin Laden and his terrorists groups from power in Afghanistan. We then turned, last year, to the problem of dealing Iraq which had defying UN resolutions for a dozen years. Again I quote the Prime Minister who when asked in September whether he would have done anything differently in relation to Iraq with the benefit of hindsight replied, “Nothing. I would have done exactly the same. We did the right thing by removing Saddam Hussein. The world is a safer place without him. I believe as powerfully as I did at the time, that making sure that that man is no longer in charge in Iraq with all the evil intent that he has is a good thing for his country, his people, for the world.” British ministers have described the capture of Saddam Hussein as momentous event for Iraq. With the capture of Saddam Hussein it is possible to look more optimistically at developments in Iraq. We know it has been a painful task trying to put an end to insurgency. Of course it continues to be a difficult objective to achieve. The priority is of course for better intelligence about who the insurgents are? Who is funding them? In order to assess the forces we face. There is a sense here that things are improving. Security will remain a key issue. For the political and economic developments of Iraq, we need to keep on top of this insurgency to ensure that we can deliver the political and economic gains that the removal of Saddam Hussein to the Iraqi people. The recruitment, training and expansion of Iraqi security forces are an essential part of this process. My government believes that while there is a very great deal of work to be done on reconstruction, on the political process, and on security, Iraq is unquestionably a better place now than it was a year ago. We look forward to further progress. This year we wish to see power transferred as soon as possible and when that happens Iraq will return to being a sovereign nation.

Now we all know that there were differences between some of traditional partners in Britain and the United States over what to do in Iraq. On this subject, it is worth recalling that it was the whole of the international community, not just Britain and the United States which came to the view based on their own evidence in November 2002 that the Saddam regime posed a threat of international peace and security by reason of its proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, its long-range missile systems, and its defiance of the United Nations. Looking forward, we now need, urgently, to rebuild international consensus. We need to put aside the family quarrels which have divided those nations on both sides of the Atlantic who belong to the same traditions of democracy and freedom. We may disagree, and indeed we did disagree on how we got here but we agree on the way forward, a free, democratic Iraq run by Iraqis, for Iraqis as soon as this is practicable. And until this is practicable, coalition forces and international money are needed create an environment where the seeds of democracy can grow. But in rebuilding international consensus, we must in this post 9-11 world ensure that errors of the past can not be repeated. Dictators such as Saddam Hussein cannot be allowed to flout the will of the international community as he did when he ignored 16 Security Council resolutions, over 12 years, which ordered him to stop his illegal weapons programs.

An op-ed in last Friday's London Times argued, "...a year ago many diplomats and strategic analysts gave noisy warnings that the military attack on Iraq would provoke anti-Western riots across the Muslim world, destabilize moderate Arab rulers, and be a starting point of the cataclysm. A year later the Middle East has changed in a way utterly unexpected by the pessimists." The op-ed was referring to a remarkable week in December which began with the capture of Saddam Hussein. In the same week, there was the signature by Iran of the additional protocol of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, a major step by the Iranians. That should ensure that there is now an intrusive safeguards regime to check on whether they are keeping to their undertaking not to develop nuclear weapons. Finally, at the end of that week in December there was a major announcement by Colonel Gaddafi that Libya had decided to abandon its weapons of mass destruction programs. Now, Britain played a major role in bringing about these developments in both Libya and Iran. The Libyan announcement followed work began in March following successful negotiations on Lockerbie and compensation to see if we could resolve the WMD issue with Libya in a similarly cooperative manor. Nine months of work followed during which the Libyans discussed their programs with experts from Britain and America. As a result, Libya has now declared its intention to dismantle its weapons of mass destruction completely and limit the range of their missiles to no greater than the 300 kilometers allowed by the Missile Technology Control Regime. Then in October the foreign ministers of Britain, France, and Germany visited Iran and agreed that Iran would sign the additional protocol to the nonproliferation treaty to which I have referred. Part of this is an agreement to suspend, voluntarily, all uranium enrichments and reprocessing activities as defined by the IAEA. Obviously we hope and expect the Iran will stand by these agreements which hook in very tightly to the obligation set for them by the IAEA.

There had been other good news from the Middle East. In Sudan a twenty year old civil war that has killed 2 million and made 4 million people homeless, is close to a final

resolution with an unprecedented signing of a sharing agreement between the Muslim north and the Christian south. Relations between Syria and Turkey have improved. With the visit of President Assad to Turkey, the first state visit since Syria became independent in 1946. And Syria has offered to restart peace talks with Israel. There is, however, of course, a continued need for us to resolve the Israeli – Palestinian conflict, which has festered like a running sore for so long on the face of that region. We need to insure that both Israelis and Palestinians have the hope of a brighter future. This will need to involve a two-state solution: a future for Israel, free of the threat of terror and a future for the Palestinians which offers them the hope of economic development in a state of their own. No one underestimates just how difficult it will be to achieve this. We are aware of just how often when peace in the Middle East is seen within reach, it slips through our fingers in a fresh round of violence and retribution. But, we cannot give up for Israel's sake, for the Palestinian's sake, for the sake regional stability and for the sake of all of us who want international stability.

Outside of the Middle East in this post 9-11 world, we've seen in recent days encouraging signs of reconciliation between India and Pakistan with their announcement that they plan to take forward the process and normalization in composite talks next month. There are signs that the negotiations between the six – the United States, Russia, China, Japan, South Korea, on the one hand, and North Korea on the other, is having the effect of reducing some of the tension on the Korean peninsula.

Now turning to Europe, I mentioned before the importance of restoring consensus on both sides of the Atlantic on the way forward in meeting these special challenges of the 21st Century. Our friends, the French and Germans, while opposed to the action we took in Iraq continue to play a key role in the war against global terrorism. The European Union which remains of key importance, central importance to Britain will be expanding from 15 to 25 members on the 1st of May when countries such as Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic join. It is worth recalling that 18 of those 25 countries supported the British-United States position on Iraq. The enlargement process, we in Britain believe, a European Union of 450 million and will boost European stability, security, trade and prosperity. This expanded European Union should be a great source of stability and prosperity on the other side of the Atlantic to you.

To conclude, Britain made it clear after 9-11 that we were in the war against global terrorism for the long haul. Recent events, such as the terrorist attacks on British targets in Istanbul which I feel particularly intensely since my successor was blown up in them. The disruption of certain British Airway flights to the U.S. and Saudi Arabia over the holiday period showed that the price of peace and indeed our safety is in fact eternal vigilance. As I hope my speech has shown, since September 2001 Britain has been pulling her weight in coalition, military action in Afghanistan and Iraq and diplomatically, with the United States, France and Germany in bringing about the welcomed developments in respectively Libya and Iran. There is of course a great deal more that we need to do but my prime minister has made it clear that he believes that recent events and our political determination are opening up possibilities which just a few years ago would have been unthinkable. As he has said, "we must work now to create

new partnerships across geographical and cultural divides backed by tough international rules and action. Those countries, he concluded, which pursue a peaceful past will find ready partners in United States, Britain, and its allies. We have only wanted peace for people of all faiths, all cultures, all nations that desire the greater good of their citizens and the wider world.