The Liberal State in International Society. Interpreting recent British foreign policy.

Abstract

The question of who decides when a state has not met its international responsibilities (and therefore forfeits the right to non-intervention) and what kind of international action should be taken (from limited intervention to full-blown regime change) divides liberal foreign policy thinking. To understand the nature of that division, and what is at stake, this paper distinguishes 'neoliberal' from 'liberal internationalist' approaches and locates them in an English School understanding of international society. Where the latter stresses the importance of observing the procedural norms centred on the United Nations, the former contests the legitimacy of such norms if they fail to deliver substantive liberal outcomes. The paper then interprets British foreign policy discourse either side of the 2003 Iraq conflict through the prism of this debate. The central claim is that a more cautious approach to the use of force and American unilateralism has not silenced the critique of the UN system and that the international reaction to the Libyan intervention prompts the kind of reflection that continues to separate neoliberal from liberal internationalist approaches.

Introduction

The rhetoric accompanying a liberal foreign policy too often fails to distinguish the tension between its component parts: the rule of law, human rights (including humanitarian protection) and democracy promotion. These values can sit together comfortably in domestic politics, but historically the rule of international law has promoted a pluralist order based on the sovereign equality of states. This involves tolerating undemocratic regimes that are abusive to their own people and can harbour revisionist ideologies that potentially threaten international peace and security. This has led to the criticism of a universally inclusive concept of international society that is centred on the UN Charter and the commitments to non-intervention in Article 2(4) and collective decision-making in Chapter VII. There are generally two aspects to this critique. The first involves questions about the rights and responsibilities at the state-level: what kind of responsibilities does the state have to fulfil to make certain it does not forfeit the traditional right to non-intervention? The second involves questions of rights and responsibilities at the international level, specifically the question of who decides when a state has not met its responsibilities (and therefore forfeits the right to non-intervention); and who decides what kind of international action – from limited intervention to full blown regime change - should be

taken. The purpose of this paper is to show how answers to this second question expose a division within liberal approaches to foreign policy. It then demonstrates how this divide can be used to interpret a discourse surrounding recent British foreign policy and to shed light on the normative question of how the liberal state should act in contemporary international society.

To understand the liberal state's relationship to international society the paper draws on an English School framework of analysis, specifically Barry Buzan's depiction of Martin Wight's three traditions: Realism: Rationalism and Revolutionism (see figure 1).[1] The central argument is that a liberal foreign policy is best located on either side of what Buzan identified as the 'progressive/solidarist' boundary that separates Rationalist from Revolutionist approaches. This is because liberal solidarists (unlike conservative pluralists) share the view that human rights are universal, that democracy is an ideal form of government for all societies, and that the society of states should facilitate the protection and promotion of these substantive goals rather than stand in their way. *Neoliberal* internationalism however shades into Buzan's Revolutionist segment.[2] This is not simply because it argues states have a responsibility to protect their citizens' most basic human rights and that when they fail to do this they forfeit any claim to the sovereign right of non-interference. It shades into Revolutionism because it insists that the procedural norms centred on the UN Charter lack legitimacy and that democratic states in particular have a greater moral authority to decide when an international intervention advances the common good and what shape that intervention should take.[3]

Liberal internationalism, on the other hand, accepts the universal applicability of substantive liberal values such as human rights protection and democracy promotion, but it also transposes the procedural norms of democratic deliberation to the international level.[4] The inclusiveness of the UN system is, from this perspective, necessary in order to discover what the international common good is and to decide how best to act on it.[5] This insistence that the liberal state acts in accordance with an international consensus articulated at the UN keeps liberal internationalists within the Rationalist segment of Buzan's model. That position is cemented by a concern that the pursuit of substantive liberal agendas (e.g. democratic regime change) in ways that do not command a consensus at the UN risks provoking a pluralist 'counter-offensive' within international society and even power-balancing behaviour.[6] The English School model again helps to illustrate this. To prevent international society regressing toward the conservative-pluralist boundary, or even collapsing into an anarchic international system (again see figure 1), liberal internationalism counsels a more cautious and less ambitious approach to the pursuit of substantive liberal goals than neoliberal internationalism. This is not a matter of compromising on liberal goals for the sake of international order. It instead reflects the view that substantive

liberal agendas are best advanced gradually and in the context of a universally inclusive international society centred on the UN Charter.

To illustrate the interpretive value of adding this distinction to the ES framework the paper is divided into four sections. The first elaborates on the ES approach, adapting it to illustrate how the competing conceptions of an appropriate liberal foreign policy fit into this scheme. The second section applies the analytical framework to help interpret and assess the shift in UK foreign policy under New Labour, focusing on how the 2003 decision to support the American-led invasion of Iraq can be understood as an extension of the critique of the UN system contained within the neoliberal position. The third section examines the impact of the Iraq War on elite discourse in the UK. The central claim is that a more cautious approach to the use of force and American unilateralism did not silence the neoliberal critique of the UN system; nor did it reverse the argument that liberal states have a responsibility to intervene to prevent humanitarian emergencies in other states. This is illustrated with reference to the continued advocacy of liberal interventionism by significant voices on the political left, as well as David Cameron's articulation of 'liberal conservatism'. It is also evident in the UK's response to the violence that accompanied the democratic uprising in Libya, which is examined in the final section of the paper. Liberals were, for the most part, united in the defence of this intervention because it was able to square the humanitarian imperative to protect civilians with the legal imperative of a UN mandate to use force. However, the accusation that the NATO-led coalition went beyond that mandate to pursue a more ambitious liberal agenda of 'regime change', and that this caused a 'pluralist counter-offensive' that includes emerging powers such as Brazil, South Africa and India, prompts the kind of reflection that divides neoliberal from liberal internationalists. The paper concludes by defending the Libyan operation against its critics but argues that there are aspects of the pluralist critique that cannot be dismissed by appeals to the superior moral authority of liberal democratic states.

The liberal state in international society

Buzan's call for reconvening the English School articulated the virtues of methodological pluralism. The English School's interpretivist approach, he argued, offered an opportunity to step outside the 'tedious game of competing IR theories' and 'cultivate a more holistic, integrated approach to the study of international relations'. The three traditions – which Buzan called Hobbesian or Machiavellian Realism; Grotian Rationalism and Kantian Revolutionism were 'in

continuous coexistence and interplay'. The question English School theory prompts is 'how strong they are in relation to each other' at any one time.[7]

INSERT FIGURE ONE

The concept of international society is portrayed in this scheme as the *via media* between an anarchic international system where politically diverse states compete for power and security and a world society that gives legal and political expression to a universal moral community of humankind. The Rationalist tradition focuses on the shared norms, rules and institutions that maintain the sense of society and order between politically diverse states. ES theorists working within that tradition have drawn distinctions between what Buzan represents as "conservative pluralism" and "progressive" or "liberal solidarism". The distinction rests on the depth of the political consensus across international society, as well as the means by which that consensus is identified. As the label suggests, conservative pluralists tend to emphasise the diverse nature of global politics, arguing that the level of consensus between states is 'thin'. Their conception of international society, and responsible state action within it, is therefore somewhat limited. It rests only on an 'ethic of coexistence', which is 'a response to the fact and implied value of diversity on a global scale'.[8] International society in these circumstances is limited to the goal of sustaining order and conservative pluralists reject the pursuit of substantive liberal goals such as humanitarian protection and democracy promotion as imprudent and irresponsible. As Hedley Bull put it: 'the right of Western powers to protect the political rights of citizens' of other countries can, if 'answered in a certain way, lead to international disorder, or even the breakdown of international society itself.'[9]

Liberal solidarists, on the other hand, are more committed to the pursuit of substantive liberal goals because of their sense that a universal community of humankind exists but is repressed by the existence of illiberal and undemocratic regimes. What keeps the liberal commitment to humanitarian protection and democracy promotion in the Rationalist segment of Buzan's scheme is the sense that the authority to intervene on behalf of substantive liberal goals only derives from a pragmatic consensus that emerges from the process of deliberation across the society of states; a process that in contemporary international society is set out in the UN Charter. This is what Andrew Hurrell identifies as a 'liberal constitutionalist' position.[10] It 'meshes' with the pluralist approach to the extent it insists that international consensus can only be derived from a process of negotiation that involves all states regardless of their ideological

make-up.[11] The claim here is that this kind of 'liberal constitutionalism' is central to the liberal internationalist approach, which emerged from the republican idea that liberal values at the state level are best defended and promoted by a system of collective security at the international level. This is because collective security can reduce the pressure on states to adopt the kind of self-help defence strategies that double-up as tools of internal repression. As Dan Deudney notes, the Wilsonian concept of 'making the world safe for democracy' did not mean arming democratic states and giving them license to overthrow non-democratic regimes. 'Making the world safe for democracy', from this perspective, meant creating a secure international society that would enable states to disarm (and thereby give up the tools of repression).[12] Liberty in other words was contingent on, not separate to, the creation of a collective security system that included non-democratic states.

This emphasis on collective decision-making does not mean liberal internationalism necessarily capitulates to a conservative pluralist view of substantive liberal agendas. The substantive outcome of international decision-making processes is not preordained and it is not impossible for illiberal or undemocratic states to authorise international action in the pursuit of substantive liberal goals. The UN Security Council has for instance authorised the use of all necessary means for the purpose of humanitarian protection, including most recently Resolution 1973 (2011) on Libya (see below). It can, however, mean compromising on the ambition of the substantive liberal agenda. Because the UN Security Council contains non-democratic regimes it is unlikely that it would ever authorise the use of all necessary means for the purpose of democratic regime change.[13] Compromising on this (and any) aspect of the substantive liberal agenda out of respect for the procedural norms of international society can be frustrating, especially for those that ground such an agenda in what Hurrell refers to as a 'cosmopolitan moralist' position.[14] This proclaims the inherent value of human rights and democracy promotion to be self-evident and judges the value of international legal procedures in terms of how well they advance these principles. From this perspective the liberal internationalist position runs into difficulties explaining why action that can effectively advance a substantive liberal agenda should be subject to UN authorisation; and why governments that cannot claim their own democratic mandate should be included in processes that determine how best to advance the global common good.[15]

An implication of these internal tensions in the liberal internationalist position is that states can legitimately by-pass those international procedures (e.g. the exercise of the Security Council veto) that fail to deliver outcomes that protect and promote substantive liberal values. A further implication is that existing democratic states should have greater authority to speak on behalf of the common good. To paraphrase Ian Clark: the corollary of the liberal state's expressed

preference for democratic government domestically is that democratic states must have a greater entitlement to speak on behalf of the whole. From this neoliberal perspective, 'value-rationality' takes precedence over 'rule-rationality' and it finds expression in proposals to replace the legitimising role of the UN with a 'league of democracies'.[16]

These neoliberal proposals have been criticised on both a practical and normative level. While accepting that the UN is 'a deeply flawed and heavily politicised body', for instance, Andrew Hurrell notes how the 'league of democracies' idea has 'no institutional embodiment or deeply imperfect ones (as in the claim that NATO as a military alliance should play such a role)'.[17] More significantly, acting on the self-evident character of liberal values is 'normatively unacceptable and politically unviable' because it risks opening 'the door to a situation in which it is the strength of a single state or group of states that decides what shall count as law'.[18] The danger from this perspective is that the use of force to pursue substantive liberal goals without a UN mandate will be seen as illegitimate because it by-passes the inclusive procedures that articulate the international common good. That in turn will prompt a 'pluralist counter-offensive' within the society of states, making it doubly difficult for liberal states to act according to their values. So, again paraphrasing Clark, those who feel excluded will make appeal to national sovereignty, and to the virtues of pluralism in international society, turning the century-old Wilsonian programme of making the world safe for democracy into even more hazardous project.[19]

The liberal internationalist response to the tensions between UN procedures on the one hand and a substantive liberal agenda of humanitarian protection and democracy promotion on the other is therefore to warn against elevating the latter at the expense of the former. For all its faults, the UN remains the only body that can claim to legitimately represent international society as a whole. This does not necessarily mean adopting a strict legal constitutionalist position. The exercise of a veto might indeed be 'unreasonable' (especially in situations involving mass atrocity), but in reaching this judgment due consideration has to be given, at least from the liberal internationalist perspective, to the weight of opinion at the UN, either in the Security Council or the General Assembly.[20] This majoritarian view of what might constitute international legitimacy carries with it the kind of risks to international order that pluralists warn against. After all, the veto was originally included in the Charter to encourage the great powers to commit themselves to the UN and collective security.[21] But the key point is that these risks are mitigated if the state acting on behalf of international society can claim legitimacy by pointing to a democratic, if not a legal, mandate. As the following sections show, this distinction is crucial to interpreting recent British foreign policy and its relationship to international society.

(Neo)liberal internationalism and the New Labour government.

As Rhiannon Vickers and others note, liberal internationalism has long been at the centre of the Labour party's worldview and foreign policy.[22] This can be traced back to the ambiguity that those on the left had about supporting World War I. As a member of the Second International 'the party was expected to oppose the war', which was seen as the product of the imperialist systems of the old European order, but this was hardly sustainable after Germany's assault on neutral Belgium and the patriotic fervour that swept the country. Like President Woodrow Wilson, therefore, Labour's support for the War went hand-in-hand with a reformist international agenda. Its 1916 Statement of War Aims, for instance, insisted that 'the fundamental purpose of the British labour movement in supporting the continuance of the struggle is that the world may henceforth be made safe for democracy'.[23] To that end it called for the creation of a League of Nations at its party conference of January 1917 because it too understood, as Labour leader Arthur Henderson put it, that war, and preparations for it, 'paralyses the impulse towards social progress and spreads black despair in the hearts of men and women devoted to great causes'.[24] Indeed, when Wilson's Peace without Victory speech was delivered on the eve of that conference 'the delegates stood cheering when it was read to them'.[25]

Yet in many respects the inter-war history of Labour and foreign policy characterises the internal tension within liberal internationalism. Collective security by itself could not guarantee the peace that facilitated democratic social reform so long as militaristic and fascistic regimes existed. The League could not be discarded for ideological reasons but neither did it enable isolationism or disarmament. What emerged instead was a 'pragmatic' form of liberal internationalism, which countenanced the use of force in support of the League's objectives.[26] But that too sat uncomfortably with those who, while witnessing the growing strength of fascism, called on the League to 'purge' itself of certain states and to reengage with power politics.[27] And again, following World War II, Labour's 'insistence on the primacy of the United Nations' did not prevent the emergence of a strong preference for Atlanticism, which prioritised 'the special relationship' with the US and the NATO alliance.[28] As Paul Williams notes, the Labour Party and its members had always disagreed over how 'the different strands of liberal internationalism should be interpreted, which should be prioritised in a given context, and whether they were actually achievable in the real world.'[29]

The real world context of course changed dramatically with the collapse of Soviet power, yet the question of how to balance the norms articulated in the UN Charter with the defence and

promotion of substantive liberal values remained. These were exposed most obviously by the humanitarian situation in Bosnia and the Conservative government's argument that there was a limit to what outside forces could do, both as a matter of principle and practice. This stance was, moreover, supported by the Labour frontbench in opposition.[30] As Serb bombardments of Bosniak enclaves became increasingly violent, however, Labour backbenchers began to call for military intervention. What we see in these arguments is the emergence of a neoliberal position that elevates the state's right to decide when the moral imperative to act on substantive liberal values dictates an exception to procedural norms. From this perspective the overlap between a narrow or conservative view of the national interest and the UN commitment to consensus-based and impartial peacekeeping 'smacked of appeasement'. A more discriminatory approach was needed, one that elevated substantive liberal goals (humanitarian protection) over the UN process. This is best articulated in the letter 17 Labour MPs sent to *The Guardian*.

> The time has come to use military force to end the systematic assaults upon Srebrenica and other civilian populations in Bosnia … We believe the left has a particular duty to stand up against the kind of pure, racially motivated fascism which the Serbian aggressors embody. We must defend the idea of pluralist, multi-cultural, multi-denominational society which Bosnia represents. The right may enquire after the economic or electoral interests involved intervention but for the left, strong and decisive action in Bosnia is now a moral imperative.

The MPs insisted that 'we must work hard for United Nations' approval for military intervention'. But 'at the same time', they added, 'a Russian veto must not be allowed to condemn civilians to further suffering'.[31] Indeed, this was exactly the position New Labour adopted when it was confronted in government by the humanitarian crisis in Kosovo. Elaborating on the 'ethical dimension' to British foreign policy under New Labour, for instance, Foreign Secretary Robin Cook defended NATO's intervention in Kosovo arguing that the UK 'would act on the principle that a UN member state should not be able to plead its sovereign rights to shield conduct which is inconsistent with its obligations as a member of the UN'. Noting that the threat of the veto by two of the Permanent Members made Security Council action impossible he further argued that under 'exceptional circumstances, we were still justified, in every respect, in intervening as we did'.[32]

The neoliberal character of the Kosovo intervention is mitigated on two counts. Firstly, the ambition of the substantive liberal agenda was limited to humanitarian protection. Although the Milosevic regime later fell, and although Blair later characterised the Kosovo mission as 'regime

change', this was not the intention in April 1999 when NATO launched its Operation Allied Force.[33]   Procedurally, moreover, a majority of states at the Security Council agreed that the humanitarian situation at that time demanded military intervention. As Cook noted Russia and China's threat to veto a resolution explicitly authorising the use of force had to be assessed in the context of 'majority support for our cause'.[34] This was evident in the Security Council's rejection by a vote of 12 to 3 of the Russian resolution condemning NATO's action. In this respect, the intervention was characterised by the Independent Commission on Kosovo as being 'illegal but legitimate'.[35]

Neither of these mitigating factors is available when considering New Labour's support for the American-led invasion of Iraq. Firstly, the mission was much more ambitious to the extent it was committed to regime change and democracy promotion. Of course, the public justification for the use of force was disarmament, but the mission went beyond that to the extent the US in particular had equated an Iraqi WMD programme with the character of the Baathist regime.[36] Procedurally, moreover the UK could not claim that a majority of states supported the use of force in 2003. This was acknowledged by the then Foreign Secretary Jack Straw and UN Ambassador Sir Jeremy Greenstock to the Iraq Inquiry. Indeed, Greenstock's contribution to the Inquiry is significant for separating the Kosovo operation from the Iraq one. The UK's participation in the latter he concluded was 'legal but of questionable legitimacy, in that it didn't have the democratically observable backing of a great majority of member states'.[37]

The legal justification of the war rested on the argument that Resolution 1441 (2002) had deemed Iraq to be in breach of its disarmament obligations under Resolution 687 (1991), which revived the authority to use force granted in Resolution 678 (1990).[38] By enforcing previous resolutions the UK was, from Blair's perspective, defending the authority of the UN by making sure rogue states understood the consequences of defying it.[39] But to the extent this interpretation of the international common good could not command majority support at the Security Council, the Iraq operation should be characterised, in the terms being used here, as a neoliberal intervention; and it moved British foreign policy further into the Revolutionist segment of Buzan's model.   Indeed, this fits with Jamie Gaskarth's recent characterisation of Blair as a revisionist who was prepared to tear up the rule book of international relations.[40]

The decision to support the US-led invasion split the Labour party and the left more generally along neoliberal and liberal internationalist lines. In the March 2003 vote, for instance, 139 Labour MPs joined all 53 Liberal Democrats to oppose the government, many echoing Robin Cook's liberal internationalist position.[41] From this perspective, the failure to pass the 'second

resolution', which would have explicitly authorised the use of force, could not be dismissed as irrelevant. This was particularly so given that the UK had tried so hard to secure it. For Cook, Britain was 'being asked to embark on a war without agreement in any of the international bodies of which we are a leading partner' and that reflected the weakness of the substantive argument for war. This was different to the Kosovo operation, he concluded. 'Our difficulty in getting support this time is that neither the international community nor the British public is persuaded that there is an urgent and compelling reason for this military action in Iraq'.[42] The fact is, however, that 245 Labour MPs voted to support Blair's position. This is an indication of how, on the specific question of who decides when a state can use force in the common interest, New Labour's internationalist approach had a neoliberal quality to it.

British foreign policy after Iraq

Despite the human and material costs of the Iraq War, UK foreign policy did not retreat to the kind of conservative pluralism that characterised the reaction to the Bosnian crisis. In his speech to the 2005 World Summit for instance, Blair developed the theme he had introduced in 1999 as a 'doctrine of international community'.[43] The globalisation of politics made peoples dependent on each other. This made the promotion of liberal values a matter of self-interest. He welcomed the Summit's adoption of the Responsibility to Protect document and the idea 'that states do not have the right to do what they will within their own borders, but that we, in the name of humanity, have a common duty to protect people where their own governments will not.'[44] This too was the message from the Brown government, particularly when it was expressed by Foreign Secretary David Miliband. He insisted that the UK should resist the 'traditional conservative "realist position" [which] is to say that values and interests diverge, and interests should predominate'. It was in the national interest, as well as being a 'moral impulse', to help promote democracy, which he insisted was a universally applicable ideal.[45]

There was, however, an acknowledgment in these statements that the UK, and liberal democracies more generally, had to be conscious of the limited utility of force, as well as a recognition that democracy 'grows in the soil of the nation'.[46] In that respect there was a 'defensive' character to the substantive liberal agenda that emerged after Iraq.[47] So, Miliband wrote in 2008 that much of the rationale behind Blair's doctrine of international community remained valid.

> But to restore belief in the efficacy of intervention we must learn the lessons of Iraq
> and Afghanistan. We must work differently. Intervention should not always be

military and only rarely be forcible. We must focus on intervening early, before a country descends into full-scale conflict - much as the international community did in Kenya following last year's election. Where troops are needed, we must plan rigorously for the immediate aftermath. The first months after a military intervention are critical to maintaining local support and legitimacy. We must recognise that military solutions alone will not stop conflict. We need a civilian force - police, judges, engineers and others - with the professionalism and responsiveness of the armed forces. There needs to be clarity about who is in charge of the international presence, rather than fragmentation between countries and between military and civilian operations. And perhaps most important of all, we must recognise that it is politics not gun fire that ends wars. Military and civilian capacity can play a supporting role, but the real solutions are political and driven by the people who live in the country.[48]

This theme was developed further by Labour in opposition. Shadow Foreign Secretary Douglas Alexander, for instance, made much of Joseph Nye's argument that power was not simply shifting from West to East, it was also shifting from governments to peoples. Echoing what Miliband called a 'civilian surge', Alexander argued that the UK must address its diplomacy not just to states, but to peoples and in order to do that it had to adapt to the technologies that were dispersing power.

That means Britain's foreign policy needs to be clear that promoting unrestricted access to the internet is in our national interest and promotes our national values. We need to look at the export licensing of technologies that filter the internet, support online civil society in countries that continue to restrict internet access and work with EU partners in providing online journalists the arenas where they can post free from censorship by their national governments.[49]

Such an approach reflected the optimism that greeted the Arab Spring and the role that social networking technologies were said to play in mobilising peoples to protest against their government. But it can also be understood as a post-Iraq acknowledgement of the limited utility of force as a means of promoting democracy through 'regime change', as well as an extension of Miliband's argument that progressive foreign policies had to find alternative ways to promote liberal values.

There is also evidence that the Labour party post-Blair was more cautious about 'tearing up the rule book' when it came to the procedural norms that governed international action. Without explicitly defending the UN system Alexander argued there was a

need to demonstrate by our deeds, words and our actions that we are internationalist, not isolationist, multilateralist, not unilateralist, active and not passive, and driven by core values, consistently applied, not special interests. ... Multilateralist, not unilateralist means a rules-based international system. Just as

we need the rule of law at home to have civilization, so we need rules abroad to ensure global civilization. We know self-interest and mutual interest are inextricably linked. National interests can be best advanced and protected through collective action.[50]

Likewise, David Miliband expressed caution regarding the idea that democracies had greater moral authority to speak on behalf of international society and act according to the mandates granted by their own 'league' rather than the United Nations. 'You can see the dangers', he is quoted as saying. 'You don't want to set up something which undermines the ability of the international system to get to grips with difficult issues. Equally though . . . should people with the same values work effectively together? The answer must be yes.'[51]

In his effort to put distance between left and right on this issue Alexander argued that the Conservative party had retreated to a traditional realism that focused on cultivating bilateral relations for the purpose of promoting a narrow conception of the national interest based in particular on commercial success.[52] This impression is not totally unfounded.[53] It does, however, understate the extent to which the Conservative party itself adopted a liberal position while in opposition and how that too survived the political fallout of the Iraq experience. In his 2006 speech to the British-American Project, for instance, Cameron acknowledged the shift that was taking place in Conservative thinking on foreign policy. The emerging position, which he called 'liberal conservatism', placed 'a new Conservative focus on human rights' and a commitment to 'the aim of spreading freedom and democracy, and support humanitarian intervention'.[54] As with the Labour frontbench, however, there was an acknowledgement that external interference, particularly of a forceful kind, was not always appropriate.

Distancing 'liberal conservatism' from the neoconservatism that was widely considered responsible for the Iraq War, Cameron insisted that 'democracy cannot quickly be imposed from outside'. The 'transformation of a country from tyranny to freedom does not begin and end with regime change and the calling of elections. ... Liberty grows from the ground - it cannot be dropped from the air by an unmanned drone.' Echoing the defensiveness of the liberal internationalist position, Cameron looked to 'the knowledge and experience of our diplomats abroad, to the work of the British Council, to our expertise in culture, media and communications. As the limits of military power become more obvious, we must use our non-military power to better effect.' Force 'should be a last resort'.[55]

Following the UK's experience in Iraq, as well as Afghanistan, therefore, there emerged a cross-party consensus based on the continuing relevance of the liberal agenda even if it was less

ambitious. The all too apparent limitations of what military force could achieve did not lead the major parties to a position where they ruled out intervention to prevent mass atrocity. That is testament to the power of the norm that was emerging around the 2005 Responsibility to Protect World Summit document.[56] But military imposed 'regime change' as a means of pursuing a more ambitious substantive liberal agenda (i.e. democracy promotion) was rejected. Having noted that, however, there remained a trace of neoliberalism in Cameron's approach to the procedural question of who decided when it was appropriate to intervene on behalf of international society. This is evident in the fact that he, like English School theorists, drew a distinction between 'effectiveness' and 'legitimacy' and argued that the UK 'may need to fashion alliances which can act faster than the machinery of formal international institutions'. The UN he acknowledged 'confers the ultimate legitimacy on any multilateral action. But the very process of securing that legitimacy can undermine its effectiveness - as we saw, for example, in the Balkans'.[57] Without stating it explicitly, Cameron's formulation suggested 'liberal conservatism' was amenable to the idea that a coalition-of-the-willing, a league of democracies, or even a single state could decide when it was appropriate to use force to protect liberal values even in the face of UN Security Council opposition.[58] In this respect the post-Iraq check on the procedural aspects of neoliberal internationalism was not as profound as it was on the substantive aspect. The lesson of Iraq was not that the procedural norms of the UN system delivered better substantive outcomes. The UK and liberal states more generally had to be more 'humble' about what they could do to promote their values, but they need not prioritize the rule-rationality of the liberal internationalist approach.

British foreign policy and the intervention in Libya.

As Tim Dunne noted, the question of whether the Conservative-led coalition government would change UK foreign policy would only be properly answered after it had faced its first real crisis.[59] This came early in 2011 when, in response to democratic protests in his country, President Muammar Gaddafi threatened mass killing in Benghazi. In advocating intervention Cameron's government demonstrated that the liberal side of 'liberal conservatism' was not mere rhetoric.[60] Whether Gaddafi's threats were genuine was debated.[61] The UN Security Council concluded, however, that 'the widespread and systematic attacks' taking place in Libya 'may amount to crimes against humanity'. It reminded Libya of its responsibility to protect its own population and, acting under Chapter 7 of the UN Charter, authorised states 'to take all necessary measures ... to protect civilians and civilian populated areas under threat of attack in the Libyan Arab

Jamahiriya, including Benghazi, while excluding a foreign occupation force of any form on any part of Libyan territory'.[62]

In this respect the NATO-led Operation Unified Protector bore none of the controversies that plagued the Kosovo or Iraq interventions. From a liberal internationalist perspective, the intervening states had followed the proper procedure and gained a proper mandate to pursue a limited substantive agenda (i.e. humanitarian protection). There was, to be sure, criticism that the use of force by external powers contradicted the principle of national self-determination. Seamus Milne for instance argued that the 'intimate involvement of the US and the former colonial powers taints and undermines the legitimacy of Libya's transformation'.[63] This was often combined with the argument that there was a self-serving character to the intervention and this hypocrisy was exposed by a prior willingness to support authoritarian regimes in the Arab world, including Gaddafi's.[64] The government's argument that there was a moral and legal imperative to intervene, however, had widespread support. In Parliament, for instance, Ed Miliband, who in his first Conference speech as Labour leader had acknowledged that the Party's decision to support the Iraq War was wrong, drew on the R2P principle, images of his parents fleeing terror in Europe and the Republican cause in the Spanish Civil War, to support the intervention.[65]

Yet there was also a warning in Miliband's statement to the Commons. The UK, he insisted,

> must be clear about the mandate of the UN resolution. We all want to see Colonel Gaddafi gone, and the Prime Minister repeated that today. None of us, however, should be under any illusions or in any doubt about the terms of what was agreed. The resolution is about our responsibility to protect the Libyan people—no more, no less. ... I say to the Government—and the Prime Minister will know this—it is incredibly important that the international community observes the terms of the resolution in its actions and in what it says. I shall not rehearse the arguments about past conflicts, but we all know that ambiguity about the case for intervention is often one of the biggest problems that a mission faces. The House should be clear about the degree of difficulty of what we are attempting in securing a coalition from beyond western powers to support intervention in another, north African, state, so we cannot afford mission creep, and that includes in our public pronouncements.[66]

Behind these words lay a concern that the government was confusing the ends of the mission and that could lead to a level of engagement that neither the country nor the United Nations was comfortable with.

Similar concerns were expressed internationally as NATO-led forces began to implement Resolution 1973. The argument was made that these states were pursuing the more expansive liberal agenda of 'regime change' under the cover of humanitarian protection and that they were

thereby exceeding their mandate. Brazil, for instance, accepted that there was 'a humanitarian imperative' to protect civilians, but insisted states must

> avoid excessively broad interpretations of the protection of civilians, which could link it to the exacerbation of conflict, compromise the impartiality of the United Nations or create the perception that it is being used as a smokescreen for intervention or regime change.[67]

China too accepted that states could 'provide constructive assistance' but in so doing

> they must observe the principles of objectivity and neutrality and fully respect the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of the country concerned. There must be no attempt at regime change or involvement in civil war by any party under the guise of protecting civilians.[68]

Indeed, South Africa's articulation of the problem in many ways captures the essence of the pluralist critique of neoliberal interventionism. It warned that

> the pursuit of political agendas that go beyond the protection of civilian mandates ...will undermine the gains made in this discourse and provide ammunition to those who have always been sceptical of the concept.[69]

And this appeared to be the case later in the year when Russia and China vetoed the resolution condemning the violence in Syria. They argued that liberal states might imply from it a mandate to use force and pursue politically motivated regime change. As the Russian delegate to the Security Council put it

> Our proposals for wording on the non-acceptability of foreign military intervention were not taken into account, and based on the well-know events in North Africa, that can only put us on our guard. ... The situation in Syria cannot be considered in the Council separately from the Libyan experience ... For us members of the United Nations, it is very important to know how the resolution was implemented and how a Security Council resolution turned into its opposite.[70]

These sentiments and actions can be interpreted as a manifestation of the pluralist warning embedded in the more classical conception of liberal internationalism that respects the rule-rationality of collective decision-making. The issue here was less the use of force itself, but the accountability of the states that had responded to the Security Council's call in Resolution 1973 to use all necessary means to protect civilians. Because NATO-led forces had, in the opinion of some, abused that authority by pursuing a discriminatory and political objective (regime change) under the cover of a neutral and humanitarian mandate (protection of civilians), it had created a

backlash that weakened the new consensus on which international society was built.[71] The progress that had been made in consolidating the responsibility to protect norm was, in other words, being jeopardised by the neoliberal pursuit of a more ambitious (and unauthorised) agenda, namely regime change and democracy promotion.

Three points can be made in response to this line of reasoning. Firstly, it is by no means clear that NATO-led forces did exceed the terms of the UN mandate. The UK government's argument on this was that NATO had not gone beyond the mandate because it had not put troops on the ground. Where British personnel were deployed they were there as 'mentors'. It was not a first step to arming the rebels, which would arguably have been a breach of the embargo imposed by the Resolution 1970 (2011).[72] Secondly, it is not clear that the POC mandate could have been pursued without weakening Gaddafi's regime in a way that led to its eventual collapse.[73] In this respect, the British Ambassador to the UN, Sir Mark Lyall Grant, has argued that it was unreasonable for Russia to claim 'they were misled or that we [the UK] had over-interpreted the resolution' because it had been made clear that the protection of civilians specifically meant targeting pro-Gaddafi forces.[74] The onus was on Russia to bring the issue back to the Security Council if it thought OUP had gone beyond the mandate. Indeed, Gaddafi's position was largely untenable after he had been referred to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in Resolution 1970 (2011). Had the Security Council thought Gaddafi had a role to play in Libya's transition it would not have made that referral or it could have proposed a deferral under Article 16 of the Rome Statute. Government statements that Gaddafi had to go, therefore, were not necessarily indicative of unreasonable political goal. They were merely expressions of the will of the international community as reflected in Resolution 1970.

Finally, it is by no means clear that Security Council discord over Syria and its failure to protect civilians in that conflict was a consequence of what happened in Libya. The geopolitical situation surrounding the Syrian situation always made the prospect of Security Council consensus difficult. It also made external military intervention to protect civilians less likely on substantive and procedural grounds. This is picked up by the Defence Committee's 2012 report, which rejected the implication that action should not have been taken in Libya because that made it impossible for the international community to take decisive action over other countries.

> It is impossible for us to tell what the consequences would have been of allowing the killing of civilians in Benghazi, but we consider that the determination of the Arab League and of most countries of the United Nations that a massacre would be unacceptable was an example of the international community acting as it should. It was acting in a coordinated way to reflect the adoption by the United Nations in 2005 of the "Responsibility to Protect"[75]

This was echoed in the Government's response to the Committee's report. It noted that 'each crisis is unique and there cannot be a "one size fits all" approach to foreign policy'. In Libya, it insisted, 'there was strong regional support for intervention and a clear United Nations Security Council mandate through Resolution 1973 which authorised "all necessary measures" to protect civilians. This will not be the case in every crisis; but the international community has a range of tools to support the protection of civilians.'[76]

There is then the potential for a critique of Operation Unified Protector on the grounds that it was a neoliberal intervention that pursued objectives outside of an international consensus and that this rebounded in a way that made the pursuit of humanitarian protection more difficult. Yet this can be countered with reasonable arguments that defend the intervention. This does not mean liberal states should ignore the concerns expressed in the context of the Libyan operation. The neoliberal argument that the voices of undemocratic states on the Security Council lack legitimacy misses the point that democratic states have also expressed frustration at the use of western power outside the procedural norms of the UN Charter.[77] This was evident during the Libyan crisis, for instance, in the Indian abstention from Resolution 1973. It expressed concern at the welfare of civilians in Libya but also noted that 'we do not have clarity about details of enforcement measures, including who and with what assets will participate and how these measures will be exactly carried out. It is, of course, very important that there is full respect for sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Libya.'[78] Indeed Brazil, which also abstained from Resolution 1973 and expressed its frustration at the manner in which it was implemented (see above), reminded states of their responsibilities *while* protecting by writing to the Security Council and the General Assembly. This included a call for enhanced Security Council procedures 'to monitor and assess the manner in which resolutions are interpreted and implemented', as well as to 'ensure the accountability of those to whom authority is granted to resort to force'.[79]

Conclusion

The purpose of this article was firstly to demonstrate how the question of who decides when a state should use force on behalf of international society divides liberals; and secondly to illustrate how we can interpret aspects of British foreign policy through the prism of this debate. Liberal internationalists differ from what this article terms neoliberal internationalists to the extent the former puts more store by the procedural norms of the UN Charter. The latter's frustration

with these procedures stems from an assumption that the substantive liberal goals of humanitarian protection and democratic regime change are self-evidently in the universal common good and that it would be unreasonable on the part of any state to object to action designed to advance them. This tension has characterised foreign policy discourse, particularly on the centre-left, which traditionally saw liberal internationalism as providing a progressive vision of an international society that liberated individuals by transcending systems of interstate competition. In supporting Blair's arguments that the UN had failed over Iraq to act in the best interests of international society, and that the US-led coalition-of-the-willing was best placed to do that, the Labour Party demonstrated a preference for the neoliberal position that had been developing in a different context since Bosnia.

Locating this debate in the English School framework of analysis offers additional insight. This is not simply a matter of separating the liberal solidarist emphasis on the universality of human rights from the conservative pluralist emphasis on moral difference. The English School insistence that these approaches are 'in continuous coexistence and interplay' sensitizes the analyst to the possible reaction within international society to a neoliberal policy that is based on the argument that certain states (in particular democratic states) have a greater moral authority to speak on behalf of the common good. From this perspective, neoliberals who push their ideas too far too quickly 'set themselves an impossible task and risk undermining the limited degree of consensus and order that has been achieved within the society of states'.[80] The evidence presented in this article demonstrates how this possibility is manifesting itself in contemporary international society. Although the NATO-led coalition secured a UN mandate for Operation Unified Protector, the suspicion that liberal states abused that authority to pursue the more ambitious agenda of regime change informed the reaction of many states. This included the so-called BRICs, who continued to speak out in the context of the Syrian crisis.

The emerging power status of those leading the pluralist counter-offensive is significant for considering the future of British foreign policy. Prime Minister Cameron's use of force to protect Libya's civilian population illustrated that the adjective in 'liberal conservatism' was not mere rhetoric. But the British government has, as noted, expressed the need to establish good bilateral relations with emerging powers as a matter of self-interest. As Foreign Secretary William Hague acknowledged, this will inevitably impact on the pursuit of liberal agenda to the extent it increases the material costs of acting against the pluralist approach preferred by the BRIC nations. 'We are all agreed' he argued 'that we would try to intervene if another Rwanda were predicted ... . But' he added 'in the years and decades to come, the rise of other nations will constrain our ability to act in this way'.[81] This suggests an increased sensitivity to the collective

decision-making procedures that include states that are keen to protect an order based on sovereignty and non-intervention. When one also considers the defence cuts that further limit the expectations of what military force can deliver, it is hard not to conclude that the British preference for neoliberal internationalism did indeed peak during the Blair years.

Notes

[1] Barry Buzan, 'The English School. An Underexploited Resource in IR', *Review of International Studies,* Vol.27 No.3 (2001), pp.471-88; Martin Wight (edited by Gabriele Wight and Brian Porter), *International Theory. The Three Traditions* (Leicester and London: Leicester University Press for Royal Institute for International Affairs, 1991).

[2] The use of the term neoliberalism here should not be confused with its use in positivist IR theory. It is inspired by Tony Smith's use in his book *A Pact With the Devil. Washington's Bid for World Supremacy and the Betrayal of the American Promise* (New York and London: Routledge, 2007). For Smith, neoliberalism shared with neoconservatism the idea that the spread of liberal democracy makes the world safer and it is therefore in the liberal state's interests to pursue a values-based foreign policy.

[3] As Wight put it: 'The Revolutionist theory of international obligation may be summed up as an avoidance of an "abstractly dogmatic" interpretation of the Rationalist principle of *pacta sunt servanda* which is limited ... by an implicit clause which discriminates between the status of those who give the promise and those who receive it'. *International Theory*, p.240.

[4] On the distinction between procedural and substantive liberalism see Andrew Hurrell, *On Global Order. Power, Values, and the Constitution of International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 77-94; 'Legitimacy and the use of force', *Review of International Studies* (2005), 31 special issue, pp.15-32; Kai Alderson and Andrew Hurrell, (eds.) *Hedley Bull on International Society* (Macmillan, 2000), p.6; Ian Clark, *Legitimacy in International Society*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 3, 18-19; 164-5; 194-6; Justin Morris and Nicholas J. Wheeler, 'The Security Council's crisis of legitimacy and the use of force', *International Politics* 44 (2007) pp.214-231.

[5] On the 'widely held belief – however many qualms there are about the representative degree of the Council – that its votes and resolutions can be taken as appropriate demonstrations of the existence of any consensus or not', see Clark, *Legitimacy in International Society*, p.195.

[6] Ian Clark, 'Democracy in International Society: Promotion or Exclusion', *Millennium. Journal of International Studies* Vol.37 No.3 (2009), p.581.

[7] Buzan 'The English School'.

[8] Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*, 2nd edn. (London: Macmillan, 1977), p.134; Clark, *Legitimacy in International Society*, p.157.

[9] Bull, *The Anarchical Society* p.80. For elaboration see Nicholas J. Wheeler, 'Pluralist or solidarist conceptions of international society - Bull and Vincent on humanitarian intervention', *Millennium, Journal of International Studies*, 21 (1992), 463-87.

[10] Hurrell, 'Legitimacy and the use of force', p.21.

[11] Hurrell, 'Legitimacy and the use of force', p.18.

[12] Daniel Deudney, *Bounding Power. Republican Security Theory from the Polis to the Global Village* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press 2007), pp.179-89.

[13] Clark, *Legitimacy in International Society*, p.176.

[14] Hurrell, 'Legitimacy and the use of force', p.21.

[15] Clark, *Legitimacy in International Society,* pp.196-7. For a discussion of the relationship between legitimacy and effectiveness in this context see Hurrell, *On Global Order,* pp.77-94.

[16] Clark, 'Democracy in International Society'.

[17] Hurrell, 'Legitimacy and the use of force', p.24.

[18] Hurrell, 'Legitimacy and the use of force', p.29.

[19] Clark, 'Democracy in International Society', p.581; see also Christian Reus-Smit's critique of the league of democracies idea in 'Liberal hierarchy and the license to use force', *Review of International Studies*, Vol.31 special issue, 2005, pp.71-92.

[20] On the idea that the permanent five have a responsibility not to veto in cases involving mass atrocity see Ariela Blätter and Paul Williams, 'The Responsibility not to Veto,' *Global Responsibility to Protect* Vol.3, 2011, pp.301-22.

[21] Blätter and Williams, 'The Responsibility not to Veto', pp.305-6.

[22] Rhiannon Vickers, *The Labour Party and the World. Volume 1. The Evolution of Labour's Foreign Policy 1900-1951*: Manchester University Press, 2003) pp.5-9; and *The Labour Party and the World Volume 2. Labour's Foreign Policy since 1951* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011); Chris Kitchen and Rhiannon Vickers 'Labour Tradition of International Order and the Dilemma of Action Towards Iran', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* early view online September 2012; Paul D. Williams, *British Foreign Policy Under New labour, 1997-2005* Palgrave, 2005), pp.23-31; Mark Phythian, *The Labour Party, War and International Relations, 1945-2006* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

[23] Quoted in Phythian, *The Labour Party*, p.2.

[24] Arthur Henderson, *The League of Nations and Labour* (London: Oxford University Press, 1918) pp.4-7.

[25] J.Callaghan, *The Labour Party and Foreign Policy. A History* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007) p.46.

[26] C. Sylvest, 'Interwar Internationalism, the British Labour Party, and the Historiography of International Relations', *International Studies Quarterly* 48 (2004) pp.409-32.

[27] Leonard Woolf, 'Labour's Foreign Policy', *The Political Quarterly*, 4 (1933) p.517.

[28] Phythian, *The Labour Party*, p.5; Kitchen and Vickers, 'Labour Traditions of International Order', p.5.

[29] Williams, *British Foreign Policy,* p.24; Kitchen and Vickers, 'Labour Traditions of International Order', p.6.

[30] Phythian, *The Labour Party* pp.110-18.

[31] Quoted in Phythian, *The Labour Party*, p.116.

[32] Robin Cook, 'Guiding Humanitarian Intervention', Speech by the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook at the American Bar Association Lunch, London, 19 July 2000.

[33] On Blair's claim that the Kosovo intervention was an act of regime change see Blair's speech at the George Bush Snr. Presidential Library, Crawford, Texas, April 2002 at http://www.britishpoliticalspeech.org/speech-archive.htm?speech=281.

[34] Robin Cook, Personal Statement, House of Commons, 17 March 2003 at http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200203/cmhansrd/vo030317/debtext/30317-33.htm.

[35] The Independent International Commission on Kosovo, *The Kosovo Report. Conflict. International Response Lessons Learned,* (Oxford University Press, 2000), p.4.

[36] There is ambiguity in Blair's position here. In March 2002 the Prime Minister described regime change as 'obvious' from a centre-left perspective. Memo from the Prime Minister to Jonathan Powell, Iraq, 17 March 2002 at http://www.iraqinquiry.org.uk/media/50751/Blair-to-Powell-17March2002-minute.pdf; and on the eve of war Blair stated that 'if the result of peace is Saddam staying in power, not disarmed, then I tell you there are consequences paid in blood for that decision too ... Ridding the world of Saddam would be an act of humanity. It is leaving him there that is in truth inhumane.' Speech to Labour Party Spring Conference, 15 February 2003 at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/2765763.stm. Yet he also stated that 'however abhorrent and foul the regime ... regime change alone could not be and was not our justification for war'. Tony Blair, Speech given by the Prime Minister, Sedgefield, 5 March 2004 at http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2004/mar/05/iraq.iraq. Sir David Manning's evidence to the Iraq Inquiry also suggests that the British strategy was to persuade the US not only to go to the Security Council but to accept that disarmament could take place without regime change. Oral Evidence before the Iraq Inquiry, 30 November 2009 at http://www.iraqinquiry.org.uk/media/40459/20091130pm-final.pdf.

[37] Jeremy Greenstock Oral Evidence to the Iraq Inquiry, 17 November 2009, p.38 at http://www.iraqinquiry.org.uk/media/40456/20091127am-final.pdf. For a similar argument see Morris and Wheeler, 'The Security Council's crisis of legitimacy', pp.214-231.

[38] Attorney General Peter Goldsmith, 'Iraq: Resolution 1441', 7 March 2003 at http://www.ico.gov.uk/upload/documents/library/freedom_of_information/notices/annex_a_-_attorney_general's_advice_070303.pdf.

[39] Speech to Labour Party Spring Conference, 15 February 2003.

[40] Gaskarth, *British Foreign Policy* Polity, forthcoming. Gaskarth, cites Blair's 2006 Georgetown speech in which he stated the Kosovo crisis taught him that 'the rule book of international politics has been torn up' and insisted the UN Security Council was no longer 'legitimate in the modern world'.

[41] BBC 'Did your MP support the rebels?' 19 March 2003 at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/2862397.stm.

[42] Robin Cook, Personal Statement, House of Commons, 17 March 2003 at http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200203/cmhansrd/vo030317/debtext/30317-33.htm; see also statement by Home Office Minister John Denham quoted in Clark, *Legitimacy in International Society* p.202.

[43] Doctrine of the International Community at the Economic Club, Chicago, 24 April 1999 at http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/international/jan-june99/blair_doctrine4-23.html. See also Speech to the Labour Party Conference, Brighton, 2 October 2001 at http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2001/oct/02/labourconference.labour6.

[44] Tony Blair, Speech to the UN General Assembly 14 September 2005 at http://www.un.org/webcast/summit2005/statements/uk-blair050914eng.pdf. On attempts to 're-legitimise interventionism by (re)linking it more closely to conflict prevention and humanitarian agendas, including through the emerging legal norm known as the 'Responsibility to Protect', see John Lunn, Vaughne Miller and Ben Smith, *British Foreign Policy Since 1997* House of Commons Library Research paper, 23 June 2008, p.1.

[45] David Miliband, 'Aung San Suu Kyi lecture. The Democratic Imperative', St. Hugh's College Oxford, 12 February 2008 at http://davidmiliband.net/speech/aung-san-suu-kyi-lecture.

[46] Miliband, 'Aung San Suu Kyi lecture'. For prior acknowledgement, including the view 'we must come to this with a good deal of humility', see Jack Straw, 'Promoting Democracy. A Progressive foreign policy agenda', Speech to the Fabian Society, 10 March 2005 at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/4336159.stm.

[47] Benjamin Miller, 'Democracy Promotion. Offensive Liberalism versus the Rest (of IR theory). *Millennium. Journal of International Studies* 38 (2010) 561-91.

[48] David Miliband, 'We must restore belief in the efficacy of liberal interventionism', *The Independent* November 24, 2008.

[49] Douglas Alexander MP, Labour's Shadow Foreign Secretary speech to the Royal United Services Institute 10 October 2011 at http://www.labour.org.uk/autumn-perspective-on-arab-spring,2011-10-10. For Joseph Nye's ideas on the diffusion of power see his TED lecture July 2010 at http://www.ted.com/talks/joseph_nye_on_global_power_shifts.html

[50] Douglas Alexander, 'The role of international development in a changing world', 12 July 2007 at http://www.cfr.org/economic-development/role-international-development-changing-world-rush-transcript-federal-news-service/p13910; see also Kitchen and Vickers, who note how Iran policy presented an opportunity to recommit the UK to a rules-based approach to the question of proliferation, 'Labour Traditions of International Order', p.9, 11.

[51] Quoted in Clark, 'Democracy in International Society', p.578.

[52] Alexander, 'The role of international development'.

[53] See for instance William Hague's first major speech as Foreign Secretary in which he stressed the importance of building bilateral relations with the big and emerging economies to secure the UK's economic prosperity. William Hague, Britain's Foreign Policy in a Networked World, The Locarno Room, The Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 1 July 2010 at http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/news/latest-news/?view=Speech&id=22462590. For an interpretation that this was a 'departure from the "ethical" approach adopted under New Labour', see N. Watt, 'National interest would dominate Tory foreign policy, says Hague', *The Guardian* 20 July 2009 http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2009/jul/20/william-hague-tory-foreign-policy. For criticism of Hague's speech from an academic associated with a liberal solidarist English School approach see Tim Dunne 'A foreign policy for the 17th century. Bilateralism made sense four centuries ago – strange then for William Hague to make it a strategy for a networked world', *The Guardian* 6 July 2010 at http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/jul/06/foreign-policy-william-hague-bilateralism.

[54] On the similarities between liberal conservatism and New Labour's doctrine of international community see Matt Beech 'British conservatism and foreign policy. Tradition and ideas shaping Cameron's global view', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 13 (3) 348-63.

[55] David Cameron, A new approach to foreign affairs. Speech to British-American Project, 11 September 2006, http://www.conservatives.com/News/Speeches/2006/09/Cameron_A_new_approach_to_foreign_affairs__liberal_conservatism.aspx. William Hague, 'The Future of British Foreign Policy with a Conservative Government'. Speech to International Institute for Strategic Studies, 21 July 2009 at http://www.iiss.org/recent-key-addresses/william-hague-address-jul-09/.

[56] For the coalition government's commitment 'to promote a shared understanding of R2P', see Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *UK Government Strategy on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict*, 2011, pp.4-5 at http://www.fco.gov.uk/resources/en/pdf/about-us/our-publications/ukstrategy-protect-cvilians-arms-conflict.

[57] Cameron, A new approach to foreign affairs. On the use of this distinction see Hurrell, *On Global Order*, pp.77-94.

[58] For a less guarded criticism of the UN, one that 'believes that ... the political or human rights pronouncements of any international or regional organisation which admits undemocratic states lack the legitimacy to which they would be entitled if all their members were democracies', see the Henry Jackson Society statement of principles at http://www.henryjacksonsociety.org/content.asp?pageid=35; and for discussion of the links to liberal conservatism see K. Dodds, and Stuart Elden, 'Thinking ahead: David Cameron, the Henry Jackson Society and British neo-conservatism', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 10 (3) 2008 pp.347-363.

[59] Dunne, 'A foreign policy for the 17th century'.

[60] On the influence the memory of Srebrenica had on the Prime Minister's decision-making see Patrick Wintour and Nicholas Watt, 'David Cameron's Libyan war: why the PM felt Gaddafi had to be stopped', *The Guardian* 2 October 2011 at http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2011/oct/02/david-cameron-libyan-war-analysis.

[61] See for instance, Zaki Laidi, 'Gaddafi's threats had to be taken at face value', *Financial Times* 30 March 2011.

[62] S/RES/1973. Adopted by the Security Council at its 6498th meeting 17 March 2011. Whether this Security Council authorization was *necessary* for military action can be debated. It is noticeable, however, that the 2011 British Defence Doctrine states that it may 'be lawful to use offensive force in another state's territory (without its consent) in certain circumstances – under a Chapter VII UN Security Council Resolution, or to prevent an overwhelming humanitarian catastrophe'. Ministry of Defence *British Defence Doctrine* November 2011 p.1B-1.

[63] Seamus Milne 'Libya's imperial hijacking is a threat to the Arab revolution: Only when those who fought Gaddafi force Nato to leave will Libyans be able to take control of their country', *The Guardian* 25 August 2011

[64] Simon Jenkins, 'Britain can push democracy or weapons - but not both: Cameron's arms-sale tour has mired him in typical liberal interventionist hypocrisy. Better let the Arab world sort itself out' *The Guardian* 23 February 2011 at

[65] Hansard 21 March 2011: col.715.

[66] Hansard, 21 March 2011: col.718-22. On this speech as an indication of 'a values-based' and 'multilaterally engaged' post-Iraq Labour policy see David Clark, 'Labour's next foreign policy', in John Denham (ed.) *The Shape of Things to Come*, (The Fabian Society, 2012) at http://www.fabians.org.uk/publications/the-shape-of-things-to-come/

[67] United Nations S/PV 6531, 10 May 2011, p.11.

[68] United Nations S/PV 6531, 10 May 2011, p.20.

[69] United Nations, S/PV 6531, 10 May 2011, p.18; see also United Nations, S/PV.6650, 9 November 2011 p.22-3.

[70] United Nations S/PV.6627, 4 October, p.4.

[71] For a discussion of the pluralist concern prior to Libya see Alex J. Bellamy and Paul D. Williams 'The new politics of protection? Côte d'Ivoire, Libya and the responsibility to protect', *International Affairs* 87 (4) (2011) 825-50.

[72] Defence Minister Liam Fox Oral Evidence Taken Before the House of Commons Defence Committee, 27 April 2011at
http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmselect/cmdfence/uc950/uc95001.htm
. Resolution 1970 was passed several weeks prior to Resolution 1973 and it imposed an arms embargo. Crucially this did not apply to 'supplies of non-lethal military equipment intended solely for humanitarian or protective use, and related technical assistance or training'.

[73] This is the conclusion of Defence Committee's Report, Operations in Libya, 25 January 2012, although it did conclude that 'the Government failed to ensure that its communication strategy was effective in setting out the aims of the operation', p.6.

[74] Ambassador Sir Mark Lyall Grant, Oral Evidence at the Defence Committee, 12 October, 2011, at http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmdfence/uc950-ii/uc95001.htm. See also evidence given on the same day by Christian Turner of the Foreign Office, who noted that the Free Libya forces were not systematically targeting civilian populations in the way the pro-Gaddafi forces were. So 'the ongoing involvement of the OUP forces is to try to prevent that and to go after the command and control centres'. He added that if there was evidence that 'the Free Libya forces were causing widespread civilian casualties, we would absolutely be responding to that'.

[75] House of Commons Defence Committee, Ninth Report of Session 2010-2012, *Operations in Libya* 25 January 2012 p.7 at
http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmdfence/950/950.pdf.

[76] House of Commons Defence Committee, *Operations in Libya. Government Response to the Committee's Ninth Report of Sessions 2010-2012*, 25 April 2012 at
http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmdfence/1952/1952.pdf. At the time of writing, UK intervention in the Syrian conflict was limited to non-lethal assistance to human rights groups and humanitarian aid BBC, 'UK to give extra £5m to opposition groups', 10 August 2012 at http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-19205204.

[77] Jonathan Steele, 'Why Kofi Annan had enough over Syria. The UN's special envoy and BRIC countries have got increasingly frustrated with the west's domineering consensus on Damascus' 5 August 2012 at http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/aug/05/why-kofi-annan-enough-over-syria/print

[78] S/PV.6498, 17 March 2011, pp.5-6.

[79] United Nations Letter dated 9 November from the Permanent Representative of Brazil addressed to the Secretary-General, A/66/551-S/2011/701, 11 November 2011 at http://www.un.int/brazil/speech/Concept-Paper-%20RwP.pdf.

[80] Hurrell, *On Global Order* p.78.

[81] Hague, 'The Future of British Foreign Policy'. For the left's acknowledgement of multipolarity and the need to reshape the international community in a way that reflects the emerging reality of

a multipolar world, with institutions and decision-making processes broadened and deepened', see Clark, 'Labour's Next Foreign Policy', p.108.