

The Guardian  
13 November 2007

The text of prime minister Gordon Brown's foreign policy speech:

Tonight, I want to speak about Britain's unique place in the new world.

And where, as a result, our responsibilities lie; How our national interest can be best advanced; And what we can achieve by working together internationally and by contributing to building the strongest and broadest sense of common purpose.

*The new context*

() In 1989 the old world order dominated by the Cold War came to an end.

But how quickly events have disproved those who celebrated the end of the Cold War as 'the end of history'.

From Bosnia to Darfur, Rwanda to Afghanistan we have seen a level of disorder and uncertainty that no-one predicted.

() Our international institutions built for just 50 sheltered economies in what became a bipolar world are not fit for purpose in an interdependent world of

200 states where global flows of commerce, people and ideas defy borders.

With such transformative change comes a clear obligation, but also a great opportunity, to write a new chapter to set down for a new era a better 21st century way of delivering peace and prosperity.

*New forces at work*

Of course the first duty of Government - our abiding obligation - is and will always be the safety of the British people, the protection of the British national interest.

() First, few expected when the adamant certainties of the Cold War came to an end, we would have to address the constantly changing uncertainties of violence and instability from failed states and rogue states.

() Today a nation's self interest today will be found not in isolation but in cooperation to overcome shared challenges.

And so the underlying issue for our country - indeed for every country - is how together in this new interdependent world we renew and strengthen our international rules, institutions and networks.

My approach is hard-headed internationalism:

internationalist because global challenges need global solutions and nations must cooperate across borders - often with hard-headed intervention - to give expression to our shared interests and shared values;

hard-headed because we will not shirk from the difficult long term decisions and because only through reform of our international rules and institutions will we achieve concrete, on-the-ground results.

Building a global society means agreeing that the great interests we share in common are more powerful than the issues that sometimes divide us.

It means articulating and acting upon the enduring values that define our common humanity and transcending ideologies of hatred that seek to drive us apart.

And critically - and this is the main theme of my remarks this evening - we must bring to life these shared interests and shared values by practical proposals to create the architecture of a new global society. (...)

### *A new framework for security and reconstruction*

Today, there is still a gaping hole in our ability to address the illegitimate threats and use of force against innocent peoples.

It is to the shame of the whole world that the international community failed to act to prevent genocide in Rwanda.

We now rightly recognise our **responsibility to protect** behind borders where there are crimes against humanity.

But if we are to honour that **responsibility to protect** we urgently need a new framework to assist reconstruction.

With the systematic use of earlier Security Council action, proper funding of peacekeepers, targeted sanctions - and their ratcheting up to include the real threat of international criminal court actions - we must now set in place the first internationally agreed procedures to prevent breakdowns of states and societies.

But where breakdowns occur, the UN - and regional bodies such as the EU and African Union - must now also agree to systematically combine traditional emergency aid and peacekeeping with stabilisation, reconstruction and development.

There are many steps the international community can assist with on the ladder from insecurity and conflict to stability and prosperity. So I propose that, in future, Security Council peacekeeping resolutions and UN Envoys should make stabilisation, reconstruction and

development an equal priority; that the international community should be ready to act with a standby civilian force including police and judiciary who can be deployed to rebuild civic societies; and that to repair damaged economies we sponsor local economic development agencies in each area the international community able to offer a practical route map from failure to stability.

() The injustices people inflict on one another are not god-given but manmade and we have it in our power to become the first generation in history to deliver to every child the long overdue basic right to education. And today we also have the science and medicine to be the first generation to eradicate the preventable diseases of TB, polio, diphtheria and malaria -- and eventually to cure HIV and AIDS.

And with a special UN meeting next year, it is my personal commitment to work with all people of goodwill to achieve these goals.

By history and conviction, we - Britain - are bearers of the indispensable idea of individual dignity and mutual respect.

But we act to build a different, better world because we judge that it too is the best defence of our own future.

We know that Britain cannot be a safe and prosperous island in a turbulent and divided world.

A better world is our best security, our national interest best advanced by shared international endeavour.

So this is our message - to ourselves, our allies, potential adversaries and people who, no matter how distant, are now our neighbours: Our hard-headed internationalism means we will never retreat from our responsibilities.

At all times justice in jeopardy, security at risk, suffering that cries out will command our concern.

() For the pressing challenge for Britain and for the international community is to harness these insights in a sustained endeavour to reform and renew our global rules, institutions and networks.

Upon this rests our shared future: - a truly global society empowering people everywhere; - not yet here but in this century within our grasp.

Full text of speech available at:

[http://uk.news.yahoo.com/epolitix/20071112/tpl-gordon-brown-foreign-policy-speech-i-0a1c1a1\\_1.html](http://uk.news.yahoo.com/epolitix/20071112/tpl-gordon-brown-foreign-policy-speech-i-0a1c1a1_1.html)

Commentary on the speech available at:

<http://politics.guardian.co.uk/foreignaffairs/story/0,,2210045,00.html>

