

LIBERAL INTERVENTION: THE EMPIRE'S NEW CLOTHES?

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Portillo: Ladies and Gentlemen, my name is Michael Portillo and it is my pleasure this evening to be able to chair this discussion, which is being held by the Foreign Policy Centre in conjunction with Prospect Magazine.

Well I guess this discussion was pretty much bound to be timely. We meet I might remind you, on the day which has brought the deaths of another 3 US service men in Iraq, a day when the United States has committed itself to a presence in Liberia, and is being urged to intervene in Liberia by the United Nations.

We have gathered here today a marvelous panel to discuss some of the issues concerned with whether there is a new American Empire. You have biographies of the people who are going to be speaking. So I am going to introduce them just briefly but I would urge you to read about them in more detail. On my extreme right is Philip Bobbitt who was the former Director of Intelligence at the National Security Administration, under the last president, President Clinton, one in from him is Michael Gove a columnist from the Times, sitting immediately to my right is Lindsey Hilsum, Diplomat Correspondent for Channel four news, immediately on my left is Noaman Muna of the Al Amal Association. To his left is Mark Leonard, who is the Director of the Foreign Policy Centre, and on his left is Robert Cooper, Director General of external affairs for the EU.

In order to keep this fairly lively, we are going to frame the discussion in 3 sections with a preamble. In the preamble we are going to ask the panelists just briefly in a minute or two to answer the question 'is America the new empire?' and then we will deal in sections with Iraq, a second section on the ability of the West to export democracy and then a third section on the extent to which there are perceived differences between the United States and Europe concerning the threat that we face.

So I am going to begin by asking the panelists to speak very, very briefly on the first question which is 'is America the new Empire? ', and I am going to ask Noaman Muna if he will give the first few comments on that.

Muna: Thank you very much. I believe that America is now the new empire. It is following in the footsteps of the great empires we have known historically whether it is the Roman Empire, the Islamic empire, or any other empire, the British Empire for that matter. There is a reason why they are extending their control and it is a question of control. That reason is economical and it has not changed. America has always been an empire. Henry Kissinger described the American position as a prominence not enjoyed by any other empire in history. Robert Cooper himself is calling for a new doctrine of humanitarian intervention, but it is a new liberal imperialism or at least it was described that way. Richard Hass calls for an imperial foreign policy. Now there is no shyness in calling what

is going on empire building, and comparing themselves to the greatest empires so why should we be shy of doing the same?

Portillo : Noaman, thank you. Michael Gove, the response we have got from Noaman is that yes it is empire so why not call a spade a spade. What is your reply to that Michael?

Gove: I don't believe that America's current position in the world is analogous to that of an Imperial power, as we have come to understand imperial powers. The first thing I should say is that empires are having a bad press at the moment, but not all empires have been wholly malign through out history. There have been spectacularly malign empires in the past- the Nazi Reich, the Soviet Union, the Belgium empire, (pretty much). But there have also been more benign empires, and in that I would include almost pre-eminently, the British.

But I don't believe that America's current foreign policy posture is imperial. I think that it is clearly not America's aim to retain and control territory in the way we have come to understand how empires' seek to do -as they expand territorially. It seems clear to me that George Bush is not someone who is hardwired to expand America's reach globally in order to expand American control over territory and power. He was elected on the basis that he would relinquish the more activist policy that Bill Clinton had pursued. But the events of the September the 11th forced (to my mind) a wise reconsideration on the part of the Bush White House, and the American foreign policy that we can see now, can only be properly understood in the context of threats that September the 11th brought uncomfortably close to all our minds.

Portillo: Well, very good. Our next speaker is someone who has been wherever there has been trouble. Lindsey Hilsum has reported across the globe on the great crisis of these times. What is your answer Lindsey to this question as to whether there is an American empire?

Hilsum: My answer is yes, and I have just returned from the latest outpost of the American Imperium: Iraq, or as we used to call it, Mesopotamia. As you know the American administrators there have just appointed Iraqi Governing Council. Let me give you a number of quotes from American administrators:

'whatever our future policy is to be, we cannot now leave the country in the state of chaos which we have created. No one can master it if we can't.'

And another

'We have a really few first class Arab officials, just as we have found a few really first class Sheiks who will assume responsibility and observe order.'

Those quotes are really of course from British colonial administrators just after the First World War. In fact from Gertrude Bell who was the oriental secretary. But I have heard almost identical things said to me the week before last by the

current colonizers of Iraq. And I have also heard, just as the British used to talk about how grateful the Iraqis were for driving out the evil Ottoman Turks, of course the Americans now think that the gratefulness that the Iraqis have for driving out Sadaam Hussein will last. But I suspect that the Americans will face a similar uprising to that which the British faced in 1921. And to conclude I have the words of the colonial secretary at the time, Winston Churchill, which maybe Tony Blair or president Bush might listen to:

'I feel some misgiving about the political consequences to myself, of taking on my shoulders the burdens of the Mesopotamian entanglement.'

Portillo: Thank you Lindsey for giving us a perspective of history, which I must say is much needed. Our next speaker is Robert Cooper. I suspect that Robert might have a rather different tone on the question whether America is the new empire? He may believe for all I know that that is exactly what is required. Robert?

Cooper: Whether it is required or not we will come back to that later. But first could I say, I am not a liberal imperialist. Actually I think that liberal imperialism is a contradiction in terms. Nor do I agree with Michael Gove. The British empire was ok as empires go, but it was based on fundamentally racist assumptions - white people were superior to the people they were ruling. Those assumptions were accepted for a while by both sides and for that reason it worked. Now that time is gone and it won't come back. So I don't think you can be liberal and run an empire at the same time. Empire requires control.

Actually the liberal imperialists historically were those who were in the Liberal party and were imperialist. I don't think that they meant that the imperialists were liberal. To answer your question is America an empire? America is certainly a profoundly anti-imperial country and was founded on the basis of escaping the British empire, and then their deepest wish in World War II and afterwards was to dismantle other people's empires.

Nor do I think America's aim is to be an empire. America's aim is to be a hegemon. A hegemon aims to control the foreign policy of other countries; an empire aims to control the domestic policy. A hegemon operates on the basis that 'he may be a son of a bitch, but he's our son of a bitch', an empire aims to change the laws, the systems, the government, democracy and all that kind of thing. Basically I think America is a hegemon rather than an imperial power or would like to be. But one should always remember that history plays curious tricks on people and that the British empire was for a very large part of it, was acquired by accident against the wishes on the whole of the British government. So anything is possible. Let me throw in a final remark: I think the real imperial power is actually the European Union. But in a good sense. I will explain that later if I get the chance.

Portillo: I think that when we get to section 3 there will be a good chance for Robert to expand on that comment. We'll leave it enigmatic at the moment. Our

last contributor in this section is Mark Leonard to answer the question is America the new empire.

Leonard: I agree with Robert. I don't think it is. There are many people in America who would like to think that America is an empire and for a brief moment, for two years there was a sense that there could be an American imperial project. Certainly if you read American newspapers and Magazines, there was an extraordinary interest in early imperial projects. The younger Churchill has now replaced the Churchill of 'our finest hour', as a sort of neo-con favorite icon who gets cited frequently. The tumbling of the twin towers might have killed the possibility of isolationism and ushered in this period of imperial fervor. And there were many people who were intoxicated by the thought of American power which was I think spurred on by a feeling of vulnerability.

During that time there was a sense that the rhetoric and ideas of this project for a new American century could become a reality and a very clear ideology based on unrivaled and untrammled US power as the key to stability, a promise not to get involved in nation building, a determination to steer clear of intractable regional disputes (e.g. Israel and Palestine), and certainly no getting involved in global social work- such as conflicts in Africa.

That was set out as a very clear mission. I don't think that it was an imperial mission. But what is interesting is how much even that sort of 'empire-lite' idea has been tested over the last few months. We are now seeing the Americans asking the international community to help out in Iraq, the Americans are involved in building not one but two nations- Afghanistan and Iraq, and Bush has also said that he will spend as much time in the Middle East as Blair spent in Northern Ireland-I don't think he really realizes how much time that is! As Michael Portillo said in the introduction, the Americans are now wavering over getting involved in African conflicts that are not directly related to US economic and financial interests.

We are therefore seeing a different sort of United States, forced by world events to become more multilateral; using dialogue to engage with North Korea, showing more patience with Iran. This is all going on with catastrophic counter-productive behavior with things like Guantanamo Bay, the International Criminal Court and earlier unilateralism that did so much to destroy American credibility on the world stage.

In my more optimistic moments I feel that maybe we are about to enter a different debate. The last two years have been defined by a debate about Mars and Venus, about a unilateral aggressive America. What seems to be happening now is that struggle against terrorism in rogue states (which is designed to destroy the regime that pose a threat to America), is potentially going to be coupled with another struggle, which is a positive one. It goes back to America's foreign policy during Roosevelt's time, which is a struggle for a more liberal international order. In my more optimistic moments, I think the European Union under the guidance of Robert Cooper will join America in these battles. The EU

is also slightly beginning to talk about a more tough multilateralism, lifting its gaze and starting to think more strategically and less about itself, and there could be a commitment to maybe a more progressive project which is not imperial but is about liberal universalism. So an end to Mars versus Venus, and a start to a new progressive era. But that is all in my absurdly optimistic moments.

Portillo: Right, thank you very much. Philip, please.

Bobbitt: I was actually hoping to sit this one out. The reason is that I agree with so much of what has already been said. In my work I try to link law and strategy, the inner and outer implications of the state. I think that in answer to this question you need to unite the law and strategic implications. Empires do not exist in one sphere or the other. An empire exists to control the civil life of another society; both through law (rights) or violence (i.e. force, conquest and possession). It is not a matter of being strong or powerful, (which undoubtedly the United States is) because the Ottoman Empire was an empire and it was not as strong or as powerful. It is not a matter of being rich (which the US is), Florence was a very rich city-state but it was not an empire, but it had an income twice as great as Elizabethan England.

But by the classical legal definition of the control of the civic life of another society, the United States is unquestionably and definitely not an empire. The people who say it is, say they are speaking metaphorically, that they are using the term in a non-existential way. The American empire is not anywhere in particular; it is everywhere. Everywhere there is a Macdonalds or a movie theatre. The American empire does not rely on physical conquest or direct colonial rule (I shall come back to Iraq), but more through local clients and through less formalised, less obvious diplomatic and economic means. But that cannot be sufficient, because all that is voluntary, and control is what defines an empire, and control is what happens when you are not free to opt out, and societies have no choice. We cannot have already forgotten that France ordered NATO forces and American bases out of their country; that if we try to tell Japan how to write their history books, they would simply spurn us; that the two states that mostly vote against us in the UN are Mexico and Canada. This may be something else. It may be a new era in which the rich and powerful try through many kinds of market and diplomatic inducements to get other states to go along with their policies.

I think it is something new. That is why I resist so strongly using the term, so laden with all that is old. It cannot be that our imaginations, our vocabularies are so impoverished, that at the beginning of this new era, the best term we can think of is for something that really has not existed in almost a century. I think that this question of words is not just academic or pandemic in nature. This word is laden with meaning: nostalgia for some people, hostility or resentment for others. Using this word legitimates the worst fantasies of some groups and the worst fears of others.

Portillo: Now we want to take the discussion forward in three different sections, beginning with Iraq and then moving our focus outwards as it were, as the discussion continues. I hope to involve the audience in each of the three sections. In each case we are going to ask two panelists to lead off the discussion for maybe about five minutes. The first topic we want to discuss is the intervention in Iraq. Broadly speaking, as it been a success or a failure? Was it justified or not justified?

Gove: I think it may be too early to say whether it was a success or not. But I think that the intervention in Iraq was pretty much a success, I'd give it an 8 or 9 out of 10 as foreign policies go. But I think that there are some obvious gains as a result of the Iraqi intervention. Given how bitter some on the anti-war side are about the success of that venture, they seem to have forgotten the obvious gains. Let me remind you of them: We've ended a mass murdering genocidal tyranny: there will be no more mass graves in Iraq. We've ended a secret police society: There is no more Mukhabart. We've also removed the single greatest block on the progress of the Iraqi people want to make towards representative democracy: Sadaam Hussein and the Ba'ath party. There are also some contingent gains for the whole of this region as a result of this intervention.

Sadaam Hussein's was a terrorist sponsoring regime. Its gone, and the capacity of Sadaam Hussein to use Iraq's oil wealth to support terror across the Middle East and beyond has disappeared. The effect of our intervention on Iraq's neighbors- Iran and Syria, seems at this stage to be for the good. Both countries seem to be more eager to show that they are less aggressive in their pursuit for the support of terror. It is at the moment not a definite gain. But one definite gain has been the rejuvenation of the Middle East peace process. I don't believe that the progress we have seen so far could have been made without the removal of Sadaam Hussein's regime. All these are gains that are emerging, but they are nonetheless real. There are other gains for Iraq itself. Iraq now has openly free political parties who in the future (a few months perhaps), will be competing directly for political office. Iraq is also receiving resources from the outside world, of a significant amount, and also the resources of Iraq itself will be used for the benefit of the Iraqi people and not for the Ba'ath party as in the past.

There are problems in Iraq; it would be preposterous to ignore them. But it is important to contextualise them: most of the military problems that the coalition face are from an area of the country known as the Sunni Triangle. The reason for that is that was those were the areas in which Republican army forces dispersed. I believe that, as most of the people on the ground attest, most of the so called resistance that the coalition forces face are in fact the remnants of Republican Guard and the Special Republican Guard who recognise that their destiny was tied with the former regime which has come to an end and therefore they have no option but to fight the allies and indeed target those people in Iraq who want a better future.

It is notable whom they have targeted aside from American soldiers: those Iraqis who want to join a new civilian police force and those who want to get the universities working. There are infrastructural problems in Iraq but these are overwhelming due to the misgovernment of Sadaam Hussein, not a consequence of the war or anything that the coalition forces have done subsequently. The first requirement of the coalition is to restore order. Without the restoration of order there can be no movement towards representative democracy.

In assessing the success of what happened in Iraq, we have to look at what would have happened if the coalition had not acted as it did. Undoubtedly all those countries that believe in democracy and liberty would have been thought to have shown weakness in the face of force. We would have had no progress in the Middle East peace process, and we would have had when dealing with terrorism, a single example of the West's unwillingness to put its money and its troops where its mouth had been. Numan mentioned that one of the unhappy consequences, as he saw it of the Iraqi intervention, was that it revealed that America was intent on redrawing the map of the Middle East. I believe that we should redraw the map of the Middle East. Literally in one respect, because I believe the borders between the Palestine Authority and the state of Israel should be redrawn in order to have a viable Palestine state, and the Israeli settlements must be withdrawn. In that respect I believe that there should be a literal redrawing of the map. But I also believe that there should be a broader conceptual redrawing of the map.

I am not one of those people like George Galloway and Eric Hobsbarn who are nostalgic for the cold war and the bogus balance of power, between good and evil. I am one of those people who believe that after 1991, we have had a series of opportunities to put right the wrongs of the cold war. Many of those wrongs were committed in the Middle East where we did, in Robert Cooper's words, back 'sons of bitches' because they were our 'sons of bitches'. We've seen the mistake we have made in Iraq, we are making and have made a similar mistake in Saudi Arabia. There is a chance to redraw the map of the Middle East in order to ensure that the values of liberty, which I regard as universal, have a chance to take root. Without the Iraq intervention that opportunity would not have occurred. That is why I consider the intervention to have been a success and its opponents to be deluded.

Portillo: could I see a couple of hands in the audience who would like to intervene? I also just want to ask Michael Gove who laid a lot of emphasis on the nature of the regime in Iraq, on the mass graves, the violence and so on – are you opening the way for further preemptive action in places like Zimbabwe, Burma and North Korea?

Gove: I think that each case must be taken on its own merits. But I do believe that the presumption that states have an automatic right to have their sovereignty protected in all circumstances whatever they do to their own people is outdated. It may have been wrong at the time- I think that is a debate we can have about

the circumstances under which the UN charter was drawn up, but I now believe that presumption is outdated. One has to consider circumstances each on their own merits. And one has to weigh up -and it's a grim calculus- what the suffering of the people are, how easy it is to intervene, how easily one can persuade one's own population to bear the costs of that intervention, and also what the risks of not intervening are for one's own long term security.

Portillo : Thank you. Now I would like to invite from the audience, brief interventions that may be a point or a question, it doesn't really matter.

Audience member: may I please make a comment Sir, that perhaps you will ask the panel not to make allegations for which they have no factual basis, like saying that Iraq had been sponsoring terrorism. The CIA itself has declared that there was no evidence of Sadaam or Iraq being a sponsor or connected in any way with terrorism. Thank you very much. The other question I wanted to ask you about Iraq is that it is nonsense that super powers do not go around attacking or invading other countries because they feel for the suffering of those countries peoples. They do it for their own interests, for their economic interests. And in this context may I point out to you that in 1970 America did not import a single barrel of oil. Today it is now dependent for 60% of its consumption from imports from all over the world, and whether that has any bearing on what has happened to Iraq.

Audience Member: The Iraqi intervention was justified and customary international law has evolved to the point where we are ready for humanitarian intervention. But the central question to this debate is not what is the right of intervention or when it should be, but who should claim the right to sovereignty in the 21st century? I personally believe that sovereignty derives from the two pillars of legitimacy in the international system today: and that is the protection of democracy and of the 1st generation fundamental human rights. States that transgress these two pillars should have no rights of sovereignty in today's international system.

Audience Member: I was quite impressed with what Robert Cooper had to say about America being a hegemon as opposed to an empire. Both the United States and the United Kingdom have shown both throughout history and recently that they are very good at winning wars but can they win the peace? Certainly we can invest troops into winning wars, and it is very good for our industries as well as preserving and building a new world order. But if we are going to build long-term security, surely some of the principles of old empire should still apply. Perhaps we should invest our resources and that includes our people in helping to actually rebuild the Middle East, from what I've seen, we (i.e. the US and the UK) are not putting in the people and the money to build a long term peace in these countries.

Portillo: I am going to leave it there for just the moment. Just to recapitulate, we had three points there really - that Iraq was not really linked to terrorism, that countries which have intervened have only done so in their own interest, that we

should have a new look at what right anyone has to claim sovereignty and that sovereignty is as it were, a privilege which is owed to the people of a country that is being governed. And the final point which is that we should be willing to invest our own resources and people in some of the countries which come under our sway. I know that Lindsey Hilsum would like to react for a start to some of those comments.

Hilsum : Yes I would like to react to both Michael and the man in front there. First to Michael. It must be great to be a columnist and have opinions. I have a lot of opinions and reality keeps interfering with them and that is the problem with Iraq. When I find that I think something in theory, the reality on the ground makes it look very different. You say that Sunni Triangle is territory of the Republican Guard and the Special Republican Guard. Unfortunately whenever I have been in a place where an American vehicle has been attacked by this so-called resistance, the people who gather around aren't sorry. They don't say what a shame this is and they don't blame the old regime. They all talk about how they resent the Americans and how angry they are. And that makes me worry that this resistance cannot be characterized simply as old Baath party resistance that is going to fade away. This is different. I think it is patriotic or nationalistic, and that is going to make it much more difficult. And that is why we have to look on this as an imperial power because that is in my experience how Iraqi people are looking at it. They believe that they are being colonized. Whether that is what America wants in theory to give the impression it is doing or not, that is part of the problem. On the issue of terrorism, I think there is some confusion here. Because there is no proof that Sadaam Hussein's regime was in any way involved with Al-Qaeda. However, Sadaam Hussein's regime did give money to the families of suicide bombers in the West Bank and Gaza strip, which I guess is what Michael Gove is talking about. However, I have never had anybody involved in that conflict tell me that that was a decisive factor. The psychiatrists in the Gaza strip, the people who work with the youths who are likely to take part in suicide bombings, the strategists, the people from the PLO who are trying to stop it, the people in Hamas trying to do it; none of them have ever said to me that that is a decisive factor. And I don't think that is what is going to stop it and I don't think that is what is rejuvenating the Middle East peace process.

Bobbitt: There is a widespread view that a state can either intervene for decent and often ultraistic purposes or out of self-interest, and a state can never have more than one of these reasons. Or if it professes to one, it is lying about the other and *we know which one*. But this really is not a realistic assessment of the motives of states when they do act. It may very well be that the increasing dependence of US on oil has given the momentum to throw out the Iraqi dictatorship; I would imagine that is true. If it is true, I say thank heaven for it. As to my other point, I would just echo what Lindsey said. I think you are honestly confusing two different things. The CIA did say (as I believe most of us believe) that Sadaam Hussein was not behind the September 11th attacks, but Iraq has been named a terrorist state by the State Department, by the CIA for a great number of years. And it is not just because they have been giving money to

suicide bombers, but also because they have been engaged in specific acts of terror themselves. You will all of course remember the effort to assassinate President Bush as one example.

Cooper: Leaving aside the question of whether Iraq should have been done, I have a major problem with the way it was done. Because I think that the way it was done damaged the United Nations, damaged NATO, damaged a lot of relationships, damaged the fabric of international society in general. And we need that. Secondly to reply to a number of points from the audience: first of all I think that if people are going to go into imperialism, they should go into it seriously. They should learn the languages, and they should become properly involved.

Portillo: Now we want to give the panel a chance to make some comments on some of the other interventions other than Iraq, and to ask the question as to whether the West has been successful in these other interventions-broadly speaking in exporting democracy, human rights and the other agenda items that have been claimed. I am going to ask Lindsey Hilsum to comment on that.

Hilsum: Thank you Michael. I am going to start in Iraq and then move on elsewhere. And I am also going to start by quibbling with the premise, because I would say that certainly with Iraq, America was not trying to export democracy. In fact I would say in Iraq they have a choice: they can either try and foster a democratic state or a state that is friendly and compliant. Unfortunately, I don't think they can have both. Now everybody here would have seen the statue of Sadaam Hussein's symbolically tumbling, with a small group of Iraqis in front of it, and a large group of journalists and helpfully an American tank removal van there to pull it down. What is there now is a plinth and written on it in red by some graffiti artist is: 'all done, go home'. Unfortunately a lot of Iraqis do seem to think that. There is a great awareness of democracy now. In fact I saw a rather wonderful slogan on a wall in Basra that referred to democracy spelt *dim*-ocracy, which I wondered were a government run by very stupid people. I think we have to ask why the Americans had this war in Iraq. I don't think it was as I said before to export democracy. I don't think it was because weapons of mass destruction were regarded as an immediate threat (though that did have some role to play). Likewise I don't think it was because they wanted the oil- I think that is simplistic. I think it was done for strategic necessity. It had everything and nothing to do with the 11th of September: nothing because, as we have said, Sadaam Hussein did not have links with Al-Qaeda as far as we know; everything because it gave the Americans a license to do it and because they realized that Saudi Arabia was no longer a reliable ally and they needed somewhere else. I think this is proven by the fact that the moment that Sadaam Hussein fell, the Americans moved their bases from Saudi Arabia. They didn't need them anymore, they had Iraq. I think another central plank of their policy is support of Israel. I think this is where the real problem comes because I don't know of any Iraqis who will vote for a normalization of relations with Israel. I certainly don't know any Iraqis who will vote for Iraqi soil to be used by Israelis or Americans trying to deal with Israel's

enemies- Iran and Syria, which are on the borders of Iraq. I think this is a real problem for America.

What are the lessons? We talk of shock and awe. I think the shock was for the Iraqis and the awe was for everyone else- you better watch out. I am not sure the lesson is well learnt. There is increasingly evidence that the hard-liners in Iran at least do appear to be trying to build a nuclear weapon. I am afraid that the lesson is that you better get on with it, because if you don't do it quickly they are coming for you too.

Now another problem with colonialism as the British found is that the natives are so damn ungrateful. You go in because they cause so many problems and they don't even thank you. That I think is what we have with the people I mentioned before gathered around the American vehicles. They are not very thankful. Channel Four News and the Spectator sponsored a survey in which 47% of the people in Baghdad in this sample said that life was worse and only 32% said life was better. 75% said that their own personal security was worse than it had been a year ago. The problem is that these people are the voters. They are the ones who are going to have to vote in any kind of democratic system.

Let's move onto some other interventions. Now Afghanistan was a response to the attack on September the 11th. I think it can be regarded as a legitimate act of response, retaliation, and self-defense. You can certainly make that argument. I don't think it was about bringing democracy and I don't think anyone pretended it was, because bringing democracy to Afghanistan is a very long way off, and I don't think that is what they are trying to do now. I think that they are trying to make Afghanistan more livable; I certainly think that for women in Kabul it is probably more livable but not necessarily for women anywhere outside Kabul. But democracy we are nowhere near.

Now let's look at West Africa which is interesting. You have three countries: Sierra Leone, formally colonized by the British, Ivory Coast formally colonized by the French and Liberia which was created as a haven for free slaves by the Americans. Now here you have a strange situation because I see Britain, France and possibly America (which is now reluctantly talking about going into Liberia) as reluctant colonizers. They really don't want to do this. I mean why would you? These are not places that are of strategic importance; these are not places that are rich in natural resources. But certainly Britain and France seem to have decided that a fairly small number of troops can at least put a lid on the violence and stop it spreading throughout the region. One of the things that I think is really sad is that some people in this region want to be recolonised. And as somebody who has spent a lot of my life in Africa, I find this quite tragic. There was a British High Commissioner in Sierra Leone called Peter Penfold, and one time the people of Freetown would demonstrate the streets shouting 'Penfold, tenfold', and there was an opinion poll done which said that if he had run for president he would have won hands down. These are not places where we are bringing democracy to them. Democracy is a long way off. The Americans don't seem to be terribly interested in this kind of post-colonial adventure. They are very reluctant to get involved in Liberia; and I suspect because their colonial

ambitions are much more to do with what we have seen in Iraq and what we may see in Iran and Syria.

I am going to finish by briefly talking about the Balkans. The intervention in Kosovo, it was hard for me to be in favour of it because I was in Belgrade. I seem to make it a specialty of mine to be bombed by my own side. I think that it was very good that Milosvic did not fall in the way that Sadaam Hussein fell—being toppled by outsiders. Of course there were other people involved, (a lot of money went to the opposition from the German Secret Service and various others), but in the end he was disposed by the Serbs. It was the moment when the paramilitaries, the key elements in the army and the police had decided that they had had enough. I think that is why there is a greater chance of democracy growing than in Iraq.

The problem you have in the Balkans now is not nationalism but organized crime. That is the biggest problem that democratic elements there have to face. In Bosnia and Kosovo, you do have a colonial situation. Paddy Ashdown is the viceroy of Bosnia. Michael Stiner is the viceroy of Kosovo. But in the end there is some hope for these countries to move out of that colonial era and into the European Union. Because that is the incentive and I think that Robert Cooper will have more to say on this. These countries if they become democratic, they can become more prosperous, they can become part of the European Union and that is not a colonial project. Unlike what I think see the American project as being. That I think is a modern project and what Europe should be aiming at. Thank you

Portillo: Lindsey thank you. I was a little surprised at some of the early comments you made when you said that America in Iraq could choose between having a compliant country or a democracy and that you couldn't have both. If we establish a democracy in Iraq it would not be a compliant country, but would it not be an enormous step forward in terms of American foreign policy/British foreign policy because a democracy is unlikely to develop weapons of mass destruction, is unlikely to attack its own people, its neighbors, and it will not commit atrocities against its own people. Aren't those all very important advances?

Hilsum: Well they would be but I am not sure that the Americans would take the chance. Because it is a question of why they are there. And I think that they are there to ensure that Israel remains stable and is recognized by the Arab world and they are there because they want American bases there because of the Al-Qaieda threat and other potential threats from the Middle East. I don't think that they can find that they can afford it. So I don't think that we will get that far.

Portillo: I am going to ask Robert Cooper to address this question about the success otherwise of these ventures to export democracy and human rights.

Cooper: Voices in the US administration are sometimes heard explaining that they're going to "export democracy" to Iraq like they did in Japan and Germany after the war. This misunderstands both Japanese and German history. Germany was a country with very deep democratic traditions – there have been

Burgomeisters there for centuries - where democracy was waiting to emerge. The Weimar constitution was highly liberal, one of the first in Europe to give women the vote. So the idea that democracy arrived in Germany in 1945 is a mistake. Equally, the Japanese state had progressively liberalised under the Taisho period when there was a certain flowering of democracy. The US should take credit for its extraordinary land reform that redistributed wealth to tenant farmers, but to take credit for the flourishing of democracy after the war is a bit much.

Can democracies develop without outside intervention? South Korea moved from a military dictatorship to democracy on its own, not as a result of great encouragement from anyone outside, in spite of the presence of American troops. Thailand has been more of a success story: there have been a couple of opportunities recently for the army to intervene in Thailand and they didn't take them, which shows, although it's imperfect, democracy is pretty well established. In Indonesia you could say that the IMF brought democracy – I don't think that was intentional but it had that effect. In South Africa, it was the international business community that forced change. The most reliable systems of government for capitalists are probably democratic because people don't like investing in places where they don't trust the court and the law. In Spain, Portugal and Greece no external forces were responsible: those countries did it themselves but the European environment certainly helped. In Central and Eastern Europe it was the non-intervention of Russia that brought democracy.

I would be tempted to conclude that democracy is not on the whole brought by armies. I should add a caveat: there was a counter-example to that in the Falklands War. Though it was not fought to bring democracy to anyone, the defeat of the Argentine military during this war led to a democratising "domino effect" throughout the military dictatorships of Latin America. This was definitely not the intention of the British Government, but it seemed to work.

And what of western interventions? There is a good chance of democracy in Bosnia sometime – it's taking a very long time but you can feel that the state is becoming more stable. If anything they have too much democracy there at the moment with endless elections and endless authorities, people are tired of them. It shows that they are reaching the place we are. Kosovo is a bit more difficult but, again, there's hope, and this will happen within the framework of the European Union. If there is democracy in Afghanistan it's not going to be democracy along the lines of the Westminster model, the French model, or the American model. But certainly it will be far better than what was there before. I don't think that Afghanistan is a big success at the moment. There is a lot that needs to be done there – people need to forget about tackling the symptoms, which are terrorism and drugs, and tackle the disease, which needs a stable and strong authority in Afghanistan. And I wish that the West would set itself that as a strategic objective more clearly. So, the only two conclusions I can draw from these disparate experiences is that countries introduce democracy by themselves, not through a foreign army, and secondly, history is full of surprises.

Portillo: As far as what you wish for Afghanistan given the degree of attention or inattention it is getting from the West, do you think that things will get better or worse than the position we are currently at?

Cooper: I am mildly optimistic at the moment, because to my surprise, the attention level hasn't gone. It is clear that there is something of a re-think going on in the United States regarding Afghanistan. The countries that I am familiar with in the European Union remain deeply concerned about Afghanistan. There was actually quite a lively debate at the EU-US summit about the subject. So the subject has not been forgotten and I think people realise that it is not going terrifically well, that there is a need to learn from the mistakes- that is an encouraging thing, that people are willing to learn from the mistakes.

Portillo: Thank you. Next question?

Audience member: Having worked in Afghanistan for about six years until recently, I very much agree with Mr. Cooper. My question is directly related to the title of the event: 'liberal intervention: the empire's new clothes, and perhaps the question should be directed to Mr. Muna and Mr. Gove. You have described for instance this governing council, and I agree perhaps this is the best that can be done under these circumstances, but for instance one of the very first decisions of the governing council was to declare the 9th of April as the National Holiday of Iraq, which is the day Baghdad fell. Is this what we understand as Liberal Interventions? Wherever you 'liberate and intervene' or whatever, you just take up a decision like that? I think that it is highly symbolic and I don't really think that it is widely accepted by the Iraqi people I really suspect that they might be very well resenting that. Thank you.

Audience member: I would like to ask Lindsey a question. She mentioned the survey. The survey also mentioned that 50% of those Iraqis asked saw the war as justified, and it also said that 76% thought that in five years time that these their lives would be better. Could you comment on that as well please?

Audience member: This is for Mr. Cooper who was talking about bringing stability and investment to South Africa. I was just wondering why do we associate democracy and stability because it has failed so many times? Surely what should be much more emphasized for safeguarding human rights for example, is the rule of law? And is that always necessarily linked with democracy?

Audience member: Thanks. We have heard a lot about the doctrines of intervention. I think that doctrines of intervention need to be accompanied by doctrines of accountability. Because when you intervene or in some way seize or displace the leadership of a state, the normal means of accountability are ruled out (which is the accountability of a government to its electorate) and in that period where you effectively have a vacuum of any normal means of accountability, for example as in Afghanistan or Iraq, the intervening powers as they are now are (or rather the UN), seem to be acting with no sense of

accountability. Human rights abuses are classically defined as the State's responsibility. Whose responsibility are they when effectively someone has intervened and there is not a functioning state?

Portillo: Thank you very much. So the points were; an objection to the way that the 9th of April has been declared a national holiday in Iraq, going back to the survey of opinion in Iraq- saying that the majority of people were satisfied that Sadaam Hussein had been toppled, the question we just had about accountability- how is there accountability in this period where the US takes over in a country? I was not quite clear about the question of safeguarding human rights?

Audience member: My point was that despite the failure so many times of fledgling democracies, there is a tendency to think that they can safeguard human rights, and I would have said that the rule of law is more important. I don't think that it is necessarily linked to democracy.

Portillo: Right Muna would you like to start?

Muna: yes, firstly with a view to the national holiday of the 9th of April, declaring it a holiday, shows the depth of relief that Sadaam has gone, but it was not declared as *the* national holiday for Iraq. It is just one of the holidays, like a bank holiday in Britain. I would like also to comment on the issue of exporting democracy. I think this is a true opportunity in Iraq to build a democracy. The Americans have an interest or at least building democracy in Iraq will be in America's interest if they really pursue that route. But they cannot pursue it by force. They cannot pursue it by imposing that situation on the Iraqi people. It has to be the Iraqi people, who I believe are ready to accept democracy. They have to allow the Iraqi people to develop their own form of liberal democracy. Now America has exported dictatorships not just democracy in their interventions. Their interventions- whether direct or indirect -was to underpin dictatorships internationally. We saw it in Chile, we saw it in Iraq, we saw it in Saudi Arabia, and we saw it in Indonesia. We saw it everywhere where they directly or indirectly supported reactionary forces which undermined dictatorships and that is a worrying fact. Thank you

Leonard: I don't think I agree with the premise of this discussion which is based on the option of a democracy which is imposed by invading armies or something which is an organic growth over hundreds or years in the way in which we have had it in the UK. I think that most countries what has happened has been a mix of extrogenous forces which have an enormous impact on the internal politics of the state. I agree with Cooper's premise that democracy tends to be something which is fought for and won for by people who live in a country rather than something which is given as a gift to them. It is rare for regimes to hand out power or increase their accountability without some kind of conflict with the citizens who want to take power from them. But I think if we stick with those two alternatives it is a cop out for the rest of the world. We live in an age of interdependence and even if you didn't have an enormous concentration of

economic and military power in a few countries, that do have enormous relations with the rest of the world, it would be wrong to see democracy and the development of democracy as something that is out of our control. If you look at the European Union's effect on its near abroad; it might be true that it was the failure of the Soviet Union to intervene militarily that allowed the development of democracy in those countries. That created a vacuum and its not a vacuum as realists would assume, was filled by other powers, it was filled with liberal democracy because we set out clear paths for those countries, and there was a mix of carrots and sticks and very clear attempt to work with those countries from the outside in quite a structured and concerted way to bring about the changes. I was in Turkey a few weeks ago and I saw a fascinating snap shot of how external forces can impact on internal democracy. We are at a meeting with the American ambassador and the German ambassador and a group of Turkish civil servants and policy makers and some politicians. The American Ambassador had a quite strong message for them which was essentially 'if you get your act together on Iraq, there will be a fat cheque in the post and we could get back to having our relations in the way that they were before' whereas the German Ambassador got up and started talking about the sixth package of amendments which the Turkish Parliament is starting to consider. What was interesting was that the European Union was actually changing this country. Support for putting the development of democracy with a mix of carrots and sticks and the eventual promise of membership, the US approach, in spite of all the rhetoric of democracy is essentially to support the status quo. To support the role of the army in that country, and their veiled threat to the army- that is if they don't reassert themselves and stop the parliament from being so pesky and difficult as they were over Iraq, the relationship in the past will not continue. That shows A that non-intervention is impossible if you have major countries outside your borders with whom you trade, with whom you have political relations etc. So it is the content of those relationships which does matter and I think that you can have a very benign effect- in that middle ground between intervention and complete laissez faire and an assumption that we can't make anything better.

Portillo: Mark thank you very much. Michael Gove a small comment?

Gove: Thank you. I'll try to be brief. Of course foreign armies can impose democracy. We should know in this country our democracy was imposed in 1688 by a Dutch army, and very grateful I am to it too. One of the things that bedevils me a little about intervention is that people tend to talk about the illegitimacy of the actor rather than the legitimacy of the outcome. One of the good things about this discussion is that we have concentrated on outcomes rather than actors. One of the points that I think is very important that Philip made is that interventions are only worthwhile if they are virtuous. Well if I am fighting and I know I am right, I don't mind if the person fighting on my side is black hearted or virtuous provided that they are on my side. I do believe that America (and it is America whose virtue is normally impugned in these debates) has been on the right side. I think that Robert Cooper underestimates or understates the extent to which America was vital to the democratization of Germany and Japan. Both those countries were illiberal, militaristic states throughout the modern era;

the role that America played after 1945 set them both on a hugely successful path. I also think he underestimates the role that America played in South Korea and in Eastern Europe most importantly of all. Of course American troops did not invade Eastern Europe, but I think that one of the things that we underestimate about the 1980s is the extent which Reagan and Thatcher's policies hastened the collapse of communism. It was known at the time as the 'arms race' it forced the communist regime to realise that it couldn't supply its population with both arms and butter, at anything like the same rate that Western democracies could. That forced Gorbachev and leading cartels within communism to abandon Marxism/Leninism and eventually that led to the liberalization of Eastern Europe. That liberalization would not have happened the way it did and the pace it did without the policies pursued by Conservative/Republican government during the 1980s. So in that respect you can sometimes have armies spearheading liberation without blood having to be shed.

Portillo: Thank you Michael. To judge by the audience reaction the assessment of the Glorious Revolution of 1688 is the most controversial point so far in the discussion. Lindsey wants to make a single liner about the point that was raised about the UGOV/Channel 4 survey.

Hilsum: There were a lot of interesting things in the survey, and the majority was very pleased with that the intervention had happened, which was interesting. But a vast majority thought that the reasons for it were oil and to help Israel. I think therein lies a problem. Briefly to the lady who raised the point about accountability, which is very well taken. What you have is international law and that is the only way in which occupying countries are accountable at the moment. I think that one of the most unfortunate things is that the Americans are not very keen on international law and that is all we have.

Portillo: Ok now we move onto the third section. What next? Why is there such a difference in the perception of threats between Europe and America? What does that mean for our future relations? What is the United States likely to do next under a doctrine of preemption? I am going to ask Mark Leonard if he will open up on this one please.

Leonard : What I would like to do is to think about whether there transatlantic relationship can continue, whether there is commonality between liberal interventionism and the Bush Doctrine. Whether it is possible for us to imagine a positive future. I think there is a shared starting point between the people who believe in liberal intervention and liberal internationalist philosophy and the Bush Doctrine. The story of the post-cold war world is not one of too much intervention but too little intervention. The opposite of the cold war that was supposed to protect people's security, prosperity and wellbeing, is no longer entirely appropriate for the new situation. I would like to explore whether it is possible for us to think about re-inventing the West and saving the idea of the West based on those sorts of values. In order to understand it or looking at Europe, its a dialectic. It is the relationship between the two that is the key. I think the first question I would like to ask is whether America actually wants the West to exist?

Does it realise that it needs alliances, will it realise it in the long-term? Or will it continue to attempt to divide and rule? I think in Britain we are in quite a good position to see the consequences of a policy of divide and rule. Britain in many ways will be a key to this question because the UK is very much part of the European mainstream on what sort of world it wants. Many people I think misread Blair's motivations on Iraq as one of power hungriness, of wanting to go on the American coat tails. Instead I think it has to be seen as a principled view of world order. Blair shares the European attachment to a rule based world order, but I think he knows that in order for it to work, that order has to be underpinned by power, and the only power that can do that at the moment is American power. Therefore the legitimacy of that world order is umbilically tied to the legitimacy of the United States which means that if the American government wants to undertake an action which is destabilizing, Europeans are faced with two very stark choices: either you stand aside and condemn it and thereby undermine the legitimacy of the internationalist project which is sponsored by the United States, or you support it and try to apply it with at least fig leaf of legitimacy and then try behind the scenes or in front of the camera to eliminate the most erogenous bits which you don't want to be associated with or you think will do the most damage. Put like that the answer for Britain the past has always, always, been to go along with the Americans. If you keep the question in that form, the answer for Blair will almost certainly be to still go along with the Americans. Because if you take a consequentialist worldview and ask whether the world is a better place or not (depending on which route you go down), you will almost always end up supporting the Americans. I think that if September the 11th changed America, Iraq has changed Britain. I think it was a one-off case, and I think that it has tested that particular model of intervention of preemptive strikes to destruction and seriously has weakened the transatlantic relationship. I think it would be wrong for the American administration to take the UK for granted in the future after the battering which the government has taken in recent months. They are not going to be rushing to join any interventions in Iran or any countries soon. That means that there will be a diminishing return for using the UK as a fig leaf for multilateralism, because the price that Blair will have to demand to go along with any US intervention, will be almost as large as that which will be needed to take Europeans with the Americans in the future. The price will rise with every single intervention. Which really brings me to a second question which is whether the Europeans can get their act together before the event rather than after it. The history of the European foreign policy is that we have had a series of crisis over the years after every crisis, Europe has developed a number of policies that it sticks to and there has been a gradually growing body of European foreign policy developed after the fact rather than before it. One of the most important developments of the last few months, something which Robert has been involved in, is the idea to start to tackle these issues before they happen, to try and create a more predictable policy environment, so that there are a set of European givens which the rest of the world can understand and respond to. So that Europe is not simply reacting, and you get different coalitions with the willing according to each situation. I think this is essential for two reasons- first of all to have a deterrent effect on potential transgressors, but also so that countries like the US understand where Europeans are, and don't attempt to pick them off. . If you go to war to defend

yourself, you don't need to persuade everyone that it is legitimate and you do not have to go to a court of higher opinion, I think that is one of the big differences between the Europeans and the US on Iraq. Most Americans from public felt that it needed to be legitimated. Over here it was seen as a discretionary war and discretionary wars need to go through a much higher standard of proof if they are going to be fought than ones that are about immediate self-defence. Therefore I think that it is absolutely essential that Europeans agree a doctrine of intervention and a strategy that people outside can understand. It is not a process without its dangers because in the past when European countries have not managed to agree on a particular course of action, they have often sought to hide behind abstract principles as a proxy for policy. This is obviously what happened a decade ago with Yugoslavia, and the whole process ended in chaos when member states acted unilaterally and abandoned the criteria that they had signed up to. It is not difficult to imagine problems emerging in the future with countries being put under a fair amount of pressure to move away from it. But the final question is whether the Americans decide they want the West to continue, if Europeans get their act together and stop behaving like a status quo power, and start to apply some of the revolutionary zeal that they have developed in their own continent to the rest of the world. Will it be possible to work together? I think that is the fundamental question. Can Americans and Europeans agree on the means to develop this agenda? Because I think if we agree on what the threats are, and if we agree on what kind of world we are trying to develop, there are enormous differences about how you move that agenda forward, and what timescales we should expect things to happen. I think here the key question is whether America will accept Europe's methods or simply accuse it of doing nothing. Because Europe's tools are pretty much unfamiliar to people outside the European Union, they are not the traditional tools of high strategy, geopolitics. It is precisely the sort of thing that Robert was talking about earlier. It is getting involved in domestic politics. The Turkish experience is very much what it's about, and as in the Balkans as we were talking about earlier. With Columbia for instance, the contrast could not be more dramatic. The EU is deeply involved in these countries internal affairs and offers them the ability to be rehabilitated as European states, it gives them the possibility of being involved in multilateral institutions, and gives them structural funds, The American response tends to be military training missions, military aid, maybe access to the raw freedom of the American market. But it is a very different sort of relationship. I think that is the key difference between liberal internationalism and empire. I would like to end with just a quote from Roosevelt to Churchill ' I think I speak as America's president when I say that America won't help England in this war simply so that she will continue to ride roughshod over colonial people'. He was willing to fight in the trenches to support a liberal internationalist project and to support British values, but was completely against the idea of supporting a British empire. The question which we get to is whether Europeans will be able to go to the Americans with a sufficiently satisfying answer that we will fight in the trenches for liberal democracy, that we will not be status quo powers in the future, that we won't fight for an American empire.

Portillo: Thank you very much Mark. Philip Bobbitt

Bobbitt : I would like to take on both these questions but spend most of my time on American and European differences. Well I'll tell you, as the only American on the panel, that although I am extremely flattered to be here, and I must say by the seriousness of this crowd and its size, that this has been, and I think for others who have watched this scene, perhaps the most disheartening three or four months since I have been living in Europe which is now more than 22-23 years. If I were asked what is the difference in perceptions between Europe and America and how might we bring them together? I would say that we are two peoples divided by common values. Europeans see themselves as champions of diversity, humane values, historical understanding, realism and the rule of law. The European Union brings within it the different languages and cultures it respects, most European States have generous social provisions, these societies often reflect on the colonial experience they bring to analysis like the pacification of Iraq and Afghanistan, they know the limits of military power, and they respect international public opinion and institutions - diversity, humane values, history, realism and the rule of law. But if I were to give that description and those virtues to American audience and say that this is a European self-definition, they would be extremely surprised.

Americans see themselves also as champions of these very values- the diversity we see in assimilation. We also think of ourselves as guided and enriched by history and we think the Europeans are inclined to forget the history of the recent past- including the very recent past; like Bosnia, Rwanda when Europe effectively blocked intervention. We think it is not realistic, but unrealistic to pretend that there is nothing new about a global terrorist network, that it really is just the IRA or ETA. It is also not realistic that you can supply states like Libya, Iraq and Iran with the components for weapons of mass destruction and never worry that they will someday be targeted at you. I bet if I polled the audience here I would find even amongst those who are sympathetic to the US, I would find that it is we who are thought to have weakened the EU, NATO, and especially UN via our actions in Iraq. Many Americans would say that it was frustrating impotence to more than a dozen UN resolutions more or less indefinitely undermined both those institutions. What all this means to me is something very important for this relationship.

I wonder if anyone here knows what the uncola is? It was an American advertising slogan for a drink called 7UP; some of you may have had it. They were always losing out to Coca-Cola, so they started an advertising campaign that said ' we are the uncola'. Coca-Cola is brown, we're clear, coca cola has caffeine we have no caffeine etc. Anyone who has siblings, I am mercifully an only child, (you could have probably guessed that), knows that one brother is artistic, the other is athletic, one is liberal the other is conservative. You saw this heart-rending example of the two Iranian twins joined together. They had the same genes, they had never been raised a minute apart and yet they risked, more than risked, attempted death just because they were different. I am very afraid that this is what is happening to the Atlantic community- Europe and America.

I have heard few things that are as disheartening as I have heard tonight from some of the people I admire most of this panel. To ask why the Americans are in Iraq? Is it Israel? Is it democracy? Is it oil? What's really going on? And not to ask simply, thank God they are there at all. To say that Americans can't take credit for democracy in Japan, they don't deserve credit for democracy in Germany, or Korea, or Indonesia, or South Africa, or Eastern Europe. When the question should be 'suppose there were no America?' What do you think would have happened to those societies instead? We didn't defeat the Japanese singlehandedly, but suppose we hadn't tried to defeat them at all or had cut a deal with them as many people did suggest, indeed as many people in this country suggested that we cut a deal with Germany. Do you think that the Weimar constitution, which is the one as you know Hitler ruled under, would have delivered the democracy that Germany enjoys today? As I say I have lived here a long time and I have never had an unhappy year, but that might just be my temperament. I have never been so concerned, not for the sake of the Alliance; States as rich and comfortable as we are will be fine, whether we go together or whether we have a divorce. But I worry for the fate of the world community in which we sit. The idea which most people seem to hold, I've heard it enough, that Americans of all people think that the institutions that they created are off less significance to them than to anyone else, and finally the idea that the world would really be better off if it were bi-polar, if we had some central counterweight to the Americans, when we suffered so greatly under a bi-polar world, for so long, so recently. Well you can see why these ideas dishearten me.

Portillo: Ok we have just heard from disheartened of Shoreditch, now lets go the audience.

Audience member: A very rich discussion and regrettably brief. There is so much here. There is something I would point out that has not been discussion. Now I am not one of those people who when you mention intervention suggest that simply there is a connection between poverty and terrorism, of course things are much more complicated than that and the kind of interventions we will see in future, we don't know there could be all kinds of things happening. The issue I wanted to raise was about the international political economy and the perceived injustice by many, i.e. the relationship between the rich industrialized countries and the poorer developing ones. We have very large agricultural subsidies in both the United States and Europe, and there is a strong case to be made (you may wish to debate it) that these have appreciable direct and substantial net dis-benefits on large numbers of people. 25,000 farmers in the US, \$3 billion subsidies, 11 million farmers in Africa lose out. If we are thinking about intervention, we shouldn't ignore the huge historical legacy of empire (it is partly a historical legacy) but we need to think of this structure of what is intervention, and it is not just part of this military dealing with direct terrorist threats or perceived military threats.

Audience member: I would like to make a point about the doctrine of intervention which has replaced the doctrine of containment which lasted

throughout the cold war, and what are the implications of the doctrine of preemption for both NATO and the UN, when one worked on the basis that when we were working with containment there was a level of cooperation. The doctrine of preemption appears to pre-suppose that the Americans will in fact do what they want and that seems to have fundamental implications. We saw for example how divided the NATO countries were. In a nutshell has NATO a future?

Audience Member: Given the current state of relations between Europe and America, trade disputes over trade, GM crops, what are the chances of war between America and Europe in the next 50-100 years?

Audience Member: I was a rare beast. A very active Liberal Democrat who supported the war against Sadaam Hussein. It was a war of liberal intervention but it does underline a wider problem, which is that the West is very keen to oppose dictatorships in former Soviet clients states, like Syria, Iraq, North Korea, but are a lot less keen to oppose those dictatorships that were our allies in the cold war. But if we are really to change the world order, and if we are ready to do something about our own security, don't we need to do more about the dictatorships, and I know that most people here would say Israel, but actually I am talking about virtually every Muslim country which oppress their people and bring about the kind of anti-western phobia which undermines all our security and actually does nothing for the people of those countries.

Portillo: Mark if you would like to say a few words to sum up, maybe in reference to these questions or anything else, and then we'll go around the panel.

Leonard: I think this discussion has shown that empire is not necessarily a very useful concept for understanding what is going on in the world at the moment. I think that there are competing visions that Robert set out earlier of US hegemony and of liberal internationalism. I think the more we can steer clear of the concepts and philosophies that created so much bloodshed in the last century and the one before that the better. One of the interesting things of September the 11th was the re-learning of a lot of important lessons of the 1990s after the cold war. Lessons about the importance of re-defining definitions of sovereignty, the importance of coming up with clear rules of governing in an interdependent world, and also the importance of using force to underpin a concept of peace which was a very important lesson which Europe learned. I think that since September the 11th what we have seen is a sort of regression on both sides; - we have got the American intervention we were calling for in the 1990s but wasn't always forthcoming. America has seemed to have lost its reluctance to intervene militarily, but unfortunately it has not been channeled in as positive way as possible. It is not related to international law etc. and Europeans seem to have forgotten about the importance of intervention and the importance of trying to shape the world we live in for the good. I think that part of that is the difference in threat perceptions.

Portillo: ok Noaman Muna

Muna: thank you, two very quick points. One is that I believe that American intervention to build democracy in Iraq could have been done without a military campaign. I seriously believe that they could have allied themselves with the real forces fighting Sadaam Hussein, in and outside Iraq. Since 1990 that has been happening, but the alliances were somewhat dubious. The other point was on the main theme of this discussion: imperialism. Now history tells us that the dictatorships of Eastern Europe were bailed under the banner of 'the peoples democracy' 'the highest form of democracy'. They called them whatever they liked but they were still dictatorships. What we are seeing now is imperialism, call it whatever you like, it is imperialism without colonies.

Cooper: I wanted to pick up on something that Mark said and pick up on something I said earlier, perhaps rather fleetingly in the beginning about the European Union. What I mean is that it is not like an imperial power like Britain was in the 19th century, but perhaps it is more like Rome was perhaps in the Third century. What Mark said about Turkey illustrates that. There is a political revolution going on in Turkey right now, precisely so that they can join the European Union. In the same way constitutions have been changed all across Eastern and Central Europe in order to join the EU. When you join the EU, you don't join as a colony, you get a seat at the table, if you are going to exist in the modern world, you can't do it as a small country, you're need some larger unit, the EU in some kind of clumsy way at the moment does provide that. The problem with that is that maybe we can expand the European Union; maybe we can take in Turkey and, who knows, the Israelis sometimes talk about that, (though I think that may be sometime ahead). It may be that you can do that in the immediate neighborhood. But the problem for Europe, the problem for all of us is that the threats are not now in the immediate neighborhood. 9/11 took place as a result of activities organized by Osama Bin Laden in Afghanistan, finance came from all other Middle East, people trained in Germany and the US who did it, and therefore looking after your neighborhood which I think the European Union is well equipped to do, is not an adequate policy anymore. The difficulty now, is that the threats we face are more distant, more direct, more invisible and more dangerous. Waiting for them is not a sensible strategy anymore. I think that we have to think in terms of taking advance action. Now I would like to take advance action in terms of dealing with riches and poverty as well, to create a world that seems to be more just, whether that will solve the problem or not I doubt it. I think it is a good step in that direction, it helps legitimize action when you have to take war forcefully. In the end you probably do have to use force, you do have to use it preemptively. If we are going to live in this more dangerous world and here I agree with Philip Bobbitt, it is essential that the countries that respect human rights and democracy should act together otherwise we really are in trouble.

Portillo : Robert , Thank you. Lindsey Hilsum please.

Hilsum : Very briefly. I do think that the concept of imperium is helpful. Not least because it reminds us of how it feels to live in the imperium. Iraqi people do feel that they are being colonized, that they are being occupied, and whether that is how America or Europe or anyone wants to look at it I think it is important that we

understand that. I think that Philip Bobbitt is completely right that the biggest danger and problem we face is this schism between America and Europe. I think it is a real schism and I think that the danger is that America and Europe are beginning to perceive their interests as being opposed and different. I think that is the biggest problem that we are going to face in the coming decades.

Portillo: Thank you. Philip Bobbit please.

Bobbitt: Let me take up 3 issues: preemption, imperialism and the rule of law. As many of you know in the early 1950s Bertrand Russell suggested that the West pre-empt the Soviet Union to keep it from acquiring nuclear weapons. This was only a few years after the adoption of the charter and even less time since the adoption of the plan for containing the Soviet Union. SO it was rejected on both legal and strategic grounds. That rejection I believe was vindicated on the grounds of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the success of containment. What has happened since then however, has cast great doubt on both containment and policy of deterrence on which it rests. When you have the increasing availability of weapons of mass destruction, and their delivery- they are beginning increasingly cheaper and accessible to states and groups that don't have to develop them any longer the way the Soviet Union did. And when you marry that with a terrorist network that is not simply in one particular place or desires a political hegemony in one particular theatre; although deterrence doesn't vanish, it is greatly weakened because it depends upon a tactic of retaliation that becomes very hard to execute.

Preemption comes forward not because there is a particular vile regime in Washington, London or anywhere else for that matter, it comes forward for all states because the strategic context has changed. If you believe that containment would have succeeded against Sadaam Hussein, then I have to strongly disagree. Not only would I be unwilling to wait the 50 years we waited to put the Soviet people through all that suffering, not only am I skeptical that people who urged containment on us are the very ones who tried to have the sanctions lifted even after he had expelled the inspectors. Mainly I believe that in a fairly short period of time he would have acquired nuclear weapons, and that would have changed the regional picture completely. Because unlike the theatres of Germany, Japan and Korea, the Americans and the British, NATO and the Western alliance would never have been willing, in my opinion, to risk nuclear attack by Iraq in order to protect Saudi Arabia, or Kuwait, very undemocratic and in some ways very unappealing states. So preemption has not come forward as a political matter, it has come forward as a strategic matter. And the question can I tell you what the Americans or anybody else will do next with a doctrine of preemption has to be no because we don't have a doctrine of preemption. Preemption is not a doctrine. It is a tactic. It is a technique. What the West has failed to do is to articulate precisely what the parameters are for the use of that technique: when? Where? How much? Why? Under what auspices? Decided by whom? Under what conditions? That is a doctrine and that is something we don't have. I said I would also say something about imperialism: I deeply respect the

views of the Iraqis as reported to us; they must feel that they are under occupation and they must hold the most skeptical, cynical ideas of what is really been done to them and for what reasons. How could they not after all they have suffered both under our hands and from the hands of Sadaam Hussein and his party? But I urge you finally not to superimpose not just vile motives, but any kind of pure motives- vile or altruistic on the complex actions of states but instead say what is the result of their activities, whether I understand their motives or not. Most of us don't even understand our own motives in the simplest transactions of life. Understanding the motives of states I think is really a waste of time. Look instead I say at whether the Iraqi people, the region, the West, be better off in 5 years or 10 years than it would have been if we had not acted? Nobody knows the answer to that, but that is the right question to ask. The last thing I will say is the need for rules. I am a law professor of course I am crazy about rules, but I do think that the kinds of rules the world community will need can only come from consensus. That can only come from cooperation across the Atlantic and with our Asian allies. If you really believe in the rule of law, then I think you have to encourage more intercourse, more genuine concern, but also more mutual respect. A little less condescension, a little less high- handedness- Americans, particularly Texans, are famous for that, a little less superciliousness, and a little more patience. Thank you

Portillo: Final comments from Michael Gove

Gove: Thank you Michael. I just want to deal with some of the questions raised: the connection between terrorism and poverty. There is a connection, but perhaps not as simple as his question allowed him to make. I don't believe that there is a causal connection between terrorism and poverty, demonstratively not. Some of those who were responsible for the atrocity of September the 11th were highly trained and indeed wealthy representatives of their societies. Some of those responsible for the most despicable crimes of the 20th century, not least the SS for example, terrorists in uniform to my mind, were also very well trained and indeed cultured representatives of a very intensely cultured society. It can often be the case that the temptations of totalitarianism have the greatest hold on cultivated minds, cultivated minds which have developed in anti-democratic or unfree societies, and that is one of the most striking things about the terrorism that we face from the Middle East. Terrorist movements draw their recruits and their rationale from a denial of democracy in a variety of nations. A denial of democracy, I believe, directly contributes to poverty, demonstratively so, and I also believe that it ties in with the question put by our friend who is a Liberal Democrat in favour of a war in Iraq. I salute your bravery and I think your point is very well made. It is convenient for us perhaps to isolate certain regimes as rogue states that already occupy such a pariah status. What requires greater honesty and courage for us to do is to recognize states with which we have been objective allies of in the past, not least Saudi Arabia, have shameful domestic policy and the consequences have been for us in diplomatic and terrorist terms have been melancholy. I agree with everything Philip said about containment. I would add one other thing in response to that- the institutions that we inherited after the war since 1945, the EU, the UN and NATO, all served an admirable

purpose during the cold war, I believe that we are learning lessons after the collapse of a bi-polar world which challenges the assumptions which underlaid those institutions. I do not think we should continue to show them unthinking reverence because they served as well in the past. There is a time for all institutions, and I think we need to critically engage with the weaknesses of all three of those institutions, which have been laid bare by the events of the last few years. My final point is, I think that I was particularly struck by the hint of melancholy in Philip's comments when he was discussing the differences between America and Europe. Speaking as a European and a Briton, I think we should all consider why it is that someone who dedicated his life to the rule of law, dedicated his life to diplomacy, and worked in the Clinton administration, should feel so melancholic about these state of relations between America and the EU. Philip is not a neo-conservative hawk of the kind that people in this country enjoy caricaturing, he is altogether a more substantial figure than the caricatures we are used to dealing with, why is it that he feels that way? And why is it in the words of Tony Blair, we need to have a prime minister that says in his address to Congress, 'that there has never been a time when the power of America was so necessary' which I entirely agree with, 'or so misunderstood', which also unfortunately is true. Thank you.

Portillo: Well I think all those contributions underline what a high quality panel we have had here this evening and I am extremely grateful to all of them. But I am also extremely grateful to the audience; the contributions from the floor have also been uniformly of a high quality.

Transcribed by Dorcas Erskine

ENDS