

Finding Britain's role in a changing world:

The principles for Global Britain



Executive Summary

This publication recommends how the UK Government can decide the principles and values that should underpin its concept of 'Global Britain' and provides some strong suggestions of what they should be, set in the context of the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy. The Integrated Review takes place not only in the wake of Brexit, COVID-19 and economic turmoil but in the global context of eroding confidence in liberal democracy and the buckling of the rule-based world order, challenged by authoritarians such as revisionist powers Russia and China.

The publication argues that there is a strong moral and strategic case for putting the defence of liberal democracy and open societies at the heart of UK foreign policy. It argues that the UK should take advantage of its new comparative diplomatic freedoms to be more nimble and able to take a lead on these issues. It welcomes the Government's commitment that 'the UK will remain distinctively open and global, working with our allies as a problem-solving and burden-sharing nation', and argues that as an internationally focused middle power it should renew its commitment to a rule-based international order, putting in the hard yards behind the scenes working with partners and institutions both old and new to show it is still committed to multilateralism.

It recognises and examines the crucial importance of listening to the views of the British people and working with them to improve accountability and policy sustainability. However, there will be times when the Government will need to lead, using public diplomacy to better inform its own citizens.

It argues that having a clearly defined set of core principles and priorities- a 'Global Britain values statement'- would make it easier to assess policy compliance and coherence against them. It would help give UK foreign policy both an ethical foundation- upon which its approach is built- and ensure there is an ethical core running through each policy, providing a solid structure around which to build Global Britain. It would also help UK policy makers and diplomats more effectively use the full range of tools available to the new FCDO and across government (including its newly independent trade policy) to better support those clearly articulated values.

It recommends that in the Government's Integrated Review and future foreign policy it should:

- actively engage the British public in developing foreign policy, looking to 'listen, reflect, explain, and respond' to their concerns to enhance decision legitimacy and longevity, while conducting 'public diplomacy' to them to improve public understanding on strategic issues;
- organise a coherent strategic response to the global erosion of liberal democracy and the buckling of the rule-based world order in the face of revisionist powers and systemic decline;
- continue to 'get its own house in order' particularly on areas of transparency and anti-corruption to enhance its soft power and ability to promote its values;
- cultivate democratic solidarity and with like-minded consolidated democracies within international institutions, and through 'mission-coalitions' and other ad hoc partnerships;
- support international mechanisms that defend and promote democratic and human rights values, rooted in the principles of informed popular consent and universal capabilities;
- draft a Global Britain values statement that clearly articulates the principles and values it wants to be the ethical foundation of its approach to the world;
- use a Global Britain values test and 'social value approach' to decision making to ensure an ethical core to each foreign policy decision; and
- develop a whole of government approach ensuring that the institutional structures and all available policy tools, including trade policy, can support this agenda.

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1. Finding Britain's role in a changing world: Principles (and priorities) for Global Britain

By Adam Hug¹

This publication explores the ethical basis on which the UK's emerging post-Brexit foreign policy is being built, examining the principles and values that should help define it and looks at how they relate to the Government's definition of the national interest. It then seeks to show how these principles and values inform the hard choices the UK has to make about defining its international priorities for the next decade and beyond. This discussion is framed by the UK Government's Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy that will report this autumn; setting out the blueprint for the Government's response to the challenges the UK faces that will then be expanded and implemented over the coming years.

We have come a long way since the post-Cold War optimism that provided the backdrop to the 1998 Strategic Defence Review and the optimism around the 'ethical dimension' of then Foreign Secretary Robin Cook underpinned by doctrines of both liberal internationalism and its close cousin the liberal interventionism of Tony Blair's Chicago speech; the latter trialled successfully on the smaller scales of Kosovo and Sierra Leone but undermined through overreach and misapplication to Iraq and other conflicts.² In the post-9/11 period the threats posed by terrorists and other non-state actors

¹ Adam Hug became Director of the Foreign Policy Centre (FPC) in November 2017. He had previously been the Policy Director at the FPC from 2008–2017. His research focuses on human rights and governance issues, particularly in the former Soviet Union. He also writes on UK and EU foreign policy. *Image by FCO under (CC).*

² Whilst there is neither the time nor space to write down the full list of failings of the Iraq war, one area that is relevant to here is that the way in which UK participation was framed domestically as a liberal intervention against an out of control dictator (and to some extent tried pursue objectives that ran in line with this). In a way that did not entirely mesh with US objectives and arguments ranging from the

predominated, a legacy that to this day means for example MI5 focusing two thirds of its resources on Islamic terrorism and only 13 per cent for monitoring hostile state activity.³ The strategic environment is also different to the world of the early 2010s, post-economic crash but still before some of its long-term effects came to full fruition, with policies and narratives framed by ideas of 'enlightened national interest' under Hague, Cameron and the coalition.⁴ That approach, talking about interests and values to similar degrees and sometimes eliding the tensions between them, prevails to some extent under the current Government. However, it is set against an even more volatile international and domestic political backdrop, as well as the generational shift in the UK's global position as a result of Brexit, a process shaped by domestic political processes and the role of public opinion. The Integrated Review comes at a time when a post-Brexit Britain is forging its own new trade policy and is more able to operate diplomatically beyond the partial constraints and cushions of the EU's common foreign and security policy, but faces uncertainty over the future of the transatlantic relationship and wider international order.

Global Challenges

From both an ethical and practical standpoint this publication argues that the UK's evolving foreign policy needs to have at its centre a coherent and strategic response to the sustained global erosion of liberal democracy and the buckling of the post-war (both WWII and Cold) architecture of the rule-based world order.⁵ Since the mid-2000s, despite occasional bright spots, democratic practice and human rights standards, such as civic space and freedom of speech, have been in retreat across the world, with countries in the UK's wider neighbourhood such as Hungary and Turkey declining significantly.⁶ The impact of COVID-19 has further emboldened authoritarians and those who seek to emulate them.⁷ Understanding of the systemic threat posed by a Russia, actively seeking to disrupt and undermine Western-led systems, has been clear for some time but grows more so day-by-day. Even during 2020 there has been a sea-change in perceptions of the challenge posed by China in the wake of COVID-19, the Hong Kong national security law and the persecution of the Uighurs, putting China sceptics who have long warned of both growing repression and a more assertive Chinese approach to foreign policy under Xi Jinping in the ascendancy.

Russia and China do not seek to zealously promote a particular overarching political philosophy (albeit Russia has to varying extents promoted an anti-liberal traditionalism and China has promoted

related but distinct neo-conservatism (see here for some differences: David Bosco, What divides neocons and liberal interventionists, Foreign Policy, April 2012, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2012/04/09/what-divides-neocons-and-liberal-interventionists/>) to a blunt assertion of US regional interests and the American domestic political opportunity to act provided in the wake of 9/11. This analysis above seeks to make a differentiation between Liberal Internationalism and Liberal Interventionism, when the terms are sometimes used synonymously (as indeed Liberal Interventionism and Neo-conservatism sometimes are by their critics). As framed here it sees all three as overlapping positions in the realm of values focused foreign policy placed on a spectrum relating on the one hand relating to the importance role of military intervention and on the other to the importance of international law and institutions (running from a Liberal Internationalism more sceptical on proactive military intervention but in-favour of work through international and multilateral forums through to, put crudely, neo-Conservative preferences for more war and less law). Beyond these frameworks are also a range of socialist, radical and increasingly now traditionalist or nationalist internationalisms- for more on the latter see: The Rise of the Casey Michel, 'Traditionalist International' March 2017, People for the American Way, <https://www.rightwingwatch.org/report/the-rise-of-the-traditionalist-international-how-the-american-right-learned-to-love-moscow-in-the-era-of-trump/>

³ Russian interference highlights Britain's political failings, The Economist, July 2020, <https://www.economist.com/britain/2020/07/25/russian-interference-highlights-britains-political-failings>

⁴ FCO and The Rt Hon William Hague, Britain's Foreign Policy in a Networked World, Government, July 2010, <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/britain-s-foreign-policy-in-a-networked-world--2>; See also the 2010 National Security Strategy and the Strategic Defence and Security Review – UK Government, A Strong Britain in an Age of Uncertainty, October 2010, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/61936/national-security-strategy.pdf

⁵ The democratic system of government in which individual rights and freedoms are officially recognised and protected, and the exercise of political power is limited by the rule of law and with pluralist political organisation and free and fair elections. This essay contribution does not in any way argue for uniformity in political structures or policy outcomes merely that citizens of each country should be freely able to decide what they should be, with space protected for a range of different views;

⁶ The Freedom House rankings have shown consistent decline in global freedoms since 2005: Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2019: Democracy in Retreat, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2019/democracy-retreat>

⁷ Shadi Hamid, Reopening the World: How the pandemic is reinforcing authoritarianism, Brookings, June 2020, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/06/16/reopening-the-world-how-the-pandemic-is-reinforcing-authoritarianism/>

expansive conceptions of state sovereignty and power to support their wider approach).⁸ However they are united by a critique of Western meddling in the affairs of other countries, challenging past and current Western imperialism (both real and imagined).⁹ This is not to say that global democratic decline is driven solely at the behest of these actors, as local authoritarians are perfectly capable of seizing their own opportunities, but this high-level disruption has combined with Western disunity and introspection to place the cause of democracy and open societies on the back foot in much of the world. The UK of course needs to be mindful of these anti-Western narratives, addressing where they are built from a kernel (or more) of truth and the failings on which such narratives feed, without being cowed by them. Recent positive signs, such as Armenia's Velvet Revolution in 2018 and the massive protest movement in Belarus at time of writing show the enduring attractiveness of freedom from oppression and government accountability, particularly when such principles can be decoupled from great power rivalries. However, recent history is full of examples where the international community has failed to take opportunities to consolidate positive change leading to further international fatigue and cynicism.¹⁰

So the presence of revisionist powers, and the growing confidence of individual authoritarian and semi-authoritarian states, pose many challenges to an international order also contending with an unprecedented international public health emergency that is triggering the second seismic global economic crisis in 12 years, instability in the future of the transatlantic relationship, and the ongoing structural shift in economic and political gravity towards Asia.¹¹ The panglossian assumptions of some a few decades ago of an inevitable march towards greater freedoms, openness and global cooperation, are long in the rear view mirror as history came back with a vengeance, if the UK plays an active and cooperative role on the world stage to help reverse this systemic decline there is hope that progress can again be made.

In short it is a challenging environment for the UK's post Brexit Foreign Policy to operate in but one, which if handled with care could provide new opportunities for the UK to be a force for good in the world whilst protecting what it sees as its core interests. The UK would need to be as proactive as it can be in reaffirming its commitments to international engagement as, irrespective of the goals of its advocates, the UK's departure from the EU has added to the sense of instability in the international rule-based order, as Nicholas Wright and others point out in this collection, thereby placing an onus on the UK to show it remains a committed international player.

To meet the Government's proposed high-level outcomes for UK foreign policy, such as 'a secure, stable and prosperous Euro-Atlantic neighbourhood' and a 'world order in which open societies and economies flourish', taking an active role in defending the principles of liberal democracy and open societies are not only the right thing to do from an ethical standpoint, but essential from a strategic

⁸ The rise of illiberal civil society in the former Soviet Union?, FPC, July 2018, <https://fpc.org.uk/publications/the-rise-of-illiberal-civil-society-in-the-former-soviet-union/>; The information battle: How governments in the former Soviet Union promote their agendas & attack their opponents abroad, FPC, March 2017, <https://fpc.org.uk/publications/infobattle/>; and, Sharing worst practice: How countries and institutions in the former Soviet Union help create legal tools of repression, FPC, May 2016, <https://fpc.org.uk/publications/sharingworstpractice/>. These reports show both the role played by Russia and China in encouraging the reduction in freedoms but focus on the agency of local regimes and political actors. Michael Allen's essay in this collection also outlines these issues in detail.

⁹ While Russia and China share an antipathy towards many aspects of 'the West' and work together to promote authoritarian collaboration through the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) it would be wrong to see them as a uniform block- not least because to strategic concerns Russia over the security of its far-Eastern territory and some nervousness (albeit mostly suppressed) over China's rapid expansion into Central Asia and to a lesser extent the South Caucasus through Belt and Road.

¹⁰ For example the failure to properly support political transition in Ukraine both in 2005 and since 2014, the later albeit substantially impacted by Russian invasion.

¹¹ Revisionist powers are driving the world's crises, Financial Times, June 2014, <https://www.ft.com/content/fb9a5ba6-fd4d-11e3-96a9-00144feab7de>; Cabinet Office, Integrated Review: call for evidence, August 2020, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/integrated-review-call-for-evidence>

perspective so that a UK 'open from a position of strength' can flourish.¹² As a middle power with an internationally focused economy and set of strategic assets, it is of critical importance to show support for shared and applied international rules and a system where the balance of power remains with fellow democracies.¹³

As Michael Allen points out in his essay these objectives will need to be argued for from first principles upwards, as the legacy of recent reverses and the current challenges facing the international order mean that simply asserting the supremacy of liberal democracy and rules-based cooperation will likely be self-defeating. This will involve reinforcing the principles of liberal democracy as being rooted in informed popular consent, with protections in place for dissent amongst those currently in the minority (but may not always be so) rather than simply focusing on specific structures that have arisen in predominantly Western contexts to deliver on those principles.

Interests and Values

The Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab has said that the 'guiding lights' for the current Integrated Review 'will be free trade, democracy, human rights and the international rule of law'.¹⁴ The Integrated Review's call for evidence similarly describes the Government's vision as being 'that in 2030 the UK will be stronger, wealthier, more equal, more sustainable, more united across nations and regions', saying that 'the UK will remain distinctively open and global, working with our allies as a problem-solving and burden-sharing nation'.¹⁵ The Prime Minister has talked supportively of these values too, but both have been clear in consistently repeating that the Government seeks to act internationally in the 'national interest'. All UK governments have sought to publicly support both objectives, but different administrations have had different emphases when seeking to balance them.

As the essays in this collection show interests and values can be mutually reinforcing, particularly at a strategic level and in the context of the wider defence of liberal democratic values and a rule-based order outlined above. As Allen argues in his essay, responding to challenges by revisionist powers by defending a country's values should be a core national interest for any foreign policy.¹⁶ Politicians and campaigners regularly seek to minimise the tension between the two objectives in order to advance their goals and avoid challenging debates. However, as both Jamie Gaskarth and Jonathan Gilmore point out, a narrowly defined national interest and values are not always in alignment, particularly in the short-term. This author would strongly argue that while certain values-led actions may not fit within a short-term, tactical assessment of the national interest, they may still serve the UK's strategic objectives and therefore an understanding of the long-term national interest. Yet sadly even when using a long-term perspective beyond even the most patient of politicians it is important to

¹² Government, Integrated Review: call for evidence (PDF), <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/integrated-review-call-for-evidence>. The list of high level outcomes it sets out are:

- a more resilient UK: open from a position of strength;
- a secure, stable and prosperous Euro-Atlantic neighbourhood, which enables our security and prosperity at home;
- a world order in which open societies and economies flourish;
- a more resilient world, well on the path to net zero by 2050;
- strong science, technology & data capabilities; and
- a reformed and refocused approach to defence underpinning all of the above

¹³ As addressed below in this essay, this is not to say all democracies will necessarily support the UK or wider Western perspectives, particularly given colonial legacies that shape international attitudes in a number of cases, something the UK and others need to continue to do more to understand and respond sensitively (such as by improving the UK's ethical practices and using new tools such as its trade policy to promote pro-poor growth in developing state partners) to if it is to build wider and deeper diplomatic alliances.

¹⁴ Dominic Raab – 2020 Statement on Britain in the World, UK POL, January 2020, <http://www.ukpol.co.uk/dominic-raab-2020-statement-on-britain-in-the-world/>

¹⁵ Cabinet Office, Integrated Review: call for evidence, August 2020, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/integrated-review-call-for-evidence>

¹⁶ And it is to some extent exactly what those revisionist powers are doing themselves, albeit where national interest is made synonymous with protecting the interests of their autocratic rulers.

recognise that there will still be cases where the two priorities may not align (often where the long-term benefits of the values approach are hard to quantify) and the balance will need to be shaped by the priorities of the Government of the day. This is an area where greater openness and honesty about the reasons why certain decisions are being made would be helpful for accountability and trust as Gilmore suggests.

In his essay Gaskarth calls for rooting ethical decision-making in a deeper understanding of public opinion, setting out a possible 'listen, reflect, explain, respond' approach for policy development, something that may well find support in this particular government given its extensive use of polling and focus group work to hone its messages and understand public attitudes. This is an area also focused on by Catarina Thomson, Thomas Scotto and Jason Reifler who draw from their 2018 public opinion data which shows that when asked to prioritise values and interests the great British public, unsurprisingly, finds itself almost directly in the middle, falling slightly either side depending on question wording. Their data also shows, again not unsurprisingly given its sometime use as a political football, that the concept of 'human rights' while still popular overall is significantly less supported than many of its constituent principles when they are polled on independently. Referencing different data in her essay, Kate Ferguson notes that the principle of supporting the 'vulnerable abroad' received 87.4 per cent public support, while tackling 'the root causes of migration, violence and instability' received 86.7 per cent support, and 66 per cent believe it is important that Britain helps protect people in other countries from atrocities such as genocide and ethnic cleansing.¹⁷

Gaskarth sees the concept of the 'national interest' as one closely aligned with the concept of 'public good'¹⁸ – that is, the collective safety, prosperity and contentment of the political community of the UK, something similar to the Government's strategic vision of a UK 'stronger, wealthier, more sustainable, more united'.¹⁹ His approach for assessing domestic interests is a helpful tool that can be set alongside the particular principles or ideology that the Government of the day wishes to promote internationally. However of course there needs to still be room for the application of good judgement, particularly where individual actions may have variable, delayed or diffuse impacts on a particular objective but the goal is of particular strategic importance (e.g. the protection of democratic and rule-based norms), there are potential diplomatic trade-offs or other hard to quantify second order effects. These are concerns that Gaskarth notes, regarding the need to consider long-term trends, arguing that 'it is clearly in the national interest of a liberal democratic state to live in a stable international order, with more prosperity, less conflict and more freedom. But, our commitment to those public goods should always be linked back to the costs they impose on UK citizens and the benefits.' It is also worth being wary of a purely case by case or 'what works' approach to individual decisions in the absence of a clear ethical and policy framework. This is due to the risk of the aggregate impact of side effects (negative externalities) mounting up to undermine the overall legitimacy of wider policies or systems.

While the UK's foreign policy has to have buy-in from its citizens to ensure its continuing credibility, such an approach must leave enough room for the Government to shape public understanding and sentiment (perhaps externally influencing the explain and respond sections of Gaskarth's model process), the 'need to lead'. Gilmore describes this approach as public diplomacy 'directed at the British, rather than overseas publics' to help the evolution of domestic attitudes, particularly given the understandably infrequent attention given to foreign policy issues by many citizens. With this in

¹⁷Attest and Protection Approaches, 'British society - How do you feel? 2019', social attitude survey, January 2019 from Kate Ferguson's essay in this collection.

¹⁸ See Edmunds, T. Gaskarth, J. and Porter, R. *British Foreign Policy and the National Interest*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2014; Kratochwil, F. 'On the notion of "interest" in international relations' *International Organization*, 36,1,1982: 1-30.

¹⁹ Also Cabinet Office, *Integrated Review: call for evidence*, August 2020, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/integrated-review-call-for-evidence>

mind, there is a strong case to clearly explain and show the systemic risks outlined above that authoritarian states pose to the UK's security and economic wellbeing to broaden the domestic political constituency beyond those that currently particularly value defending democracy and human rights in and of themselves. Such an approach does of course have echoes of the societal efforts used in response to the Cold War and getting the balance right between awareness and alarmism will require political skill and sensitivity to navigate. There is a case for increased public education around the reasons behind potential trade-offs that could for example see reduced access to Chinese originated goods and services (from Tik Tok to early access to 5G) if the situation continues to escalate. One area in particular that can effectively bridge the values and interests divide is around issues of governance, transparency and accountability. This agenda can marry opportunities to improve standards here in the UK with the need to evidence value for money for the UK taxpayer of its international spending and by making UK's international partners more accountable to their own citizens.

It is hoped that the Integrated Review can help provide an overarching vision and set of principles that can span the post-Brexit fault lines and provide opportunities for the cross party agreement necessary for the durable strategic approach needed to respond to the seriousness of the international situation. At time of writing at a policy level- recent cross-party agreement on the use of 'Magnitsky' personal sanctions against human rights abusers, the response to the Belarus protests, the Navalny poisoning and China's national security law in Hong Kong gives some hope that some elements of a shared agenda can be found, whilst understanding that deep philosophical, political and policy divides will remain in some areas.

There is little point at this stage in rehashing the arguments over the costs and benefits of membership of the EU for the UK's foreign policy, nor given the trajectory of the Brexit negotiations of what the kind of close Foreign and Security partnership proposed under the May administration (envisioned in part as leverage for economic access but also to support a somewhat more gradualist international approach to post-Brexit) would mean for UK Foreign Policy. Therefore, when considering what the principles and practice of Global Britain should be under this Government, it is essential to look at how the UK's freedom of action outside of the EU's foreign policy architecture can enable British policy to be more nimble and able to take a lead on important issues. With a nod to the 'float like a butterfly, sting like a bee' strategy of Muhammed Ali it should aim to show that 'taking back control' translates to a renewed international self-confidence rather than taking its ball home.²⁰ To deploy another well-used phrase, the UK needs to be able to walk and chew gum at the same time by being both able to take swifter action where former EU partners may be slowed by the aim to seek consensus, but also showing it is still willing to put in the hard yards behind the scenes in multilateral institutions to develop common positions where behind this would better achieve the desired outcome.

Areas for caution

A principle or values-based approach to foreign policy needs to be rooted in what the UK does, both at home and internationally, rather than just what it says. As Gaskarth points out, rather than automatically assuming the universality of our ethics, the UK needs, where appropriate, to translate them into the language and practices of other communities and make the case for how they can serve the interests of their citizens (and their governments) to limit reflexive defensive reactions where possible and reduce the likelihood of 'bandwagoning' with other ostracised parties. This is not to retreat from advocating for values derived from the principles of universal human capabilities,

²⁰ To the extent such an approach can be taken by a country of the UK's size and reputation. The UK of course would wish to avoid the terminal outcome experienced by the bee upon completion of the stinging process, something that in the relative absence of the institutional backup and political cover provided by EU joint positions will involve both strategy and precision to pull off effectively.

particularly where states have signed up to relevant UN or other international treaties endorsing these values. It is a question of getting the tactics right to make an impact and to recognise the complex baggage (both good, ill and viewed differently in different parts of the world) that the UK can bring with it, whilst retaining confidence in the UK's ability to be a force for good. Getting our own house in order is imperative on issues around tackling corruption, arms control and military support, climate policy and many other issues.²¹ This will help add moral weight to the UK's diplomacy and enhance its attractive, soft power, helping it better navigate an more fractured and fractious international environment and engage fellow democracies in Africa, Asia and Latin America that understandably have a perspective on the current international order and its history that is far from uniformly positive.²²

While it is tempting, to package advocacy of open societies and economies together it can be risky. This is not to say that a government that values both liberal societies and free market economies should not seek to promote the two goals, the UK has a long track record of encouraging both, but rather that it should avoid conflating the two. In these turbulent times it needs restating that liberal democracy is not contingent on (neo) liberal economics. Some populists, of both right and left, have been able to draw support from those who have suffered from the downsides of free and globalised markets to lead projects that seek to undermine liberal democratic institutions themselves to entrench their own power. Many, including this author, would strongly argue that for the liberal democratic project to remain successful much more needs to be done to address the inequalities that can arise from interconnected markets and tackle issues around transnational kleptocracy and tax avoidance that breeds understandable cynicism in the status quo.²³

However the decision on whether and how to (re)allocate the costs and benefits of globalisation or to reduce or reframe a countries exposure to it needs to be decided democratically. Free societies where leaders are chosen democratically and are ultimately accountable to their people must be the first priority. They then need to be allowed to choose the economic systems that work best for them, a lesson sometimes still forgotten by international financial institutions, while leaving space for international advice and advocacy of preferred economic models without undue pressure.²⁴ Indeed a lesson of the Brexit process is in recognising the value placed in the importance of democratic control over policy and decision-making, an input legitimacy separate from perceptions of the potential costs or benefits of any outcomes. Particularly if placed in *de facto* competition with the type of authoritarian state capitalist system being refined in China, liberal democracy's ability to support a diverse range of economic models and policies needs to be promoted as a strength.

The Prime Minister's Commons Statement announcing the merger of the FCO and DFID potentially signalled a number of important changes. Firstly, it suggested that while poverty reduction would

²¹ Addressed later in this publication series and previously in Finding Britain's role in changing world, FPC and Oxfam, March 2020, <https://fpc.org.uk/publications/finding-britains-role-in-a-changing-world/>

²² Hans Kundnani, What is the Liberal International Order?, The German Marshall Fund of the United States, May 2017 <https://www.gmfus.org/publications/what-liberal-international-order> gives a good analysis of

²³ For example Ikenberry highlights the problems caused to liberal international systems by growing inequality and the conflation of globalisation with the liberal international political order, G John Ikenberry, The Next Liberal Order, July 2020, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-06-09/next-liberal-order>

²⁴ There is not the time or space here (nor frankly the need given the weight of literature on the topic) to chronicle the impacts of debt and other lending being used to push particular economic policies on developing and other debtor countries, from the 'structural adjustment' of the 1990s to 2009 Greek debt crisis. Both the often-significant inequality and the overriding of domestic political preferences in favour of those of the lenders have played their part in sapping trust in the post-cold war international order. This does not preclude donor advocacy of their preferred economic strategies, nor completely rule out conditionality on transparency and human rights grounds as well as ensuring a reasonable prospect of repayment but without forcing sovereign governments to adopt a donor's economic approach against their will. Indeed, in this author's humble opinion, perhaps one of the decisions that has most led to the undermining of the liberal international order and liberal democracy was the use of Russia as a laboratory for 'economic shock theory' (as well as the lack of a 'Marshal Plan for Russia comparable with the level of investment and support provided to former Eastern bloc states outside the former Soviet Union) that played such an important role in its failure to transition to being a stable democracy and becoming instead the global disruptor it is today (though it is worth noting that more than in some other country cases such policies found support in sections of the early 90s Russian elite).

remain a central focus for British aid spending and the mission of the new department, it would be as one of a number of core priorities (including human rights, climate and crucially the 'values and interests of this country' at the same time) rather than being first among equals as it was in DFID. Finding an appropriate and equitable balance between similarly important goals of poverty reduction, human rights, good governance and conflict prevention can prove challenging particularly when, usually due to authoritarian or corrupt governments, these otherwise highly compatible goals may not align in the short term. However, it is worth reiterating that this is an area on which UK Aid has already made considerable progress in recent years. How this Government will define national interest in this context is a central question as discussed above and elsewhere in this collection. One area where greater clarity and reassurance would be welcomed is around how the 'commercial priorities' mentioned in the Parliamentary debate will work with this wider agenda, while noting the Prime Minister's firm commitment on no return to tied aid and with mutually positive framings on trade possible as set out below.

Secondly, the Prime Minister's remarks underlined the importance of enhancing the UK's engagement in the wider European Neighbourhood, highlighting the need to increase support to Ukraine and the Western Balkans (contrasting this with traditional DFID support for Zambia and Tanzania).²⁵ This approach would seem to build from an assessment of the UK's security interests and the global concerns highlighted above. This has been reinforced by the IR's high-level commitment to a 'secure, stable and prosperous Euro-Atlantic neighbourhood', which while far from a new priority for foreign policy, may have a significant impact for aid-spending and indeed for defence posture, potentially shifting away to some extent from 'out of area' activities.

Irrespective of the strategic merits of this potential shift, it is worth being clear that any aid reprioritisation will be felt even more keenly at this time of budgets being squeezed, such as through the recent aid cuts due to the COVID-19 related drop in the UK's GNI. If there is a shift in aid resources away from poverty reduction and Africa it comes with some potential risks not only to potential deeper Commonwealth cooperation, but in the context of well over a decade of expanding Chinese influence in Africa and across the developing world (including through the huge Belt and Road initiative in China's neighbourhood). While the Chinese focus on supporting infrastructure development without direct conditionality has been popular, there has been growing concern about the new debt burden to China potentially acting as a source of political leverage.²⁶ It also comes at a time of when Russia is playing an increasingly expansive role in not only the post-Soviet space and Middle East, but also now expanding its military and mercenary involvement in Africa.²⁷ So while redeploying resources the UK must not vacate the field.

If UK aid flows to Africa and other parts of the developing world do drop, it makes it imperative that the UK uses its new trade policy creatively in ways that support the UK's values as well as its

²⁵ DFID, FCO, Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street, and The Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP, Prime Minister's statement to the House of Commons: 16 June 2020, Government, June 2020, <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/prime-ministers-statement-to-the-house-of-commons-16-june-2020>; The Prime Minister (Boris Johnson), Global Britain, House of Commons Hansard, June 2020, <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-06-16/debates/20061637000001/GlobalBritain>

²⁶ A recent Chatham House paper, by Lee Jones and Shahar Hameiri highlights the importance of not overstating this case, particularly in relation to asset seizure. (See Lee Jones and Shahar Hameiri, Debunking the Myth of 'Debt-trap Diplomacy': How Recipient Countries Shape China's Belt and Road Initiative, August 2020, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/publication/debunking-myth-debt-trap-diplomacy-jones-hameiri>) However, from the FPC's own work in Central Asia for example it is clear that Belt and Road creates leverage both from the good will generated in some cases and in the way debt can be used to ensure Chinese interests are prioritised, as for example in the case of gas flow prioritisation from Turkmenistan as set out in the 2019 Spotlight on Turkmenistan publication (Adam Hug ed., Spotlight on Turkmenistan, July 2019, <https://fpc.org.uk/publications/spotlight-on-turkmenistan/>). Of course it is important to consider the ways in which debt was used by Western Countries and the International Financial institutions to enforce dubious and often harmful economic programmes on the debtor country, something that led to the somewhat successful efforts in the late 90s and 2000s to 'drop the debt'. The hope is to try and learn from the mistakes of the past rather than repeat them.

²⁷ Anadolu Agency, Russia to build military bases in 6 African countries: Report, Daily Sabah, August 2020, <https://www.dailysabah.com/world/africa/russia-to-build-military-bases-in-6-african-countries-report>; Svoboda Radio, Twitter Post, Twitter, July 2020, <https://twitter.com/SvobodaRadio/status/1288464211945967616>

interests, with a clear focus on supporting poverty reduction in partner countries alongside clear and actionable commitments on human rights. Focusing new trade deals on supporting economic development in partner countries, would help meet the Government's manifesto commitment to 'do more to help countries currently receiving aid become self-sufficient' whilst strengthening bilateral economic ties and strategic cooperation.²⁸

A pivot to the UK's Euro-Atlantic Neighbourhood will need to consider the extent to which the UK has previously worked with or through EU mechanisms, such as in Ukraine, Moldova, the Western Balkans and the South Caucasus where Eastern Partnership, and for some countries putative future enlargement, are still an important part of the landscape. Effective UK policy in this region will require enhanced engagement with regional institutions notably the OSCE (and in some areas with the Council of Europe) as well as through boosting bilateral diplomacy. Though institutions with many challenges, the OSCE and Council of Europe's mechanisms play a vital role in trying to defend values of democratic elections, media freedom and human rights against increasing pressure from their more authoritarian member states.²⁹ In this context, it is deeply worrying that the UK Government seems to be reviewing its continuing participation in international election observation. At time when the OSCE is under pressure and fake monitors are trying to undermine trust in elections it is essential for the UK's values and its commitment to the Euro-Atlantic region, for British foreign policy to be protecting the gold standard of the OSCE ODIHR's long-term missions rather than potentially undermining it.

²⁸ The Conservative and Unionist Party Manifesto 2019, Get Brexit done: Unleash Britain's Potential, https://assets-global.website-files.com/5da42e2cae7ebd3f8bde353c/5dda924905da587992a064ba_Conservative%202019%20Manifesto.pdf; Whilst more detail on what such arrangements might look like will be set out in future publications in this series new UK trade deals should seek to support rather than undermine regional trade integration by partner countries, learning from the mistakes of the EU's Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) in Africa and with an emphasis on it being a partnership. The UK should seek to give developing country partners greater flexibility on tariffs, including a more flexible interpretation of the 'substantially all' requirement so they can protect infant industries, longer phasing periods and a pro-development use of schedules; along with rules of origin requirements that work to support regional cooperation in supply chains rather than pull against it (except in cases relating to contents subject to conflict or human rights restrictions); and the maximum policy space possible to allow them to implement rules in ways most suitable to their development. The UK should be wary of reliance on ISDS and instead look to coordinate with its aid policy by supporting rule of law initiatives in partner countries. For discussion on this issue see: Royal African Society and APPG on Africa, The Future of Africa-UK Trade and Development Cooperation Relations in the Transitional and Post-Brexit Period, February 2017, https://royalafricansociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/APPG-for-Africa_Future-of-Africa-UK-Relations-Post-Brexit.pdf; and the upcoming contributions in this series by Ruth Bergan who advised on the suggestions above.

²⁹ As documented in the FPC's Institutionally Blind series

What our authors say

Michael Allen writes that in the context of democratic regression and authoritarian resurgence an ethical dimension to foreign policy and a firm commitment to core democratic values will serve as a potent countervail to authoritarian and malign actors. The defence and promotion of such values has become a new terrain for strategic competition. Responding to challenges to these values should be a core national interest for any foreign policy. This essay argues that as the UK moves forward and assesses its position on the global stage, it needs to take advantage of its position at the nexus of robust European, Atlantic and Commonwealth networks, and complement and consolidate current alliances, such as NATO and the G-7, to more firmly draw on its three principal resources - culture, political values, and foreign policy.

Dr Jonathan Gilmore argues that the Integrated Review provides an important moment of reflection to consider the precise relationship between values and the narrower national interests in UK foreign policy. Values and interests are not always harmonious or mutually reinforcing, and clearer mapping of the relationship is important in establishing the credibility of these commitments. Care must be taken that the language of 'enlightened national interest' does not obscure tensions between different foreign policy priorities. Furthermore, the Integrated Review takes place in a domestic political context of significant societal division, on the UK's positioning towards the outside world and its responsibilities to those beyond its borders. The rifts that became apparent over the UK's EU membership continue to limit the likelihood of reliable domestic consensus on national foreign policy priorities – the interests to be pursued, the values to be promoted or the acceptable extent of responsibilities to those beyond UK borders. Whilst Integrated Review will understandably focus on capabilities for hard and soft power projection internationally, a key claim of the essay is that the UK's internal dynamics will be a key factor in enabling or constraining these capabilities.

Dr Jamie Gaskarth sets out that ethics are a fundamental aspect of foreign policy, not an add-on. They are about deciding what is the right thing to do, given the circumstances. This essay aims to reduce some of the confusion over how ethics should be incorporated into policy-making. For instance, the law plays an increasing part in the way policy-makers think about the right course of action but it should not replace moral judgment. Sometimes it may be necessary to break international law to protect human life. Similarly, Cosmopolitan calls for the UK to look after the interests of wider humanity are problematic if they do not provide guidance on how to prioritise and ration effort. The ethical basis for government action is their responsibility to the people they govern. Recent foreign policy shocks indicate that there is an increasing disconnect between elite foreign policy-makers and the general public. This essay argues that more effort needs to be made to engage with the public, solicit their views, and balance the needs and wants of the majority with those of particular sectors or minorities. A Communitarian foreign policy would strengthen the social contract between the government and the people, benefit from the diversity of opinion and expertise of society at large, and establish necessary limits on action abroad.

Dr Catarina P. Thomson, Prof. Thomas J. Scotto and Prof. Jason Reifler examine how members of the public consider two key security matters: (1) what foreign policy role do members of the public think the UK military should play? And (2), when it comes to the UK's overall international role, what weighs more for citizens, protection of national interests or other goals such as promoting democratisation or protecting human rights? At a time in which the national security and defence sector is being reviewed and faces the prospect of significant reforms, they find no public appetite for a reduction in the scope of military activities. The British public has clear ideas about the type of roles they believe the UK military should take on. These roles include not just maintaining traditional defensive capacities such as combating terrorism, as they also find widespread support for using the

military to prevent humanitarian crises or to stop ethnic cleansing. However, support for idealism in foreign policy can change when examining survey questions that present respondents with explicit trade-offs. They find that the public considers trade-offs when weighing pursuing the national interest against more idealistic objectives. Right-leaning and older voters in particular are more predisposed to factor the national interest when considering what foreign policy options the UK should pursue.

Dr Nicholas Wright argues that the maintenance and enhancement of the international rules-based order, particularly through the effective functioning of key multilateral pillars such as the UN, WTO, IMF, etc., is an essential British national interest. As a middle-rank power the UK still exercises quite significant degrees of international influence, but its capacity to do so rests increasingly on whether other states - especially dominant actors such as the US and China, but also emergent powers such as India - recognise the value and legitimacy of the structures created in the 75 years since Second World War. In its post-Brexit foreign policy the UK must therefore not only commit to ensuring the international rules-based order functions effectively, efficiently and fairly, but also demonstrate leadership in this regard, for example in forums such as the UN Security Council and WTO. By doing so it can limit the risk that other powers see the Brexit decision as part of a broader strategic retreat by the UK, while serving to buttress institutions that have become increasingly vulnerable to the global rise in nationalism.

Dr Kate Ferguson sets out the growing need for the UK government to confront past failures to help prevent atrocities in Bosnia, Iraq and Syria, and fully embed the principles of prevention and collective responsibility into the heart of British policy. Whatever the outcome of the Integrated Review and new national security strategy, the UK will need the capabilities and systems to meet the projected global increase in identity-based violence, which if left unchecked will emerge as one of the defining crises of the next political era. The UK deserves an international policy capable of predicting and preventing crises as well as responding to them, fit to meet challenges it cannot yet foresee as well as those it can. In this essay, Ferguson urges Government to take this moment of self-reflection to learn from its mistakes and integrate a comprehensive national strategy of atrocity prevention across government.



2. Prospects for an ethical foundation for a foreign policy in the context of democratic regression and authoritarian resurgence

By Michael Allen³⁰

Revising and reviving a values-based foreign policy at a time of unprecedented global fragility, complexity and uncertainty is an intimidating proposition. The strategic environment has radically shifted from the heady optimism of the post-Cold War unipolar moment, the apparent hegemony of an international order based on the assumed harmony of liberal values, democratic governance, and free markets, and the conviction that a potent blend of economic globalisation and technological innovation was rendering authoritarian states ever more anachronistic and unsustainable.

It was in that context that an ethical dimension to foreign policy appeared appropriate, even inevitable, alongside a 'doctrine of an international community' as the political corollary of a process of globalisation generating interdependence and creating the space for a 'global alliance for global values' - the presumed universal values of the liberal West – vouchsafed by the rules-based international order. When "values and interest merge," the traditional dilemma of balancing security and idealism is resolved. "If we can establish and spread the values of liberty, the rule of law, human

³⁰ Michael Allen is a Special Assistant at the National Endowment for Democracy in Washington, D.C. and editor of the NED's Democracy Digest blog. Image by www.kremlin.ru under (CC).

rights and an open society then that is in our interest too. The spread of our values makes us safer.”³¹

Yet recent analyses and debates on both sides of the Atlantic suggest a profound crisis of confidence in the resilience of democratic institutions and the liberal values on which they rest. On the other hand, by puncturing the comfortable orthodoxies of the post-Cold War era, the current democratic recession and the COVID-19 pandemic may provide an opportunity for a reappraisal, revival and reassertion of liberal democratic ideas and institutions.

Like Moliere's women characters who spoke prose without realising it, foreign policy practitioners invariably if unwittingly employ ethical criteria in decision-making. But is the UK's bipartisan consensus that a values-based foreign policy is both feasible and desirable still sustainable? Is it feasible to cultivate an explicitly values-based approach or ethical foundation to foreign policy when the nature and validity of those values and fundamental principles are contested, both within and beyond liberal democracies?

The principles that drive British foreign policy are “obsolete,” according to a former Defence and Foreign Secretary. Policy-makers have been guided by a range of erroneous assumptions – that globalisation is immutable and global governance is replacing geopolitical rivalry, for instance – in need of revision, Sir Malcolm Rifkind wrote in the preface to a recent report.³² The UK needs “*a thorough re-appraisal of the dominant assumptions that have guided our strategic thinking,*” the report added. “*As wider state competition intensifies, Britain needs to re-empower itself to compete with revisionist and expansionist powers.*”

A leading US strategist echoes the demand of a “new set of assumptions” to underpin foreign policy. “Contrary to the optimistic predictions made in the wake of the Soviet Union's collapse, widespread political liberalisation and the growth of transnational organisations have not tempered rivalries among countries.” Likewise, “the uncomfortable truth,” is that “visions of benevolent globalization and peace-building liberal internationalism have failed to materialise, leaving in their place a world that is increasingly hostile to American values and interests.”

The current US administration's ‘principled realism,’ based on the defence rather than the evangelical promotion of values, reflects the reality that ‘geopolitics is eternal.’ “A main objective of US strategy, therefore, should be to *prevent the accumulation of activities and trends that harm US interests and values,* rather than to pursue grand projects such as trying to determine how China or other countries should govern themselves” (my emphasis).³³ Trump has reignited debate “on some concepts that we thought were settled” and forced the foreign policy establishment to reconsider “first principles,” said another former foreign policy adviser.³⁴

Liberal values are being “challenged intellectually and politically by states within and outside the West,” adds a prominent European analyst. The four central assumptions about the beneficent impact of free trade and economic interdependence, innate human rights, the universality of

³¹ Blair, T. 2006. ‘A Global Alliance for Global Values’, Foreign Policy Centre. See also T. Blair, ‘The Principles of a Modern British Foreign Policy’, speech delivered at Lord Mayor's Banquet, Guildhall, London 10 November 1997.

³² Rogers, James. 2020. Core Assumptions and British Strategic Policy: Towards the Next Foreign, Security and Defence Review, Henry Jackson Society.

³³ Nadia Schadlow, The End of American Illusion: Trump and the World as It Is, Foreign Affairs, September/October 2020, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/americas/2020-08-11/end-american-illusion>. Schadlow is a principal author of the current US National Security Strategy.

³⁴ Masha Gessen. Under Trump the language we use to create political reality is crumbling, The New Yorker, April 2019, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/our-columnists/under-trump-the-language-we-use-to-create-political-reality-is-crumbling>

democracy and multilateralism are under dispute, reflecting a growing conviction that “Western universalism was just a false front for Western particularism.”³⁵

Such analyses reflect a concern – on both sides of the Atlantic and within Europe – that the appeal of liberal values is waning, that the optimistic consensus of the post-Cold War international liberal order has fractured, and that the resurgence of illiberal and autocratic powers has ushered in an era of geopolitical competition. Furthermore, “Westlessness” has dissipated democracies’ cohesion and identity, prompting some to argue that we are witnessing “the decay of ‘the West’ as a relatively cohesive geopolitical configuration anchoring a normative model of global order in which commitments to human rights, democracy, and the rule of law are central,” in short, as a champion of global constitutionalism.³⁶

Undermined by the *internal* threat of ascendant illiberal, nativist and populist forces, liberal democracies also confront the *external* challenge of an authoritarian resurgence. Russia, China, and other illiberal actors have employed an innovative repertoire of techniques – from disinformation to influence operations - to take advantage of democracies’ openness and pluralism while advancing an autocratic model of governance and set of values as an alternative to liberal democratic norms and institutions.

The latest in a series of “transformational changes that left many nations unmoored from old certainties,” COVID-19 is, with the Cold War, “one of the two greatest tests of the U.S.-led international order since its founding,” says the US Council on Foreign Relations. “Nothing else since that time approaches the societal, political, and economic effects of the virus on populations around the world.”³⁷ The COVID-19 pandemic has further sapped the “strategic position, credibility, and moral authority” of the world’s most powerful democracy, according to another analysis, which notes that traditional US allies “are losing faith in American leadership while illiberal regimes are growing in number, stature, and audacity.”³⁸ The pandemic is deepening and accelerating the democratic downturn, as authoritarian and illiberal actors take advantage of the crisis to further erode liberties and undermine democratic institutions, according to a recent open letter signed by 62 former world leaders, 13 Nobel Laureates and 73 pro-democracy institutions.³⁹

COVID-19 has demonstrated that “the blithe assumption in much of the West that liberal democracy is self-evidently superior to other forms of governance is unwarranted and self-defeating.” The transition to the post-American era is taking place in “a growing strategic, political, and normative void — a new world disorder..... characterised primarily by a lack of clarity (or agreement) about the rules of the international system [and] the steady de-universalisation of norms.”⁴⁰ The crisis will “sharpen great power rivalries and hasten the shift in the global balance of power from west to east,” with China most likely to emerge “as a bigger global player in political as well as economic terms,” with Europe’s democracies much diminished, the Economist Intelligence Unit adds.⁴¹

³⁵ Ivan Krastev, *The Missionary Who has to Become a Monastery*, Center for Liberal Studies/Robert Bosch Stiftung/Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, 2019, <http://www.robertboschacademy.de/content/language2/downloads/Policy-Paper-Hypocrisy-2019-Final.pdf>.

³⁶ 2020 Munich Security Report, Munich Security Conference. Matthias Kumm, Jonathan Havercroft, Jeffrey Dunoff, Antje Wiener, *The End of ‘the West’ and the Future of Global Constitutionalism*, *Global Constitutionalism*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2017, pp. 1-11, p. 2.

³⁷ Robert D. Blackwill and Thomas Wright, *The End of World Order and American Foreign Policy*, Council of Foreign Relations Special Report #86, May 2020, https://cdn.cfr.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/the-end-of-world-order-and-american-foreign-policy-csr.pdf

³⁸ Kelly Magsamen, Max Bergmann, Michael Fuchs and Trevor Sutton, *Securing a Democratic World: The Case for a Democratic Values-Based U.S. Foreign Policy*, Center for American Progress, September 2018, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/reports/2018/09/05/457451/securing-democratic-world/>

³⁹ *A Call to Defend Democracy*, NED, June 2020, <https://www.ned.org/call-to-defend-democracy/>

⁴⁰ Bobo Lo, *Global Order in the Shadow of the Coronavirus: China, Russia and the West*, Lowy Institute, July 2020, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/global-order-shadow-coronavirus-china-russia-and-west>

⁴¹ *Geopolitics after COVID-19: is the pandemic a turning point?*, EIU, April 2020, <https://country.eiu.com/article.aspx?articleid=1339299717&Country=Albania&topic=Politics&subtopic=Forecast&subsubtopic=International+relations>

The challenge of forging a credible values-based foreign policy is all the more problematic and intimidating given the global regression evident in the declining number of democracies and the growing fragility of democratic institutions and culture:

- A 2020 survey of 210 states registered a 14th consecutive year of decline in freedom, *as measured by political rights and civil liberties*.⁴²
- Only 5.7 per cent of the world's population live in a 'full democracy' and more than a third under authoritarian rule.⁴³
- *Some 52 per cent of citizens are dissatisfied with the quality of democracy, compared with 44 per cent who are satisfied, highlighting the fragility of democratic values*.⁴⁴
- Autocracies comprise a majority of the world's political regimes, with 92 countries hosting 54 per cent of the world's population. Almost 35 per cent of the world's population - 2.6 billion people - live in autocratising states across all regions, including G20 nations.⁴⁵

Perhaps more profoundly, the halt to the forward march of democratic governance has punctured the West's complacent post-Cold War teleological assumptions that history was moving in an inexorably liberal direction, that autocracies were as unsustainable as they were anachronistic and that a robust international consensus underpinned the norms, rules and institutions of the global order. Consequently, the world is "now immersed in a fierce global contest of ideas, information, and norms."⁴⁶

The rise of illiberal forces within democratic states potentially undermines their credibility in advancing ethical foreign policies, as "populists undermine the informal norms and values critical for liberal democracies to flourish," notably the vital norms of forbearance (restraint in exercising institutional prerogatives) and tolerance (acceptance of opposition and criticism). Populism emerged from a 'cultural backlash' against long-term socio-economic trends across the West, while in Central and Eastern Europe; it took the form of an 'illiberal counterrevolution' against the liberal norms that animated the post-1989 transitions. The domestic crisis of confidence translated into greater timidity and insularity in foreign policy. "Where the years after the Cold War saw growing civilian protection internationally and a surge in accountable government nationally, so today we see the reverse," not least in Syria, as the "crisis of Western values" at home acquired "a bloodier, more violent face" abroad.⁴⁷

The prevailing mix of uncertainty, volatility and interdependence in the global system enhances the fragility of democratic institutions and values. Such 'Black Swan' events as a global pandemic, cyberattacks or nuclear terrorism could "lead to fundamental changes in the principles and laws that govern liberal democratic states and the international sovereign state system," notes a former US State Department Policy Planning director (writing prior to the outbreak of COVID-19). Indeed, we have already witnessed how unanticipated large migrant flows "upset the balance of political and ideational interests that has helped to sustain liberal democracy."⁴⁸

⁴² Sarah Repucci, *Freedom in the World 2020: A Leaderless Struggle for Democracy*, Freedom House, 2020, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2020/leaderless-struggle-democracy>

⁴³ 2020 Democracy Index, The Economist Intelligence Unit.

⁴⁴ Richard Wike and Shannon Schumacher, *Democratic Rights Popular Globally but Commitment to Them Not Always Strong*. Pew Research Center, February 2020, <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2020/02/27/democratic-rights-popular-globally-but-commitment-to-them-not-always-strong/>

⁴⁵ *Autocratization Surges—Resistance Grows: Democracy Report 2020*, Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Institute, University of Gothenburg, https://www.v-dem.net/media/filer_public/f0/5d/f05d46d8-626f-4b20-8e4e-53d4b134bfc9/democracy_report_2020_low.pdf

⁴⁶ Larry Diamond, *America's Silence Helps Autocrats Triumph*, *Foreign Policy*, September 2019, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/09/06/americas-silence-helps-autocrats-triumph-democratic-rollback-recession-larry-diamond-ill-winds/>

⁴⁷ Anne Applebaum, *The West Has Lost Confidence in Its Values. Syria Is Paying the Price*, *Washington Post*, September 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/the-west-has-lost-confidence-in-its-values-syria-is-paying-the-price/2019/09/06/b8b73dee-d0ac-11e9-b29b-a528dc82154a_story.html.

⁴⁸ Krasner, Stephen. 2020. *How to Make Love to a Despot: An Alternative Foreign Policy for the Twenty-First Century*, New York: Liveright, p.36.

How should the UK respond to the wider international crisis of liberal democracy (in a values context)

Just as Voltaire observed that the Holy Roman Empire was neither holy, Roman nor an empire, many critics say the same of the liberal international order. Yet crises generate opportunities and the current democratic regression provides an occasion for the reconsideration and reassertion of core liberal values. With China and Russia making considerable investments in media and other forms of ideological infrastructure in an effort to revise the established conventions and norms of the prevailing liberal international order, the defence and promotion of values has become a new terrain of strategic competition.

The traditional cleavage between a 'realist-conservative' approach to foreign policy that highlights the objective, morally neutral pursuit of the national interest, and the 'idealist-liberal' insistence that values should shape policy preferences is breaking down. While all states claim to pursue the 'national interest,' notions of identity and culture, including values, are central to how it is defined. With respect to foreign policy, values are not ethical principles per se but "principles that influence political beliefs and action."⁴⁹

The conventional dichotomy of interests vs. values in foreign policy is anachronistic and unhelpful in an era when revisionist authoritarian regimes engage in various forms of ideological conflict – from the Kremlin's 'information warfare' to China's United Front influence operations - to subvert democracies from within and to undermine the established norms of the liberal international order. In this age of great power competition, authoritarians aim to sap the moral appeal of liberal values in order to legitimise own autocratic rule, to expand their spheres of influence and to present a countervailing force against the expansion of open societies.

In any case, as a leading US diplomat recently observed, *a propos* foreign policy analysts' preoccupation with realism v. idealism, offshore balancing, primacy and hegemony, "The concepts from international relations and doctrines help frame debates, but they do not offer policy makers guidance about what to do." Practitioners, he added, "considered strategic reference points – about geography, economics, power and politics – but prized flexibility, adaptability and trying what might work."⁵⁰ One reason why British practitioners have traditionally shied away from hubristic foreign policy doctrines in favour of pragmatism and empiricism.

The new era of strategic competition is likely to enhance the salience of values in foreign policy. "A state's values are not just part of its foreign policy," according to a 'realist' geopolitical analyst, "they are paramount to it." Indeed, without "a belief in its own values, a foreign policy of any kind is nearly impossible to execute." Because they are advanced "through the projection of power, understanding a world of competing powers requires a discussion of values," not least because "once a great state or empire loses such a belief in its own values, it must proceed into decline."⁵¹

In an era of strategic competition, the projection of a nation's values is a low-cost source of comparative advantage. Few states will admit to practicing a morally bereft *Realpolitik*, with even autocratic regimes claiming to represent and advance a values-based approach to foreign policy. The Kremlin instrumentalises the Russian Orthodox Church in its claim to represent the 'traditional values' of Christianity, alongside Putin-friendly ideologues such as Alexander Dugin advocating

⁴⁹ Krishnan Srinivasan, James Mayall and Sanjay Pulipaka (eds). 2019. *Values in Foreign Policy: Investigating Ideals and Interests*. London: Rowman and Littlefield.

⁵⁰ Zoellick, Robert B. 2020. *America in the World: A History of U.S. Diplomacy and Foreign Policy*. Location 9170.

⁵¹ Robert D. Kaplan, *Ibid*, Srinivasan, et al. p.xxi.

the “blood and soil” values of nationalism to receptive illiberal forces abroad as part of the Kremlin’s ongoing efforts to “discredit and damage Western liberal institutions and values.”⁵²

While the West purports to promote the universal values of the Enlightenment, China’s ostensibly Communist regime insists it has a comparable civilisational narrative rooted not in the principles of Marxism-Leninism but in the Confucian idea of ‘harmony’. In practice, however, Beijing’s ‘coercive diplomacy’ and projection of its ‘sharp power’ entails the “rigorous, ruthless advancement of China’s interests and values at the expense of those of the West.”⁵³ By exercising sharp power, “the repressive values of authoritarian systems—which encourage top-down authority, censorship, and the monopolization of power—are projected outward,”⁵⁴ undermining democracies’ sovereignty, institutional integrity, and values— in effect, “marketing dictatorship.”⁵⁵ Authoritarian regimes have been notably successful within international institutions, to such a degree that “norms privileging state security, civilizational diversity, and traditional values over liberal democracy now enjoy significant backing, and they are reshaping the international environment,” raising questions about the utility of multilateral forums as a channel for advancing values-based foreign policy.⁵⁶

This new contest of values is a rebuke to the triumphalist delusions of the 1990s that economic, cultural and political ‘liberalisation’ was inexorably ascendant, that Europe would soon be ‘whole, free, and at peace’ and that China would eventually be incorporated as a ‘responsible stakeholder’ in the liberal international order. But while liberal democracies face new constraints and challenges to efforts to assert or defend established international norms, intensifying competition between rival values systems demands an explicit and unapologetic assertion of what the UK represents, including the culture or way of life we aspire to protect and project, and the active promotion of our values as an instrument of influence.

It was during the post-Cold War heyday of liberal interventionism or ‘muscular liberalism’, that some Western leaders “claimed to infuse their actions with moral considerations that go beyond, and help to redefine, the national interest of their respective countries,” as manifested in humanitarian interventions and human rights conditionalities in foreign aid, for instance. The ‘golden era’ of the rules-based world order from 1989 to 2009 saw a raft of normative institutions and innovations, including the International Criminal Court, new UN peacekeeping missions, and the expansion and consolidation of women’s and LGBT rights. Yet while few dispute the benign intent and impact of value-driven social movements such as Doctors Without Borders, “What remains controversial is the extent to which governments can transmogrify into moral actors in international society.”⁵⁷ Especially when the strategic context has radically shifted, placing democratic states on the defensive.

By traditional realist logic, “combining ethics and foreign policy is a category mistake, like asking if a knife sounds good rather than if it cuts well, or whether a broom dances better than one that costs more,” notes one analyst. “So, in judgingforeign policy, we should simply ask whether it worked, not whether it was moral.”⁵⁸ Yet it is precisely the practical, real-world outcomes of values-based foreign policy that has generated skepticism, if not pushback, among practitioners and public alike.

⁵² Laqueur, Walter. 2015. *Putinism: Russia and Its Future with the West*; London: Dunne. Shandra, Alya and Robert Seely, *The Surkov Leaks, The Inner Workings of Russia’s Hybrid War in Ukraine*, RUSI, July 2019. https://rusi.org/sites/default/files/201907_op_surkov_leaks_web_final.pdf.

⁵³ Charles Parton, *China–UK Relations Where to Draw the Border Between Influence and Interference?*, RUSI, February 2019, <https://rusi.org/publication/occasional-papers/china-uk-relations-where-draw-border-between-influence-and>

⁵⁴ Walker, Christopher. “What Is ‘Sharp Power?’” *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 29 no. 3, 2018, p. 923. doi:10.1353/jod.2018.0041.

⁵⁵ Brady, Anne-Marie. 2007. *Marketing Dictatorship: Propaganda and Thought Work in Contemporary China*, London: Rowman & Littlefield.

⁵⁶ Alexander Cooley, “Authoritarianism Goes Global: Countering Democratic Norms,” *Journal of Democracy* 26 (July 2015): 49–63.

⁵⁷ Chandler, David and Volker Heins (eds.). 2016. *Rethinking Ethical Foreign Policy Pitfalls, Possibilities and Paradoxes*. London: Routledge.

⁵⁸ Nye, Joseph. 2005. *Soft Power: The Means To Success In World Politics*. New York: Public Affairs.

The US administrations of Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama each adopted foreign policies that privileged the promotion of American values over vital national security interests, not least in their efforts to democratise foreign states, and all three presidents failed.⁵⁹ Similarly, the huge human and financial costs of the international community's engagement in Afghanistan caused other analysts to insist that the 'liberal world order' is not an entity of fixed *principles* but comprises two different strains: a 'liberalism of imposition' - activist, interventionist, and committed to the aggressive promotion of liberal values; and a 'liberalism of restraint' - moderate, empathetic, and non-interventionist.⁶⁰

Consequently, over the past decade, US foreign policy has witnessed a transition from *transformational* diplomacy to *transactional* relations, an approach that shamelessly elevates economic and security interests over ideals.⁶¹ Even the administration's critics concede that the end of the era of Pax Americana places the US – like other democracies – at a watershed and confronting fresh strategic choices. “Does the United States reaffirm itself to the cause of freedom, human dignity, and democracy at home and abroad—or allow it to be chipped away? Does it compromise the values, promises, and foundational liberties etched in the US Constitution because of the latest insult or opportunity that arises?”⁶²

Developments in the US also suggest the need to reconsider the domestic consensus or social contract underpinning foreign affairs and, by extension, the credibility of a values-based foreign policy. There is an emerging bipartisan view that US foreign engagement should be reviewed with a “focus on how foreign policy connects to the doorstep issues of average Americans” which would also reflect “renewed suspicion of losing sovereignty or decision-making to bodies beyond voters’ reach and control.”⁶³

With the multipolar alternative to the post-war liberal rules-based order yet to take definitive form; it is imperative that the UK plays a role by asserting its interests and values in shaping its institutional contours and content. Whether or not ethical principles in foreign affairs are, as former UK foreign minister William Hague suggested, “part of our national DNA,” concern for democracy and human rights, “while not always in the mainstream of British policy-making historically”, has been a consistent strand of foreign policy in support of such values as national self-determination – from the Greeks in the 1820s and Gladstone’s support for Italian unification through Versailles and the Balkans more recently.⁶⁴

The insistence that values and interests are readily conflated, merged or otherwise reconciled tends to disguise the political considerations driving policy choices.⁶⁵ Yet the likely efficacy of a values-based foreign policy rests on more than the bipolar choice between geopolitical calculations and humanitarian principles, but on balancing the three dimensions of intentions, means and consequences, perhaps by means of an ‘ethical scorecard.’⁶⁶

The primary principles of British foreign policy include a commitment to rule of law, not least to international law as embodied in treaties and the application of human rights law through such

⁵⁹ Mandelbaum, Michael. 2016. *Mission Failure: America and the World in the Post-Cold War Era*. New York: Oxford University Press.

⁶⁰ Sørensen, Georg. 2011. *A Liberal World Order in Crisis: Between Imposition and Restraint*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press. 37.

⁶¹ The normally sympathetic Wall Street Journal wrote of Trump’s response to the murder of Saudi dissident Jamal Khashoggi that ‘we are aware of no President, not even such ruthless pragmatists as Richard Nixon or Lyndon Johnson, who would have written a public statement like this without so much as a grace note about America’s abiding values and principles.’

⁶² Ian Bremmer and Joe Kennedy III, *Time for a New U.S. Foreign Policy Narrative: A Better Alternative to Trump's "America First"*, *Foreign Affairs*, April 2018, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2018-04-30/time-new-us-foreign-policy-narrative>

⁶³ Nikolas K Gvosdev, *Can a 'Trumpian' Foreign Policy Stick?*, *The National Interest*, November 2019, <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/can-trumpian-foreign-policy-stick-95196>.

⁶⁴ –Cited in Edmunds, Timothy, Jamie Gaskarth; Robin Porter (eds). *British Foreign Policy and the National Interest. Identity, Strategy and Security.*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 125

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, p.124

⁶⁶ Nye, Joseph. 2020. *Do Morals Matter: Presidents and Foreign Policy From FDR to Trump*. New York: Oxford University Press, (especially Context of choices and Ethical Scorecards, pp.35-42).

institutions as international courts and dispute resolution forums. But for a more comprehensive list, we might consider the 'strategic priorities' outlined in the 2005/06 FCO budget lines for 'Delivering Foreign Policy/Administration' since "the principles encompassed in these objectives are as close as it may be possible to come to an explicit statement of the UK's national interests as they relate to our foreign policy".⁶⁷

- Making the world safer from terrorism and weapons of mass destruction
- Protection of the UK from illegal immigration, drug trafficking and other international crime
- An international system based on the rule of law, which is better able to resolve disputes and prevent conflicts
- An effective EU in a more secure neighbourhood
- Promotion of UK economic interests in an open and expanding global economy
- Sustainable development underpinned by democracy, good governance and human rights
- Security of UK and global energy supplies
- Security and good governance for the UK's overseas territories

The policy-implementation of these principles is, of course, problematic. In some circumstances, they may clash, in line with Isaiah Berlin's observation that desirable values may be incompatible. Nevertheless, given these provisos, priorities for advancing a values-based foreign policy in the new environment of strategic competition should include:

- **Cultivating democratic solidarity:** Confronting the authoritarian resurgence requires a renewed commitment to democratic solidarity – to enhance deeper cooperation with fellow democracies (not least in such fora as the UN Human Rights Council) and with liberal forces in civil society and liberal to establish a liberal bulwark. This demands a multidimensional approach, employing the tools of 'transformational diplomacy' in bilateral relations, multilateral institutions and ad hoc networks.
- **Reforming global governance:** In a world of strategic competition, growing inequality, and rapid technological innovation, "where ideologies as well as pathogens spread with viral ferocity....the stakes are too high and the consequences too dire to simply stick with what worked in the past and hope for the best."⁶⁸ A values-based foreign policy that seeks to defend liberal norms and democratic institutions requires institutional innovation and political creativity. Western policymakers deluded themselves that the trade and economic benefits of globalisation and the moral magnetism of their soft power would eventually convert autocratic rivals into liberalised partners.⁶⁹ Yet *the record of multilateral institutions, from the UN to the WTO, shows that relatively few states respect the liberal principles that maintain the international system. Consequently, a 'smaller, deeper liberal order' of industrialised democracies would "reaffirm liberal principles while limiting the scope and membership of liberal order to shore up its integrity, legitimacy, and resilience,"* argues a former National Security Council official in the Bush and Obama administrations.⁷⁰
- **Reform the Community of Democracies:** British diplomats are reportedly promoting a new forum of leading democracies, the D-10, designed to establish a bulwark against resurgent authoritarianism.⁷¹ This initiative echoes recent for a formal D-10 to function as a "steering committee of the democratic core of the rules-based global system", alongside an Alliance of Free Nations, a free world technology alliance and a Free World Free Trade Agreement to "strengthen coordination among democracies and facilitate the sharing of best practices

⁶⁷ Edmunds, et al, op. cit, 124.

⁶⁸ Schadlow, op. cit.

⁶⁹ Leonard, Mark. 2006. *Why Europe Will Run the 21st Century*. New York: Public Affairs.

⁷⁰ Miller, Paul D. 2016. *American Power and Liberal Order: A Conservative Internationalist Grand Strategy*. Washington, DC; Georgetown University Press.

⁷¹ Ben Judah, Surprise! Post-Brexit Britain's foreign policy looks a lot like the old one, Washington Post, July 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/07/13/surprise-post-brexit-britains-foreign-policy-looks-lot-like-old-one/>

across democracies.”⁷² The UK should work with its partners to expand G-7 activities and membership, adding consolidated democracies such as Australia and South Korea, converting the G-7 into a D-10 to refashion a global order that defends liberal principles.⁷³ The UK should act as a catalyst in reforming and complementing the current Community of Democracies (CD) into a more streamlined, action-focused hub by tightening membership criteria and establishing an action agenda on the theme of Defending Democracy, providing expertise and technical assistance on such shared strategic challenges as electoral interference, disinformation, corruption and kleptocratic influence. In collaboration with the Alliance for Democracies and the Club of Madrid, it would constitute a forum for established democracies to support and ‘socialise’ leaders of emerging democracies.

- Promote ad hoc collaboration among democracies to address strategic challenges:** Autocratic powers like Russia and China have formed alternative organisations, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), to elevate the principles of sovereignty and ‘civilisational diversity’ to counter prevailing international liberal norms. The SCO has even acted as a pole of attraction for established democracies such as India and NATO member Turkey, which has promoted the SCO as an alternative to EU membership. Given the limitations of formal multilateral institutions in defending liberal norms and holding transgressors of international law to account, international cooperation on major global challenges is likely to be driven primarily by ‘*mission-driven coalitions*’ and similar flexible arrangements of like-minded states.⁷⁴ Regional groupings for which democracy is a defining criterion of membership, such as the Organization of American States, the African Union, and NATO, and the EU are suited “to act on challenges where democratic principles make a qualitative difference, such as corruption, development, humanitarian crises, and cybersecurity.”⁷⁵

If a state’s global ‘soft power’ draws on three principal resources - culture, political values, and foreign policy – the UK is in an enviable position relative to most other states.⁷⁶ The UK still sits at the hub of Winston Churchill’s “three majestic circles” of Europe, the global Commonwealth and the transatlantic axis or ‘Anglosphere’ - a pivot of more strategic value than a mere bridge between Europe and the US through which the UK can deploy its global assets. “A global language. Global businesses and NGOs. And global networks....Britain as a global hub, promoting our values and interests on the global stage.”⁷⁷

Taking advantage of its strategic position at the nexus of robust European, Atlantic and Commonwealth networks - the UK is well-positioned to act as the catalyst for a new constellation of democracies – complementing and consolidating current alliances such as NATO and the G-7. Embedded in a firm commitment to core democratic values, such initiatives would serve as the institutional embodiment of liberal democratic norms, while constituting a potent countervailing power to autocratic states and malign non-state actors alike.

⁷² Jeffrey Cimmino, Rebecca Katz, Matthew Kroenig, Josh Lipsky and Barry Pavel, A global strategy for shaping the post-COVID-19 world, Atlantic Council, July 2020, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/a-global-strategy-for-shaping-the-post-covid-19-world/>

⁷³ G. John Ikenberry, The Next Liberal Order: The Age of Contagion Demands More Internationalism, Not Less, Foreign Affairs, July/August 2020, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-06-09/next-liberal-order>

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Center for American Progress

⁷⁶ Nye, *ibid.*

⁷⁷ BBC News Channel, Miliband urges Labour enthusiasm, January 2008, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/7197467.stm



3. Developing domestic foundations for a values-based UK foreign policy

By Dr Jonathan Gilmore⁷⁸

The Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy, provides a welcome opportunity for a comprehensive review of the UK's positioning in world politics. It comes at a pivotal time, for the UK's foreign policy direction after Brexit and in a period where the liberal international order is fragmenting.

This essay emphasises the importance of a continued focus in UK foreign policy on the promotion of values and ethical responsibilities beyond its borders. Climate change, human rights abuse, pandemic disease, refugee flows and global poverty, create important moral imperatives for the UK to act towards a world common good. The international landscape continues to be one of shared problems that require a collective response.

The essay argues firstly that the Integrated Review provides an important moment of reflection to consider the precise relationship between values and the narrower national interests. Values and interests are not always harmonious or mutually reinforcing, and clearer mapping of the relationship is important in establishing the credibility of these commitments. Care must be taken that the language of 'enlightened national interest' is not used to disguise the pursuit of narrower priorities.

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Secondly, the Integrated Review also takes place in a domestic political context of significant societal division on the UK's positioning towards the outside world and its responsibilities to those beyond its borders. Rifts that became pronounced over Britain's EU membership continue to limit the likelihood of reliable domestic consensus on foreign policy priorities, whether it is the interests to be pursued, the values to be promoted or the acceptable extent of responsibilities to non-citizens.

Without a reliable domestic foreign policy consensus, governments will find it difficult to marry the ends sought in foreign policy with means that are politically acceptable to diverse opinion groups within the UK. Whilst the Integrated Review will understandably focus on capabilities for hard and soft power projection internationally, the UK's internal dynamics will be a key factor in enabling or constraining these capabilities.

The Role of Values in UK Foreign Policy

The idea of a 'foreign policy with an ethical dimension' was prominently associated with foreign secretary Robin Cook and the initial foreign policy of the Labour party, following their 1997 election victory. The foundation of DFID, the production of annual human rights reports, limitation of UK arms sales to authoritarian states, and support for humanitarian intervention were key features of this agenda.⁷⁹

The key precepts of Labour's 'ethical' foreign policy have survived successive changes of government and were embraced as the 'values' agenda within Conservative foreign policy, including maintaining the UK's commitment to international development spending and expanded commitments to civilian protection and the Responsibility to Protect.⁸⁰

For both parties, foreign policy narratives have been shaped around the promotion of liberal values - support for a 'rule-governed' international order, the expansion of democracy, the protection of human rights and the promotion of human well-being through international development. Foreign policy informed by these values requires the UK to think beyond its own immediate national interests, to consider ethical responsibilities to people and communities beyond its borders. This has fed through into the current Global Britain agenda, with continued emphasis on the promotion of values, the defence of the rules-based system and acting as a 'moral compass to champion causes that know no borders'. Human rights, development and the promotion of democracy remain ostensibly central to this agenda.⁸¹

The Integrated Review marks an important hinge point for UK foreign policy and an opportunity to better define the role of values in UK foreign policy and their relationship to the national interest. A foreign policy informed by values will be fundamentally important in enhancing its position as a responsible state contributing towards a world common good.

Global problems of climate change, population displacement, large-scale human rights abuse and pandemic disease can neither be contained within state borders, nor solved by individual states alone. Britain's withdrawal from the EU and the re-assertion of its sovereignty, do not change the realities of the contemporary global problems it faces. Developing an effective response to these problems will continue to require collective action, informed by a worldly moral compass.

⁷⁹ See Robin Cook "British Foreign Policy", speech given on 12th May, 1997; Tony Blair, "The Doctrine of the International Community", speech given at the Economic Club, Chicago, 24th April 1999

⁸⁰ William Hague, "Britain's values in a networked world", speech given at Lincoln's Inn, 15th September 2010; Jonathan Gilmore, "Still a 'Force for Good'? Good International Citizenship in British Foreign and Security Policy", *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 17(1), 2015, pp. 106–129; Matt Beech & Peter Munce, "The place of human rights in the foreign policy of Cameron's conservatives: Sceptics or enthusiasts?", *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 21(1), 2019, pp. 116–131

⁸¹ Dominic Raab, "Foreign Secretary's introduction to the Queen's Speech debate", 13th January 2020; Jeremy Hunt, "An invisible chain: speech by the foreign secretary", Policy Exchange, 31st October 2018; HM Government, *National Security Capability Review*, (London: Cabinet Office, 2018), p. 7

What is an 'enlightened national interest'?

There has been a marked tendency by successive governments to suggest the UK pursues an 'enlightened' national interest, where the political and economic interests can be reconciled in a mutually reinforcing relationship with global ethical responsibilities.⁸² The UK is not alone in this ambition, with a range of other states having similarly reconstructed their national interest to align with global ethical responsibilities.⁸³

There is no intrinsic tension between national interest, the promotion of values and global ethical commitments, whether related to human rights, international development or environmental protection. However, there has been little clarity in recent UK foreign policy on the precise relationship between national interests and global ethical commitments, or how they may support one another. This lack of clarity has been carried forward in the 'Global Britain' agenda, which unproblematically marries a 'buccaneering' approach to free trade, with continued support for human rights, democratisation and development.

Assuming an automatically mutually reinforcing relationship between national interest and global ethical responsibilities, obscures the common tensions that often emerge between them. Inconsistencies between Britain's professed support for human rights and its pursuit of narrower national commercial interests have been consistently evident in its sales of weapons to regimes with exceptionally poor human rights records.⁸⁴

Similar tensions have been evident in British advocacy of humanitarian intervention and the Responsibility to Protect. In both Libya and Syria, concerns for national interest and about the risk of ground-level entanglements have heavily tempered the approach of the UK to violence against civilians. Modes of intervention, to protect civilians or address other security concerns, have been limited primarily to the use of airpower, with questionable overall effect in creating a longer term secure and protective environment.

Compromises between national interests and global ethical responsibilities may be necessary in some cases. However, continuing to suggest a near symbiotic relationship between Britain's interests and the values it promotes in its foreign policy, risks strategic incoherence as resources and political will fail to match the ends sought. Acting at odds with the values and global ethical commitments the UK professes to support, creates an obvious image of inconsistency with the likely consequence of reducing its soft power and ability to promote international norms of conduct.

It is vitally important that the Integrated Review considers how different areas of foreign policy responsibility relate to one another – where national interest and values-based commitments complement one another, and where they may conflict. This would acknowledge more honestly, rather than seek to obscure, the tensions between different priorities in UK foreign policy. Doing so would establish a clearer link between the ends sought and the resources necessary, and create a path towards more consistent and effective foreign policy practices.

Values-based Foreign Policy for a Disunited Kingdom?

Less commonly explored in discussions about future UK foreign policy, is its relationship with shared societal values and the domestic political context *within* Britain. The tension between national interest and the global ethical responsibilities, sits alongside entrenched internal divisions about

⁸² Jonathan Gilmore, "The Uncertain Merger of Values and Interests in UK Foreign Policy", *International Affairs*, 90(3), 2014, pp. 541-557

⁸³ See Alison Brysk, *Global Good Samaritans*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009)

⁸⁴ Committees on Arms Export Controls, *First Joint Report of the Business, Innovation and Skills, Defence, Foreign Affairs and International Development Committees of Session 2013-14: Volume I*, (London: TSO, 2013), pp. 29-32

Britain's role in the world. Evidence from before and after the 2016 referendum, reveals significant divides in public opinion on foreign policy priorities, between approaches confined to the pursuit of narrow economic interest and those informed by values-based commitments. Socio-economic class, age and regional location indicate divergent priorities amongst key demographics.⁸⁵

The 2016 referendum itself was an important driver for the emergence of distinctive identity communities within the UK, reflected in polarised attitudes towards global governance, immigration and the appropriate positioning of Britain in world politics. Far from resolving this polarisation, the outcome of the referendum and the protracted withdrawal negotiations have further cemented these identities.

It is impossible to wholly disengage a post-Brexit strategy for UK foreign policy from some of the populist nationalist rhetoric that surrounded the EU referendum campaign. Hostility to global governance, immigration and rules constraining British sovereignty that characterised strands of the pro-leave campaigns, reflect some commonalities with what has been identified in recent research as a broader global trend in 'reactionary internationalism'.⁸⁶ Reactionary internationalism emphasises the need to unshackle the state from the constraints of the liberal international order. Frequent allusions to Britain's imperial heritage and metaphors of the UK "re-emerging after decades of hibernation" and "leaving its chrysalis", in speeches promoting the Global Britain agenda, promote the idea of a state breaking free from external constraints on its sovereignty.⁸⁷ An unresolved tension has emerged, between strands of thinking that emphasise national sovereignty and freedom of action, and other strands which see the appropriate place of the UK at the centre of a rules-based international order that by nature constrains foreign policy and emphasises global ethical responsibilities.

Domestic polarisation and fragile internal consensus on global ethical commitments has particular implications for foreign policy activities that have a large potential financial cost, commitment burden and/or require consistent public support over time. Public spending on international development is a key area of contestation between segments of the public that see development as an important global ethical priority for the UK, and those who feel the money would be better spent on British citizens.

Weak domestic consensus on foreign policy priorities has similar implications for intervention and the use of force in UK foreign policy. Recent research and investigations by the Defence Committee have highlighted the challenges in developing reliable public support for armed humanitarian interventions.⁸⁸

The Integrated Review must clearly consider international conditions and UK capabilities that stand to affect foreign policy. However, it must also appreciate the problem of a divided domestic landscape and consider how a more stable domestic consensus could be developed on foreign policy priorities, practices and Britain's position in world politics.

The COVID-19 pandemic is likely to do little to develop a more stable domestic consensus. It has the potential to further enlarge the divide between sections of the public who see the need for

⁸⁵ Chatham House/YouGov, *British Attitudes Towards the UK's International Priorities: General Public Survey Results*, London: Chatham House, 2014; Edward Elliott and Sophia Gaston, *Behind Global Britain: Public opinion on the UK's role in the world*, (London: British Foreign Policy Group/BMG Research/Henry Jackson Society, 2019)

⁸⁶ Pablo de Orellana and Nicholas Michelsen, "Reactionary Internationalism: the philosophy of the New Right", *Review of International Studies*, 45(5), 2019, pp. 748-767

⁸⁷ Boris Johnson, "PM speech in Greenwich", 3rd February 2020

⁸⁸ House of Commons Defence Committee, *Intervention: Why, When and How?*, HC952, (London: TSO, 2014); Graeme Davies and Robert Johns, "R2P from Below: Does the British public view humanitarian interventions as ethical and effective?", *International Politics*, 53(1), 2016, pp.118-137; Jamie Gaskarth, "The fiasco of the 2013 Syria votes: decline and denial in British foreign policy", *Journal of European Public Policy*, 23(5), 2016, pp. 718-734

expanded global connection to respond and recover from the crisis, and those who see it as cause for a strong refocussing on narrower national interests.

Previous investigations by Parliamentary committees have tentatively started to address the way in which the public engages with foreign policy and the importance of a clear narrative about the UK's foreign policy objectives.⁸⁹ The Global Britain agenda appears to be an attempt to provide a unifying narrative, directed at a polarised internal audience, to reconcile conflicting preferences about Britain's international positioning. However, a narrative generated by foreign policy elites, is unlikely by itself to resolve tensions between divergent and entrenched views about the UK's national priorities amongst the public. Concerningly, when responding to the Foreign Affairs Committee's 2018 report on Global Britain, the government neglected to answer the direct question of "what does Global Britain mean to the people of the UK"?⁹⁰

Developing a more stable domestic consensus for future UK foreign policy strategy requires a large-scale programme of public diplomacy, but one directed at the British, rather than overseas publics. The objective of such an exercise would be to better understand the way in which national interest, values and overseas ethical commitments are understood and prioritised by the public. In keeping with the emergence of 'dialogue-based public diplomacy', such an exercise must be a process of listening as well as persuasion.⁹¹

The desired outcome of such a process would be a values-based foreign policy, underpinned by stronger domestic legitimacy and a clearer sense, amongst both the public and policymakers, of how the UK's foreign policy priorities relate to one another.

Conclusion and Recommendations

- The promotion of values in UK foreign policy will be fundamentally important in helping to define Britain's place in the world after Brexit, and to enhance its position as a responsible state contributing towards a world common good.
- UK foreign policy strategy has consistently internalised unresolved tensions between the pursuit of national interests and the global ethical responsibilities created by the promotion of 'values'. The recurrent suggestion has been that values and interests are mutually reinforcing. However, this assumption obscures the tensions that frequently exist in practice. This risks strategic incoherence as resources and political will fails to match the ends sought.
- The Integrated Review must examine the specific relationship between its understanding of national interest and the values or global ethical commitments it seeks to pursue. The tensions between different priorities in UK foreign policy must be acknowledged and accounted for more openly.
- Current UK foreign policy strategy has also paid very little attention to the absence of a stable domestic consensus on Britain's role in the world and the significant internal divisions that have endured following the 2016 referendum. The absence of a stable domestic consensus on foreign policy has significant implications for costly or complex foreign policy activities, like armed intervention or stabilisation, which require robust public support. Developing a more reliable domestic consensus in support of UK foreign policy, would benefit from a large-scale programme of public diplomacy directed toward British, rather than overseas publics.

⁸⁹ House of Commons Defence Committee, *Intervention*, p. 20; House of Lords Select Committee on International Relations, *UK Foreign Policy in a Shifting World Order*, HL250, 2018, p.96

⁹⁰ House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, *Global Britain: Government Response to the Sixth Report of the Committee*, HC 1236, p. 5

⁹¹ Shaun Riordan, "Dialogue-based Public Diplomacy: a New Foreign Policy Paradigm?" in Jan Melissen (Ed.) *The New Public Diplomacy*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2005), pp. 180-195



4. Communitarian foreign policy: Ethics and public opinion

By Dr Jamie Gaskarth⁹²

Summary

- Ethics are a fundamental aspect of foreign policy, not an add-on.
- They should be grounded in the relationship between government and the governed.
- This would involve far more engagement with the public to gauge their needs and wants and align policy accordingly.

What do we mean by ethics?

Ethics are about deciding what the right thing to do is, given the circumstances. Foreign policy involves making these choices continually as part of the normal process of government. As such, ethics are not a 'dimension' of foreign policy, nor an optional add-on, they are integral to its operation.

Ethics are distinct from laws or rules. There has been a tendency for law to creep into government decision-making as a proxy for ethical reasoning. Decisions on the use of force are subject to legal approval and that is a useful benchmark for what is appropriate; but morality and legality should not be conflated. Breaking the law could sometimes be the right thing to do, to prevent a greater harm or allow the law to evolve. For example, the Independent International Commission on NATO's intervention in Kosovo in 1999 described the operation as "illegal but legitimate" because diplomacy

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had run its course and it ended the oppression of the Albanian community. David Cameron rejected the idea that one of the Permanent Five members of the UN Security Council could veto military action in Syria in 2013, despite that being enshrined in the UN Charter.⁹³

British foreign policy-makers often assert they support a rules-based international system.⁹⁴ What the above examples show is that we do so because we assume that those rules align with our values.⁹⁵ Where they do not, we are willing to break them. For the most part, this is not a problem since we set many of the rules in our favour and they continue to serve our interests. But, with the rise of China and India and a resurgence of authoritarian rule across the world, we face the prospect of an international order whose rules could be hostile to our values.⁹⁶

In short, ethics, not laws or rules, underpin UK foreign policy.

Whose ethics?

There are many things that influence our sense of right and wrong and what is appropriate behaviour. In the foreign policy realm, two ethical frameworks operate in tandem: Communitarian ethics and Cosmopolitan ethics.⁹⁷ For Communitarians, the primary ethical duty of the policymaker is to look after the interests of their citizens. For Cosmopolitans, the aim is to advance the interests of their fellow human beings globally.⁹⁸

After the Cold War, commentators got carried away thinking the second ethic was rendering the first redundant. It was not. States continue to be key actors, even when responding to transnational issues such as the 2008 financial crisis and the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. Most people still identify with, and value, their national identity.⁹⁹ National leaders have to make choices about how to allocate resources but Cosmopolitanism struggles to explain which to prioritise. If all human beings have an ethical claim on us on the basis of their common humanity, then much of what the state does, from border policing and defence to welfare and social security spending could be seen as unethical since it favours one group in particular. Furthermore, whenever and wherever human rights abuses occur, the UK government would be obligated to respond. That is impractical for a medium-sized power which has suffered two catastrophic economic shocks in recent years.

Cosmopolitanism is useful in encouraging policy-makers to adopt a more long term and less parochial view of their interests. Cosmopolitan ethics favour global public goods like international law, security, development and human rights which help to create a better environment for UK people to live, work and travel within. Yet, with fewer resources due to our relative decline, we now have less scope for international action. We therefore need a clearer rationale for why we act.

⁹³ 29 August, Column 1429, <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmhansrd/cm130829/debtext/130829-0001.htm>.

⁹⁴ Field, M. 'Global Britain: supporting the Rules Based International System', 17 August 2018, <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/global-britain-supporting-the-rules-based-international-system>; https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/548740/RBIS-S-01_RBIS_Fund_-_RBIS_Programme_Strategy.docx; <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/rules-based-international-system-conference>; <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201719/ldselect/ldintrel/250/25004.htm>

⁹⁵ Chalmers, M. 'Which Rules? Why There is No Single 'Rules-Based International System' RUSI Occasional Paper, April 2019, https://rusi.org/sites/default/files/201905_op_which_rules_why_there_is_no_single_rules_based_international_system_web.pdf

⁹⁶ Freedom House reports a 14 year decline in democratic rule, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2020/leaderless-struggle-democracy>

⁹⁷ Linklater, A. *The Transformation of Political Community*. Polity, 1998.

⁹⁸ The Ancient philosopher Diogenes of Sinope, when asked where he came from, is said to have replied he was a 'kosmopolitês' or citizen of the world.

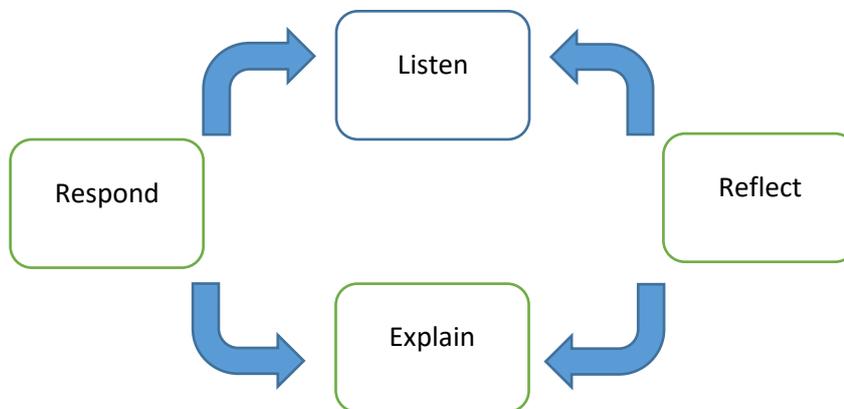
⁹⁹ In a June 2020 YouGov poll, 67% of people felt fairly or very proud to be British, <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/travel/survey-results/daily/2020/06/25/31f14/2>. In a BFGP survey in June 2020, 54% of respondents self-identified as a patriot compared to 40% as a global citizen, <https://bfgp.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/BFGP-Annual-Survey-Public-Opinion-2020-HR.pdf>

The logical basis for a reformulated foreign policy is to refocus on the needs and wants of the British public. This Communitarian approach sees the key ethical relationship as being between the government and its citizens.¹⁰⁰ For that to work, the Integrated Review has to establish a more systematic approach to understanding public attitudes and desires and responding to them. The Review also needs to provide a more rigorous framework for defining the public interest, especially when action is necessary to support this against the tide of public opinion.

A Communitarian foreign policy: engaging the public in foreign policy-making

To strengthen the ethical relationship between the public and the government acting on their behalf, foreign policy-makers need to make greater efforts to solicit public opinions. The government's loss of a parliamentary vote on Syria in 2013 and the referendum result of 2016 suggest the public is having an increasing influence on foreign policy issues. It is therefore imperative to align foreign policy with public opinion in advance; or anticipate opposition so that steps can be taken to alleviate its effects. Furthermore, the extent of immigration in recent decades means that the British population has a huge resource of linguistic and cultural knowledge from which it can draw, with citizens having family links across the world.¹⁰¹ As such, engaging with the public could bring practical benefits as well as useful challenge to existing foreign policy.

Doing so entails a four stage process. Firstly, foreign policy-makers must **listen** to public views on foreign policy dilemmas. This can be done through a combination of surveys, evidence calls, opinion polling, focus groups, town hall meetings, public debates and roadshows. They should then **reflect** on the feedback they receive. This entails cross-referencing feedback from the public with official assumptions, policy and external sources. To demonstrate that they have listened and reflected, they need to **explain** the logic of the UK's policy, how it will change or stay the same following feedback, and how it serves the public interest. They then must **respond** with sensitivity to the domestic impact of policy actions.



Adapted from the Kolb Learning Cycle (1984)

In practice, the public will pay varying attention to foreign policy issues and will be affected by them in different ways. There will also be competing interests, either among different sectors and stakeholders, or between them and the broader national interest. The concept of the national

¹⁰⁰¹⁰⁰ The analogy often provided is that of a “social contract” between government and the governed, associated with Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The domestic basis to foreign policy ethics was recognised by William Gladstone, who put “Good government at home” as the first of his principles of foreign policy, ‘Right Principles of Foreign Policy’, 27 November, 1879.

¹⁰¹ According to the 2011 census, the most prevalent languages other than English were Polish, 546,174, Panjabi, 273,231, Urdu, 268,680, Bengali (with Sylheti and Chatgaya), 221,403, Gujarati, 213,094, Arabic, 159,290. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/language/articles/detailedanalysisenglishlanguageproficiencyinenglandandwales/2013-08-30>

interest is notoriously elusive but is best defined in terms of the public good¹⁰² – that is, the collective safety, prosperity and contentment of the political community of the UK.¹⁰³ The challenge is to work out how to balance the particular interests of certain sectors of the economy or society with those of the community as a whole.

To do so, policy-makers need to undertake two types of public engagement. **Comprehensive engagement**, canvassing the views of the general public, and **Targeted engagement**, soliciting the opinions of key sectors of the community who have a stake in foreign policy issues as they arise. Targeted engagement allows UK policymakers to understand the impact of UK foreign policy on sub-communities, weigh the costs and benefits to those most invested in outcomes and harness their expertise to improve policy effectiveness. However, this feedback then needs to be checked against the collective good and the broader attitudes of the community as a whole, via comprehensive engagement activities.

Adjudicating between ethical claims

The interests of sub-groups and the collective interest will not always converge and so policymakers need to decide which to favour. As defined above, those interests boil down to physical safety, economic prosperity and contentment.¹⁰⁴

Each of these categories may support or conflict with one another, either within groups or between them. Thus, a policy that brought benefit to the financial sector or arms manufacturers could bring in tax revenue and, in the case of arms, support a defence industrial base that serves national security interests. Yet, it might result in complicity in human rights abuses and have a damaging effect on the UK’s global reputation (and hence the self-esteem of the community as a whole). Obversely, human rights advocacy abroad could lead to minority communities and their families being targeted by hostile states, impacting on their safety – as in the case of the Russian, Hong Kong and Iranian diasporas.

There is no formula for weighing these considerations as it depends on the specific case. Policy may also have long or short term impacts and so time is a complicating factor. What fuller public engagement would do is provide a backdrop and reference point to assessments of the sub-group and collective interest. Policy-makers could then evaluate whether a given policy would have a net positive or negative impact on each and the degree of alignment may give an indication of its desirability. The following table illustrates this:

	Collective Interest		
Sub-Group Interest, e.g. Sector/Minority		Net Negative Impact	Net Positive Impact
	Net Negative Impact	Likely to be worth desisting.	Check benefits to collective are worth costs to sub-group.
	Net Positive Impact	Check benefits to sub-group are worth costs to collective.	Likely to be worth pursuing.

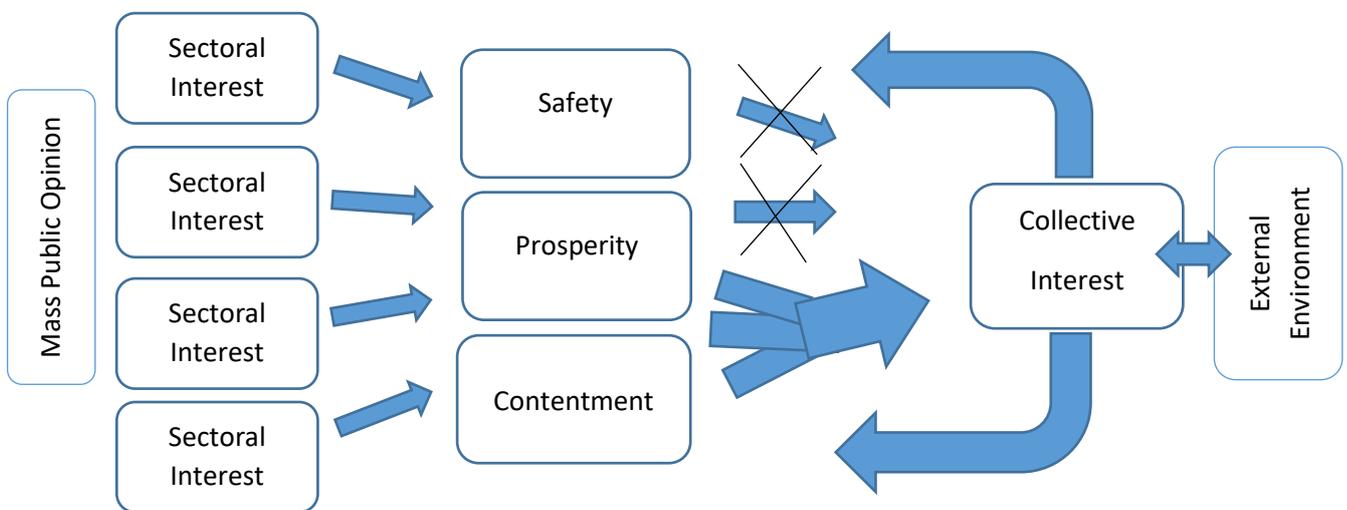
¹⁰² See Edmunds, T. Gaskarth, J. and Porter, R. *British Foreign Policy and the National Interest*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2014; Kratochwil, F. ‘On the notion of “interest” in international relations’ *International Organization*, 36,1,1982: 1-30.

¹⁰³ Contentment includes self-esteem, spiritual health, happiness, and a positive international reputation.

¹⁰⁴ This triad was recognised as far back as Thucydides, who noted that people act out of fear, interest or honour. The 2015 NSS/SDSR rendered this as security, prosperity and influence. Influence should not be an end but a means, hence why it has been substituted above by contentment.

However, in many cases the collective interest could be marginal (meaning sub-group interests are in effect the collective interest), or it may be appropriate to favour the particular interest of a sub-group, even if it entailed a collective cost, if it produced a significant benefit to that community. The granting of asylum to dissidents is one example. The key factor here would be to regularly and rigorously check the distribution of costs and benefits.

In short, deciding on what is ethical does not simply mean positing a collective interest and favouring that over international or sub-national interests. Rather, it is about weighing the relative impact of policy on different groups and balancing that with some notion of the collective interest, which itself might be fluid. The diagram below gives a flavour of the process. Sectoral interests feed into each of the three areas. Some will be marginalised whilst others will converge and achieve dominance. The dominant configuration shapes a sense of collective interest. At the same time, mass public opinion looms in the background and the external environment interacts with this understanding.



Overall, a Communitarian foreign policy focuses ethical discussion on how decisions affect domestic groups. This looks very different to a Cosmopolitan foreign policy, which would emphasise the impact on international actors. Nevertheless, it does not preclude altruistic behaviour. Britain's significant aid budget is a source of pride, which promotes domestic contentment. The advantage of a Communitarian approach is it establishes a framework for judging how to allocate resources ethically, one that fits with the UK's financial constraints.

Risks

The key risks of a Communitarian foreign policy are:

1. the marginalisation of minorities and out groups;¹⁰⁵
2. an erratic foreign policy, liable to shift when faced with difficulties; and,
3. a refusal to act on the basis of humanitarian need.

The first problem is overcome in the above formulation via the call to engage with and learn from sub-groups, rather than assume their interests are shared with the wider collective.

The second is a challenge, since public opinion can be fickle. But again, this is ameliorated by the emphasis given to reflecting on longer term trends. Furthermore, it is acknowledged that the public

¹⁰⁵ Pin-Fat, V. The metaphysics of the national interest and the 'mysticism' of the nation-state: reading Hans J. Morgenthau'. *Review of International Studies*, 2005, 217-236.

interest is not always aligned with public opinion. The latter is canvassed to resist elite capture of foreign policy and challenge assumptions, rather than wholly determine policy. Moreover, paying attention to domestic voices could mean that actions abroad are more sustainable since they align better with domestic attitudes.

Thirdly, Communitarian ethics do not mean that the UK cannot do good in the world. It is clearly in the national interest of a liberal democratic state to live in a stable international order, with more prosperity, less conflict and more freedom. But, our commitment to those public goods should always be linked back to the costs they impose on UK citizens and the benefits they afford them in turn. In doing so, this will set necessary limits on action.



5. Seeing 'I' to 'I': British support for idealism and interest-based approaches to foreign policy

By Dr Catarina P. Thomson, Prof. Thomas J. Scotto, and Prof. Jason Reifler¹⁰⁶

In the context of recent changes to the structure of the foreign policy and international aid apparatus, and considering the upcoming Integrated Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy Review, here we examine how members of the public consider two key security matters. First and foremost, what foreign policy role do members of the public think the UK military should play? Second, when it comes to the UK's overall international role, what weighs more for citizens, protection of national interests or other goals such as promoting democratisation or protecting human rights? Here we address these questions, with an eye on understanding factors that affect

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Prof Thomas J. Scotto is Dean of Learning and Teaching and Professor of Politics in the College of Social Sciences at the University of Glasgow. His work analysing British and comparative public opinion on foreign policy matters appears in peer reviewed outlets such as *International Studies Quarterly*, the *European Journal of Political Research* and *Political Behaviour*.

Prof Jason Reifler is Professor of Political Science at the University of Exeter. Prof Reifler has published over 40 peer-reviewed articles on topics such as public opinion about foreign policy, factual beliefs and misperceptions, and attitudes towards vaccines. He is PI on the ERC funded project DEBUNKER. He moved to the UK in 2013. He supports Tottenham Hotspur.

Image by DFID under (CC).

the public's opinion on these matters such as political affiliation, Brexit support, and generational divides.

Roles the UK military should play

In 2018, we asked the public (n=2,565) whether or not the UK should be willing to use military force to achieve ten different goals.

Table 1: Response Distributions: Use of the UK Military to Achieve Various Goals

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
1. Helping to Bring a Democratic Form of Government to Other Nations	15.2%	28.3	28.5	5.9	22.1
2. Combatting Global Terrorist Organisations	2.4%	6.2	38.6	40.3	12.6
3. Promoting and Defending Human Rights in Other Countries	9.0%	20.7	40.2	13.1	17.1
4. Preventing the Rise of a Hostile Superpower	4.2%	11.4	43.3	23.5	17.5
5. Preventing the Spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction	3.4%	9.4	41.4	31.8	13.9
6. Increasing International Cooperation Through Institutions Such as the United Nations	4.8%	12.2	42.4	18.9	21.8
7. Containing Chinese Military Power	9.4%	25.6	29.3	6.6	29.2
8. Supporting and Defending Allies	3.1%	8.5	53.5	19.6	15.3
9. Stopping Ethnic Cleansing.	3.5%	9.8	37.5	32.4	16.8
10. Participation in a Military Mission with a UN Mandate to Prevent a Humanitarian Catastrophe	3.3%	7.8	44.3	28.0	16.7

Notes: YouGov, September 2018 survey of adults in Great Britain; n=2,565¹⁰⁷

The main take-away point from Table 1 is that there are common consensual goals that broad sectors of the public believe the military should play. Nearly eight in ten respondents believe the military should combat global terrorist organisations, and close to three quarters of the public share the view that the military should play a role in preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction, as well as support and defend allies. A clear majority of respondents also support the military participating in operations associated with protecting vulnerable populations. Nearly three-quarters of the public (72 per cent) agreed the UK must be willing to participate in a military mission with a UN mandate to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe, and seven in ten respondents supported

¹⁰⁷ Further information on the data can be obtained from contacting Thomas Scotto on thomas.scotto@glasgow.ac.uk.

using the military to stop ethnic cleansing. Preventing the rise of a hostile superpower also receives widespread support. When excluding 'don't know' responses, the percentage of respondents agreeing with these statements outnumber the percentage disagreeing by a ratio of 5-1 or more. Ancillary analyses suggest relatively minor differences across respondents who identified with different political parties. The only real divide is over the intensity of agreement: Conservative and Labour party supporters' levels of agreement are no more than ten percentage points away from each other for all items. A note of caution is warranted in interpreting these results. While the public endorses the use of the military to achieve these goals in the abstract, we can expect that support for any specific mission will be lower as additional considerations such as opportunity costs and the prospects of success will come to the fore, potentially reducing support.

If support drops when a specific deployment is proposed, then we can see the public has particularly strong opposition to using the military to help bring a democratic form of government to other nations (34 per cent) or to contain Chinese military power (36 per cent). Opposition to using the military to install a democratic form of government is likely a reaction to the use of that rationale as a reason to intervene in Iraq. We speculate that support is low for containing Chinese military power because people do not see the Chinese military as (yet) a threat worthy of response. Interestingly, while there is consensus around specific goals associated with the promotion of human rights—stopping ethnic cleansing and preventing a humanitarian catastrophe—there are higher levels of opposition to the more general goal of protecting human rights. An open question is whether the term 'human rights' has become politicised in recent discourse in a way that elicits the activation of thinking in terms of trade-offs as opposed to the more consensual goals discussed above. One possibility is that human rights is associated with 'Europe' (the European Court of Human Rights is often misunderstood to be part of the EU). Preliminary analysis suggests some support for this view – support for using the military to promote and defend human rights in other countries is approximately 20 percentage points lower for those who support Brexit.

Weighing national interests against ideals

Since consensus may break down when trade-offs are made apparent, we designed two scenarios where supporting an idealistic position has a cost—promoting a democratic leader that does not work well with the UK and putting human rights above the interest of your own nation. Understanding citizens' views on these matters is especially salient in the context of the recent merger between the Department for International Development (DFID) and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). When the Johnson administration announced such changes in June, some argued the move ensured aid funding could be used to support wider national strategic objectives rather than being constrained by a narrow focus on poverty reduction.¹⁰⁸

When asked if a dictatorship that usually supports UK interests serves as a better ally than a democracy that usually does not support UK interests, the average response is for individuals to situate themselves towards the mid-point of the scale.¹⁰⁹ That is, people see both idealism and interests as important guideposts for foreign policy. Political ideology plays a role here: left wing voters tend to prefer allying with democracies over interests, and right-leaning voters favour putting

¹⁰⁸ Malcolm Chalmers, Farewell Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Welcome Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. RUSI *Commentary*, June 2020,

<https://www.rusi.org/commentary/farewell-foreign-and-commonwealth-office-welcome-foreign-commonwealth-and-development>

¹⁰⁹ The item asked was: "Some people think that in the long term, a dictatorship that usually supports UK interests serves as a better ally for the United Kingdom than a democracy that usually does not support UK interests. Where would you place yourself on this scale?" (scale ranged from 0 – "A dictator that usually supports UK interests" to 10 – "A democracy that usually does not support UK interests").

support for the UK's national interests more at the forefront.¹¹⁰ The Brexit-divide is also present, as members of the public who oppose Brexit lean more towards favouring alliances with fellow democracies. There is also somewhat of a generational divide, with younger voters taking a more idealistic standpoint of allying with a democracy, even if does not usually support British interests.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviations of Trade-off Questions by Grouping

Group	Dictatorship Supporting UK (0) vs. Democracy Not Supporting UK (10)	Protect National Interests (0) vs. Promoting Human Rights in Foreign Policymaking (10)
Sample Mean	5.55 (2.17)	4.76 (2.79)
Ideology:		
Far Left	6.44 (3.07)	6.19 (3.44)
Left	6.52 (2.32)	6.66 (2.57)
Centrist	5.38 (1.92)	4.51 (2.53)
Right	5.06 (1.98)	3.65 (2.44)
Far Right	4.72 (2.78)	2.99 (2.96)
Brexit:		
Right	5.01 (2.05)	3.36 (2.54)
Wrong	6.11 (2.21)	5.95 (2.57)
Generation:		
Greatest/Silent	5.19 (2.05)	3.90 (2.70)
Boomer	5.43 (2.08)	4.24 (2.79)
Gen X	5.65 (2.11)	4.81 (2.73)
Millennial/Z	5.68 (2.34)	5.48 (2.69)

Notes: YouGov, Fall 2018 survey, N=5,105. Respondents were asked to place themselves along a 0-10 continuum, here treated as continuous to derive means. Standard Errors in Parentheses.

When the trade-off between national interests and promoting democracy and human rights is presented more generally, we find similar trends.¹¹¹ The overall mean leans more towards protecting national interests than the alliance item discussed above, but remains in the centre ground. Left wing voters are more likely to take a more idealistic stance than centrists and members of the public who identify ideologically with the right (particularly the far right, who lean more towards the national interest side of the scale here than in the item discussed above). Brexit supporters privilege

¹¹⁰ Survey respondents were told: "People sometimes use the labels 'left' or 'left wing' and 'right' or 'right wing' to describe political parties, party leaders, and political ideas. Using the 0 to 10 scale below, where the end marked 0 means left and the end marked 10 means right, where would you place yourself on this scale?" Respondents were categorised by response as follows: 0-1: "Far Left"; 2-3: "Left"; 4-6: "Centrist"; 7-8: "Right"; 9-10: "Far Right".

¹¹¹ The item asked was: "Some people think that in making foreign policy decisions a more important priority should be protecting UK interests while others believe promoting democracy and human rights should be prioritised. Where would you place yourself on this scale?" (scale ranged from 0 – "Protecting UK interests should receive priority" to 10 – "Promoting democracy and human rights should receive priority").

national interests. We observe the same generational divide as in the item above, but the differences between younger and older generations are even more pronounced here.

Commentary

The British public has clear ideas about the type of roles they believe the UK military should take on. At a time in which the national security and defence sector is being reviewed and faces the prospect of significant reforms, it is important to consider there is no public appetite for a reduction in the scope of military activities. The public sees important roles for the British military – and, at least in the abstract, these extend beyond protecting Britain and the British. Not surprisingly, there is widespread support for maintaining traditional defensive capacities such as combating terrorism. What may be surprising to some is that there is also support for using the military to prevent humanitarian crises or to stop ethnic cleansing. Support for idealism in foreign policy is also seen when examining survey questions that present respondents with explicit trade-offs. Relatively small portions of the public fully embrace a foreign policy based solely on interests at the expense of supporting democracy or human rights. At the same time, interests remain a powerful consideration.

The degree of consensus across the political spectrum is high enough to be considered what political scientists refer to as ‘valence’ issues. Valence issues are common consensual goals that nearly all of the public agrees with—such as a clean environment, or quality roads. However, we also find evidence that suggests such issues may become politicised in the British context and become ‘positional’ issues where different political parties or segments of the population take opposing sides. Examples include whether abortion should be legal or whether the UK’s asylum system should be more or less restrictive. Preliminary evidence suggests this might be the case when human rights are mentioned as a broad category, instead of as something more specific like acting to stop ethnic cleansing.¹¹²

Often, policies once considered valence issues become positional when politicians ‘fill in the blanks’ and trade-offs become visible to the public or when issues become associated with specific parties and politicians so that they are seen via a partisan lens. Centre-left candidates and parties particularly are vulnerable to this phenomena—examples include the generally pro-environmental Canadian public rejecting the Liberal Party in 2008 when it proposed to replace existing taxes with carbon taxes.¹¹³ In the UK context, we find the public considers trade-offs when weighing pursuing the national interest against more idealistic objectives. Right-leaning and older voters in particular are more predisposed to factor the national interest when considering what foreign policy options the UK should pursue. It is possible that thinking in terms of such trade-offs might increase the likelihood of supporting aligning aid provision to broader national strategic interests (which has been suggested as being part of the rationale for DFID being subsumed by the FCO).

¹¹² For a detailed discussion of these two issue types, see Chapter 2 in Clarke, Harold D., David Sanders, Marianne C. Stewart, and Paul Whiteley. 2004. *Political Choice in Britain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

¹¹³ See, Jon H. Pammett and Christopher Dornan, eds. 2009. *The Canadian Federal Election of 2008*. Toronto: Dundurn Press.



6. The UK and the international rules-based system

By Dr Nicholas Wright¹¹⁴

The maintenance and enhancement of the international rules-based system (IRBS) has been an essential British interest in the 75 years since the end of the Second World War. Having contributed significantly to its construction throughout this period, the UK has been able to secure for itself a position enabling it to punch above its weight internationally. Indeed, the importance of the IRBS to the UK has only increased in a period marked by its own relative decline in power as it withdrew from empire and the era of superpower rivalry began.

As a middle-rank power with ambitions to maintain global reach, the UK today still possesses the capacity to exercise significant international influence, not least through its membership of key international institutions such as the UN Security Council. However, much of this is dependent on the maintenance and integrity of the system - i.e. it derives from the willingness of other states to remain involved in and committed to the IRBS. A rise in nationalism globally, a greater willingness by some states to act unilaterally, notably the US, and the determination of 'new' or revisionist powers such as China and Russia to challenge or re-make international structures of governance mean the IRBS that has served the UK so well is more fragile today than at any point since 1945.¹¹⁵ The UK has itself contributed to this sense of instability with its withdrawal from the EU and its difficulties in identifying a clear post-Brexit pathway for its foreign policy and diplomacy.

¹¹⁴ Dr Nicholas Wright researches national and multilateral foreign policy-making at University College London and his work focuses particularly on Britain, Germany and the EU. He has written extensively on the impacts of Brexit on UK foreign policy-making, has provided evidence for a number of parliamentary inquiries and is a regular media contributor nationally and internationally.

¹¹⁵ See, for example, Will Moreland, *The purpose of multilateralism: A framework for democracies in a geopolitically competitive world*, Brookings Institution, September 2019, <https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-purpose-of-multilateralism/>

This contribution argues, therefore, that the UK should place a renewed commitment to the efficient, effective and fair functioning of the IRBS at the heart of its post-Brexit foreign policy. This should be accompanied by a clear and unambiguous effort to provide necessary and appropriate international leadership. By doing so it can limit the risk that others see British withdrawal from the EU as part of a broader strategic retreat whilst at the same time buttressing the legitimacy of institutions that remain so vital to the UK's ability to protect and promote its national interests.

What is the International Rules-Based System?

The IRBS has evolved as a means of developing - to the extent possible - predictability and stability between states as sovereign actors.¹¹⁶ At a basic level it can be understood as encompassing three main components: (i) formal structures and institutions - e.g. the UN, IMF, WTO, etc. - and also regional organisations such as the EU, ASEAN and NATO; (ii) rules, treaties and international law - e.g. the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea,¹¹⁷ the UN Refugee Convention,¹¹⁸ or the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT);¹¹⁹ and (iii) the norms and values that have developed around and through these - e.g. support and promotion of democracy, equality, and human rights. Many of these were deliberately established and/or have evolved primarily since the end of the Second World War as a means of managing and regulating how states interact.

Tensions and disagreements are common, frequently occurring in the interpretation and contestation of norms and values. This can be seen, for example, in the contrast between states' formal representation and participation in particular organisations on the one hand; and their attitudes to the norms and values that such participation implies on the other. A state may notionally accept the norms and values a particular organisation represents, but strongly reject specific criticism of - or attempts to restrict - its own actions. It may contest the validity of certain norms and values, particularly where it is accused of violating these. A recent example is the controversy surrounding the 2015 appointment of Saudi Arabia's UN Ambassador in Geneva to chair an independent panel of experts on the UN's Human Rights Council, with some arguing that Saudi Arabia's human rights record made it inappropriate for it to hold such a post.¹²⁰

Such tensions illustrate Prof Malcolm Chalmers' argument that rather than a single IRBS, we can in fact identify three separate but interacting systems: a Universal Security System, a Universal Economic System and a Western-based system, the latter led for much of the last 75 years by the US and promoting a very particular normative perspective.¹²¹ The effectiveness of these systems in managing and mediating interactions between states - and the tensions caused by these - reflects the reality that their 'worth depends on the extent to which they serve the interests and values of the states which sustain them'.¹²² Thus, in the absence of any kind of 'world government', the IRBS functions only to the extent that states accept its legitimacy and have confidence in it.

For example, the WTO's dispute resolution system has effectively collapsed this year due to the ongoing refusal of the US to agree the appointment of new judges to its Appellate Body. The view of

¹¹⁶ Wright, Nicholas. 2019. The EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy in Germany and the UK: Co-operation, Co-optation and Competition, *New Perspectives in German Political Studies*. London: Palgrave. p.1

¹¹⁷ United Nations, United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982, February 2020, https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/convention_overview_convention.htm

¹¹⁸ UNHCR, The 1951 Refugee Convention, <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/1951-refugee-convention.html>

¹¹⁹ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), <https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/nuclear/npt/>

¹²⁰ Tom Brooks-Pollock, Anger after Saudi Arabia 'chosen to head key UN human rights panel', *The Independent*, September 2015, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/anger-after-saudi-arabia-chosen-to-head-key-un-human-rights-panel-10509716.html>

¹²¹ Malcolm Chalmers, *Which Rules? Why There Is No Single 'Rules-Based International System'*. Occasional Paper, Royal United Services Institute, April 2019, <https://rusi.org/occasional-papers/Which-Rules-Why-There-Is-No-Single-Rules-Based-International-System>

¹²² Chalmers, vii

the current US Administration is that the WTO does not serve US interests.¹²³ In response, however, a group of WTO members led by the EU have established an alternative 'multi-party interim appeal arbitration arrangement' to enable participating states to 'solve trade disputes amongst themselves', thereby reflecting their own belief in the value of maintaining the system in some form or other.¹²⁴

For the purposes of this contribution, the IRBS is discussed as a single entity. However, although space precludes a more detailed discussion of Chalmers' argument, it does serve to highlight very effectively the complexity inherent in, and ever-changing nature of, the IRBS. Most importantly, it reminds us of the challenges the UK faces in how it engages with and navigates a system characterised by multiple levels and actors, and the potential fragility of the governance structures created to facilitate this.

What approach should the UK take to the IRBS post-Brexit?

How, then, should the UK approach the IRBS and what place should it occupy in the thinking underpinning its post-Brexit foreign policy? First, we must note the important role the UK itself has played in constructing and supporting the IRBS, particularly the key multilateral institutions established after the Second World War including the UN, IMF, NATO and more recently the EU. Support for multilateralism and the maintenance of the IRBS has therefore been part of the DNA of UK foreign policy for decades with this commitment expressed in its economic, trade, defence, development and security policies as well as in its diplomacy.

In turn, the IRBS has been crucial in ensuring the UK's ongoing international influence and relevance, and thus its capacity to protect, promote and pursue its national interests. We can see this in the strong support the UK received - especially from its European partners - following the Argentine invasion of the Falkland Islands in 1982; and in the broad levels of international solidarity shown following the poisoning of the Skripals in Salisbury by Russian state actors in 2018, which resulted in the expulsion of more than 150 Russian diplomats by 29 countries and organisations.

Second, if the UK is to continue to benefit from the IRBS, its legitimacy must be maintained. This requires other states - and especially the major global powers - to remain invested in it and continue to see its benefits. Here, a brief consideration of the negotiations over Iran's nuclear programme is instructive. In a united diplomatic approach, the UK, France and Germany as the 'E3' established a diplomatic process to persuade Iran to cease nuclear enrichment and allow IAEA to monitor the development of its nuclear programme. After more than a decade of at times tortuous negotiations, and with the diplomatic process expanded to include the US, China and Russia (the other permanent UN Security Council members), as well as the EU's High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy, agreement was finally reached in 2015 on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

For all its faults, the JCPOA was a significant diplomatic achievement - at stake, after all, was the credibility of the nuclear non-proliferation regime established under the NPT, a key component of global security governance. Despite the Trump Administration's 2018 decision to withdraw the US from the JCPOA, the UK has maintained its commitment to the agreement - and thereby to ensuring that not only Iran but also China and Russia remain bound into it.¹²⁵ This was reiterated in a recent

¹²³ Jennifer Anne Hillman, A Reset of the World Trade Organization's Appellate Body, Council on Foreign Relations, January 2020, <https://www.cfr.org/report/reset-world-trade-organizations-appellate-body>

¹²⁴ Council of the European Union, Council approves a multi-party interim appeal arbitration arrangement to solve trade disputes, April 2020, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/04/15/council-approves-a-multi-party-interim-appeal-arbitration-arrangement-to-solve-trade-disputes/>

¹²⁵ See, for example: HMG, EU and UN partnership vital for rules-based international system, March 2019, <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/eu-and-un-partnership-vital-for-rules-based-international-system>

statement by the E3 in response to US attempts to reinstate sanctions on Iran: 'The E3 are committed to preserving the processes and institutions which constitute the foundation of multilateralism. We remain guided by the objective of upholding the authority and integrity of the United Nations Security Council'.¹²⁶ This example demonstrates the importance of constant engagement if the IRBS is to be sustained and the need to work closely with partners - even where, in the case of Russia, relations may be extremely difficult - if the benefits of cooperation and collective rule-making are to be achieved.

It is clear, therefore, that the maintenance of the IRBS is in and of itself a core British interest - a point recognised by the previous May government, which declared: 'The [IRBS] matters hugely to the UK. Strengthening this system, with the UN at its heart, is a key priority of British diplomacy. It enables global cooperation through which we seek to address international security and economic challenges, and also protects our values'.¹²⁷ It should therefore sit at the heart of the UK's post-Brexit foreign policy.

The ongoing Integrated Review process - examining at all aspects of UK foreign policy - provides a perfect, perhaps once-in-a-generation opportunity to do this. The lack of a comprehensive, strategic vision as to what that foreign policy entails remains problematic. Presented as 'Global Britain', to date its rhetorical ambition has not been matched by real clarity or practical detail. For example, statements such as 'Global Britain will be a force for good and an energetic champion of free trade as it pursues closer ties with international partners and embarks on a new role in the world' reveal little about the underlying strategy for how this will be achieved.¹²⁸

A focus on the IRBS provides a means for the UK to fill this intellectual and policy gap. A clear and unambiguous statement of its ongoing commitment to and championing of the IRBS, backed up by a set of concrete actions it will undertake in support - for example, a willingness to take a greater leadership role in supporting the UN's security and peacekeeping functions - will achieve a number of important objectives. First, it will send an important signal to the international community of the UK's determination to remain proactive, thereby rejecting any suggestion of a retreat into post-Brexit isolationism. Second, it will provide a clear organisational logic and focal point for policy-makers. The IRBS encompasses both the norms and values that the government currently seeks to promote, for example around human rights, and the institutional structures through which it can do this.¹²⁹ This would allow the wide range of diplomatic actions the UK currently undertakes - for example, its increased activity and profile in the UN Security Council and WTO in recent months and its imposition of the first British 'Magnitsky' sanctions on individuals for human rights abuses in July this year - to be explicitly linked to a broader strategy and narrative of international engagement rooted in the exercise of responsible power.

¹²⁶ HMG, E3 Foreign Ministers' Statement on the JCPoA, August 2020, <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/e3-foreign-ministers-statement-on-the-jcpoa>

¹²⁷ HMG, Government Response: UK Foreign Policy in a Shifting World Order, March 2019, <https://www.parliament.uk/documents/lords-committees/International-Relations-Committee/foreign-policy-in-a-changing-world/Government-Response-UK-Foreign-Policy-in-a-Shifting-World-Order.pdf>

¹²⁸ HMG, Bold new beginning for Global Britain as Foreign Secretary kicks off Asia-Pacific tour, February 2020, https://www.gov.uk/government/news/bold-new-beginning-for-global-britain?utm_source=ffc14be7-7dc8-4bd3-a3c6-7330f26e2c46&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

¹²⁹ HMG, Foreign Secretary's introduction to the Queen's Speech debate, January 2020, https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/foreign-secretary-introduction-to-queens-speech-debate?utm_source=a3595607-43bc-4211-b8a1-a0cb960369db&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

Conclusion

This year the COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated both the importance and fragility of the multilateral system and international cooperation, particularly in the face of unilateral and national(ist) approaches to crisis. In an environment in which great power politics are once again on the increase, the UK's capacity to act meaningfully and its ability to ensure its international credibility and reputation, will rest in large part on the maintenance of an effective and credible IRBS. As the government seeks to articulate a clear post-Brexit foreign policy vision for the UK, therefore, committing unambiguously in both word and deed to the IRBS must form a central element of its thinking. Doing so will go a long way to answering the key questions of what UK foreign policy is for in the 21st century and what kind of power the UK wishes to be.

Recommendations:

- The IRBS remains a crucial element in how the UK engages with the world and protects its interests internationally - placing it front and centre in the Integrated Review process will give the UK's post-Brexit foreign policy a powerful intellectual and organisational foundation.
- A priority for UK foreign policy post-Brexit must be to demonstrate that it is not withdrawing from its international obligations and will remain an active and responsible power - a focus on sustaining and strengthening the IRBS will send a powerful signal of this commitment to the international community.
- Using the IRBS as a focal point for articulating the core values of UK foreign policy, the UK should identify a set of policy priorities focused: on the leadership role it will seek to play at the UN and in other multilateral settings; how it will champion key aspects of the UN's humanitarian governance and climate change agendas; and how it will fulfil its obligations to promote and enhance international security as a permanent member of the Security Council, NATO member, etc.



7. Putting atrocity prevention at the heart of British foreign policy

By Dr Kate Ferguson¹³⁰

Of today's major and emerging crises, the vast majority – including Syria, Yemen, Libya, Myanmar, South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cameroon, Venezuela, and Xinjiang – are driven, at least in part, by the deliberate violent targeting of civilian groups by political elites. Systematic or widespread discrimination against people because of their race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexuality, political affiliation, age, disability or class has not become a challenge of the past but a common phenomenon of our modern world. Identity-based violence occurs in some form or another in all societies and as such, its prevention is something needed everywhere all of the time.¹³¹

When a state fails to protect populations within its own borders from mass atrocity crimes, the responsibility to safeguard groups at risk falls to the international community. The responsibility is at its heart a collective one and as with effective strategies for tackling other global challenges such as the climate crisis or the COVID-19 pandemic, the prevention of atrocities requires the efforts of

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¹³¹ Protection Approaches, Identity-based violence: our definition, <https://protectionapproaches.org/identity-based-violence>

many. It also requires states to adopt the means of upholding in its national policy those collective commitments – but unlike other member states the UK risks falling behind in its contributions.

When we talk about preventing mass atrocities (genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and ethnic cleansing), it is crucial to measure expectations of what outside states can do. At the same time, meeting the raised expectations on and of the international community that reflect our increasingly interconnected world demands an honest look at the gaps that exist between assurances made on the global stage to prevent crises and protect people and how states like the UK implement and integrate those commitments through their national policy. This paper sets out the growing need for the UK government to confront past failures to prevent atrocities, from Bosnia to Iraq to Syria, and embed the principles of prevention and collective responsibility through a clear, capable strategy of atrocity prevention into the heart of British policy.

Whatever the outcome of the Integrated Review and new national security strategy, the UK will need the capabilities and systems to meet the projected increase in identity-based violence, which if left unchecked will emerge as one of the defining crises of the next political era. As COVID-19's economic and political consequences deepen, climate events become more common, and democratic trends continue to move away from broad-based party politics towards exclusionary alliances, widespread and systematic identity-based violence, including mass atrocities, will become increasingly frequent. The same nexus will drive large-scale population movements, which will continue to drive exclusionary populism in developed and developing democracies.

While not a new challenge, the global incidence of mass atrocity crimes have been rising since 2011.¹³² Now COVID-19 and its consequences risks a new protracted escalation.¹³³ Already, the majority of today's refugees have fled situations of atrocity while the majority of internally displaced people have been uprooted by consequences of climate change; in 2019, nearly 2,000 natural disasters triggered 24.9 million new displacements.¹³⁴

As a state which aspires to global leadership, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, and in the interests of a secure nation, Britain can do more to confront this rising challenge. It must do more to narrow the gaps between the commitments it has made on the global stage on this agenda and their practical implementations.

This is a position shared by the British public. Expectations of the electorate continue to move towards the belief that the UK should stand up for the vulnerable abroad (87.4 per cent) and tackle 'the root causes of migration, violence and instability' (86.7 per cent).¹³⁵ 66 per cent believe it is

¹³² UN News Centre, Interview: Amid increasing suffering, responsibility to protect all the more necessary – UN Special Advisor, March 2017, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2017/03/553972-interview-amid-increased-suffering-responsibility-protect-all-more-necessary>; For a statistical overview of recent trends, see Erik Melander, *Organized Violence in the World 2015*, Uppsala Conflict Data Program, January 2015, <http://uu.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:899397/FULLTEXT01.pdf>

¹³³ Kate Ferguson, *Atrocity prevention and COVID-19: Opportunities and Responsibilities*, Briefing paper, Protection Approaches, April 2020, <https://protectionapproaches.org/ap-and-covid>; ACLED data, <https://acleddata.com/#/dashboard>

¹³⁴ The top six countries of origin for those granted refugee status in the UK in 1919 were Syria, Iran, Eritrea, Sudan, Afghanistan, Zimbabwe, House of Commons Library, "Migration statistics: How many asylum seekers and refugees are there in the UK?", March 2019, available at: <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/insights/migration-statistics-how-many-asylum-seekers-and-refugees-are-there-in-the-uk/>. UNHCR currently estimates that 45.7 million are internally displaced. <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/figures-at-a-glance.html>; see also UNHCR, *COVID-19, Displacement and Climate Change*, June 2020

<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UNHCR%20COVID-19%20Displacement%20and%20Climate%20Change%20Fact%20Sheet%20-%20June%202020.pdf>

¹³⁵ Attest and Protection Approaches, 'British society - How do you feel? 2019', social attitude survey, January 2019

important that Britain help protect people in other countries from atrocities such as genocide and ethnic cleansing.¹³⁶

All states must shoulder the burdens of preventing such atrocities and of protecting people from violent discrimination but the collective nature of these responsibilities does not dilute the function of the state as means of fulfilling shared obligations; it underscores it. Secretary General Guterres called in 2017 for member states to integrate atrocity prevention into national policy processes in order to, among other activities, 'conduct their own atrocity crimes risk assessment, identifying any protection gaps and recommending steps to close them.'¹³⁷

And yet despite growing support from ministers, parliament, atrocity prevention experts, wider civil society and the public, the UK still lacks any kind of coordinating mechanism or national strategy of atrocity prevention.

Following the ethnic cleansing and genocide of Rohingya Muslims from Rakhine province in late summer 2017, the Foreign Affairs Select Committee asked the Foreign Office to 'set out what lessons it ha[d] learned regarding atrocity prevention from these events and how these lessons will be applied in Burma and elsewhere in future.'¹³⁸ A year later, reflecting upon the UK's failures in Syria as well as Myanmar, the Committee called upon the government to 'act urgently to produce a comprehensive atrocity prevention strategy and implementation plan to ensure it moves beyond words and towards concrete actions.'¹³⁹ The Committee recommended that a draft of this strategy should be available for consultation by April 2019. Notwithstanding some important if modest steps in the right direction, no such strategy has yet emerged.¹⁴⁰

The terms of reference of the Integrated Review identifies 'increasing instability and challenges to global governance', acknowledging that '2019 recorded the highest number of state-based conflicts since 1946 and, over the last ten years, more than half the world's population lived in direct contact with, or proximity to, significant political violence.' Cabinet Office projects that by 2030, 80 per cent of the world's extreme poor will live in fragile states. This review must acknowledge that current approaches to conflict, stability and development where they focus too much on firefighting and not enough on prevention are not working.

Recent attention upon the atrocities in Xinjiang and growing debate of what more the UK can do – or should have already done – has once again exposed that the absence of such a strategy contributed to delayed, inconsistent, and ad hoc policy responses to another well-documented and ongoing pattern of widespread systemic discrimination and violence that likely meets the threshold of genocide.¹⁴¹ Without such a strategy – without applying a framework of how to help prevent future atrocities to the human rights crisis in Xinjiang, Myanmar, Syria, Cameroon or Venezuela – it is too easy to miss opportunities to influence and mitigate. Once the point of violence has been reached,

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Report of the Secretary-General, Implementing the Responsibility to Protect: Accountability for Prevention, General Assembly Security Council, August 2017,

<https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/2017%20SG%20report%20on%20RtoP%20Advanced%20copy.pdf>

¹³⁸ House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, Violence in Rakhine State and the UK's response, December 2017,

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmfa/435/435.pdf>

¹³⁹ House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, A comprehensive atrocity prevention strategy more vital than ever, says MPs, September 2018, <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/foreign-affairs-committee/news-parliament-2017/responsibility-to-protect-report-published-17-19/>

¹⁴⁰ Foreign and Commonwealth Office, UK Approach to Preventing Mass Atrocities, 16 July 2019

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-approach-to-preventing-mass-atrocities/uk-approach-to-preventing-mass-atrocities>

¹⁴¹ Kate Ferguson, What Can the UK do to Help Protect the Uyghurs? Adopt a National Strategy of Atrocity Prevention, ECR2P, August 2020, <https://ecr2p.leeds.ac.uk/what-can-the-uk-do-to-help-protect-the-uyghurs-adopt-a-national-strategy-of-atrocity-prevention/>

entry points diminish and lives have already been lost but a joined-up strategy will always help map out UK policy options and provide a process for decision-making.

An atrocity prevention strategy, rooted in a commitment to view policy choices from the perspective of making violence less likely, would help encourage more fluid policymaking better able to handle many of the current and future global catastrophic risks the Integrated Review seeks to address – be they unexpected ‘unknown unknowns’ such as the coronavirus pandemic, or expected challenges such as climate change. For example, a warmer world will change every aspect of how we live our lives, but it is in the fields of atrocity and conflict prevention that we will likely see the first and most explosive consequences. It is no coincidence that one of the largest and most dangerous regions of fragility at the moment is the Sahel area bordering upon the Sahara desert. Multiple conflicts and atrocity risks in the region, including those such as Mali or Sudan where the UK has a significant investment, have a climate component.¹⁴²

Introducing a national strategy of atrocity prevention would significantly strengthen UK Government capacity to uphold various responsibilities and commitments it has already made to protect populations from mass atrocities and as articulated in the 2005 World Summit declaration and set out in the 1948 UN Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide.¹⁴³ It would enhance UK capabilities to fulfil existing priorities such as the prevention of sexual violence in conflict, modern slavery, organised and serious crime, the protection religious freedom and belief, and of civilians in conflict.

Any such strategy would need to seek do three things:

1. Improve communication

UK missions play a key role in identifying early warning signs of mass atrocities and, in coordination with Whitehall and their local partners, devising policy options to respond. Interviews with former and current FCO and DFID staff in Myanmar and the Democratic Republic of Congo have highlighted gaps that exist between UK officials in the field and Whitehall, which mean that the urgency felt by on-the-ground personnel can be lost as the information is passed up through the bureaucracy to Ministers rather than through a distinct alert channel.¹⁴⁴ Introducing a light-touch internal model of emergency communication, accompanied by clear resources such as checklists and rapid analysis frameworks, would facilitate missions to ‘raise the red flag’ to colleagues back home, clarify tools and strategies already available, and improve joined-up communications during periods of exceptional challenge. Establishing an internal communications process would set out how to monitor imminent warning signs, triggering moments, indicators and risk factors; as well as when and how to raise the alarm – both across government and externally – and provide guidance for officials and ministers on policy options.

¹⁴² Fred Carver, As the Sahel becomes Sahara, UNA-UK Climate 2020, September 2017, <https://www.climate2020.org.uk/sahel-becomes-sahara/>

¹⁴³ UN General Assembly, 2005 World Summit Outcome: resolution / adopted by the General Assembly, 24 October 2005, https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_60_1.pdf; UN General Assembly, Prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide, 9 December 1948, https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocity-crimes/Doc.1_Convention%20on%20the%20Prevention%20and%20Punishment%20of%20the%20Crime%20of%20Genocide.pdf

¹⁴⁴ Kate Ferguson, ‘For the wind is in the palm-trees: The 2017 Rohingya atrocities and the UK approach to prevention’, Global Responsibility to Protect, *forthcoming 2021*; Alexandra Buskie, ‘Strengthening the UK’s approach to atrocity prevention in the Democratic Republic of Congo’, *Protection Approaches, forthcoming 2020*.

2. Integrate a means of prevention analysis

Whether by establishing a crosscutting analysis unit or integrating country specific frameworks, embedding the prevention systems and capabilities across government would facilitate intelligence collection and collation. It would enable HMG to conduct risk assessments of UK exposure to the possibility of complicity, undertake scenario planning, engage allies and partners, and develop the capacity to deploy civilian advisors to situations of concern. Prevention analysis is relatively low cost and should not be burdensome, although is strengthened when connected with the intelligence services.¹⁴⁵

Any uplift in the UK's current capacities would be an asset. Multiple foreign policy errors can be traced back to the absence of a coherent means of analysis focussed on the dynamics of identity-based violence and mass atrocity. No assessment of the atrocity risks were carried out by the UK government prior to its participation in NATO action in Libya, nor was there any obvious existing internal mechanism that would have been responsible for such scenario planning, precisely because the UK's disconnected approach to conflict prevention and development. Rather than be seen as a time consuming impediment in periods of urgent crisis such analysis need to become integral to the decision-making process. This gap in the UK's horizon scanning capabilities meant the cross-government Stabilisation Unit failed to include the Central African Republic in its 2013 risk analysis – despite it being a state extremely prone to atrocity crimes. By December that year, 'widespread and systematic mass atrocity crimes, including killings on the basis of religious identity, had become a feature of a crisis that was rapidly expanding in scale and scope.'¹⁴⁶

3. Institutionalise the UK's commitment to prevent atrocities

'Establishing an atrocity prevention "seat" at the policy-making table' would help maximise and coordinate contributions towards effective prediction and prevention across Government.¹⁴⁷ This could take the form of the crosscutting prevention analysis unit or be situated in a better resourced office supporting the focal point for Responsibility to Protect, a position currently occupied by the Head of the Multilateral Directorate in the Foreign Office. In reimagining the bureaucratic architecture of FCO and DFID, the Prime Minister and the new FCDO leadership have an opportunity to ensure UK staff tasked with designing and implementing policy that contributes to fulfilling Britain's responsibilities to help prevent mass atrocities are able to draw upon the full breadth of the government's tools and expertise.

With identity-based violence rising worldwide, including in many northern democracies, and with indicators of deeper, long-lasting division worsening across Europe and elsewhere, it has become necessary for states such as the UK to also focus on prevention at home in order to protect their populations, including their migrant populations. The UK also needs to get better at prosecuting suspects of international crimes in its domestic courts and safeguarding its banking system from dirty money. Whether situated in the FCDO or Cabinet Office, such a coordinating office would therefore want to bring in departments such as the Home Office and the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, the MoJ and the Treasury. At its most simple, the principles and practice of atrocity prevention need to be consciously integrated into job descriptions, job titles,

¹⁴⁵ Stephen Pomper, Atrocity Prevention Under the Obama Administration, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, February 2018, https://www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/Stephen_Pomper_Report_02-2018.pdf

¹⁴⁶ Evan Cinq-Mars, Too little, too late, Failing to prevent atrocities in the Central African Republic, Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, September 2015, <https://www.globalr2p.org/publications/too-little-too-late-failing-to-prevent-atrocities-in-the-central-african-republic/>

¹⁴⁷ Alex J. Bellamy, Mass Atrocities and Armed Conflict: Links, Distinctions, and Implications for the Responsibility to Prevent, The Stanley Centre, February 2011, <https://stanleycenter.org/publications/pab/BellamyPAB22011.pdf>. See also Wilton Park, "Prevention of mass atrocities (WP1645)", October 2018, Available at <https://protectionapproaches.org/wiltonparkreport>

and training of staff so that a prevention-first way of thinking is fully institutionalised across government.

The moment to do more

Outgoing Special Advisor to the UN Secretary General on the Prevention of Genocide, Adama Dieng, said as he stepped down from the role in August this year: 'no society is immune from atrocity crimes and their risk factors, and my conviction that the earlier and the deeper the seeds of atrocity crimes prevention are sowed, the better and more sustainable they will bear fruits.'¹⁴⁸ The COVID-19 pandemic should underline this truism.

Prevention does not necessarily require large resources but foregrounds a different way of thinking and making decisions. When the US Atrocities Prevention Board was first established under the Obama administration it was referred to as a mandate without a budget; done well, atrocity prevention should save money as well as lives.¹⁴⁹ Successful implementation of atrocity prevention requires consistent and constant effort but it works. A recent study projects that 'a 25% increase in effectiveness of conflict prevention would result in 10 more countries at peace by 2030, 109,000 fewer fatalities over the next decade and savings of over \$3.1 trillion.'¹⁵⁰ A 75 per cent improvement in prevention 'would result in 23 more countries at peace by 2030, resulting in 291,000 lives saved over the next decade and \$9.8 trillion in savings.'¹⁵¹

Programmatic efforts need to be matched by investment in the British diplomatic corps, recognising that without the diplomatic toolbox, whether cosy or coercive, on-the-ground activity will always have limits. Prevention, whether of climate change or mass atrocities, requires a holistic approach that begins in the communities most affected but promotes system changes up to the highest level.

Doing more to help prevent mass atrocities should not be a contentious agenda. Successive UK governments have reiterated their commitment to the goal. For those concerned with Britain's declining global influence, atrocity prevention has been identified as a specific contribution capable of 'demonstrating the value of the United Kingdom in international forums.'¹⁵²

Following its 2018 inquiry into the UK's Responsibility to Protect, the Foreign Affairs Committee concluded that '[e]verything we have heard as part of this inquiry has strengthened our belief that an atrocity prevention strategy is now more vital than ever.' In October that year, then Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt committed to 'doing more' on atrocity prevention.¹⁵³ During the 2019 general election, all major political parties committed to doing more to prioritise UK contributions to atrocity prevention and Policy Exchange listed an atrocity prevention strategy as one of its eight

¹⁴⁸ UN News, Profile: Taking a lead against genocide 'no society is immune' warns Adama Dieng, August 2020, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/08/1070402>

¹⁴⁹ Alex J. Bellamy, Mass Atrocities and Armed Conflict: Links, Distinctions, and Implications for the Responsibility to Prevent, The Stanley Centre, February 2011, <https://stanleycenter.org/publications/pab/BellamyPAB22011.pdf>

¹⁵⁰ Pathfinders, Forecasting the dividends of conflict prevention from 2020-2030, July 2020, https://530cfd94-d934-468b-a1c7-c67a84734064.filesusr.com/ugd/6c192f_e252b926005c47c39a815cf6da0c3086.pdf

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Jess Gifkins, Samuel Jarvis and Jason Ralph, Global Britain in the United Nations, UNA-UK, February 2019, https://www.una.org.uk/sites/default/files/UNA-UK_GlobalBritain_20190207d.pdf

¹⁵³ "An Invisible Chain": Foreign Secretary speaks on Britain's place in the world at Policy Exchange, Policy Exchange, Oct 31st 2018, <https://policyexchange.org.uk/pxevents/keynote-speech/>

priorities for the incoming Foreign Secretary.¹⁵⁴ These calls are backed by a growing coalition of organisations drawn from all corners of the UK civil society.¹⁵⁵

The UK deserves an international policy capable of predicting and preventing crises as well as responding to them, fit to meet challenges it cannot yet foresee as well as those it can. A prevention-first approach to policy thinking saves lives, money and political capital. It should be a no brainer but finding time for prevention thinking and resources for prevention implementation is difficult when the government faces increasing and urgent demands. As the Prime Minister undertakes the 'largest review of UK international policy since the Cold War' and as Whitehall makes preparations to merge the FCO with DFID, Her Majesty's Government has created a rare opportunity to assess what the risks of the future could look like; to develop an international and national security strategy in-line with those risks; and to rethink the systems and capabilities that are needed to prepare the UK to meet those challenges.

Atrocity crimes represent humanity at its worst, preventing them requires global leadership at its best. This is a calling to which the UK should aspire. The UK must take this rare moment of self-reflection of its international policy to learn from mistakes it made in Myanmar –and before it in Libya, Yemen, Syria, Bosnia, and Rwanda – and embed a national strategy of atrocity prevention in the heart of British policy.

Recommendations

- Establish a cross-cutting analysis unit and internal coordination mechanism
- Resource the office of the focal point for the responsibility to protect
- Embed a communication and alert channel connecting embassies with Whitehall and New York
- Mandate atrocity prevention training for embassy and country-desk staff in at-risk states
- Establish an external atrocity prevention advisory group to help bridge the knowledge gap

¹⁵⁴ Britain in the World Project at Policy Exchange, 8 ideas for revitalising UK foreign policy for the post-Brexit age, Policy Exchange, July 2019, <https://policyexchange.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Britain-in-the-World.pdf>; Protection Approaches working group page, <https://protectionapproaches.org/ap-working-group>, and Protection Approaches' Manifesto Review, April 2015, <https://protectionapproaches.org/news/f/protection-approaches-manifesto-review>

¹⁵⁵ Integrating atrocity prevention across UK policy: The need for a national strategy. Submission to the Integrated Review of International Policy from the UK Atrocity Prevention Working Group, August 2020 <https://protectionapproaches.org/news/f/submission-to-the-integrated-review-of-uk-international-policy>



8. Conclusions and recommendations

By Adam Hug

The core purpose of this short publication has been to try and tease out how the UK Government can decide on the values that should underpin the UK's evolving 'Global Britain' approach and to provide some suggestions of what those values should be. At the conclusion of the current Integrated Review it is to be hoped that the Government will be able to articulate a clear vision of the principles and values it seeks to support and how they fit into its wider strategic approach, something that can be fleshed out through more detailed policies and actions over the subsequent months.

As suggested in the March 2020 joint publication by the Foreign Policy Centre and Oxfam, the Government should seek to develop a succinct 'Global Britain values statement'.¹⁵⁶ For example, as Kate Ferguson points out in the area of atrocity prevention having a clearly defined strategy can help encourage more fluid and responsive policy-making. Having a clear set of core principles and priorities would make it easier to assess policy compliance and coherence against them, a 'Global Britain values test' or benchmarking process. There may be further lessons to be learned from the way in which best performing UK local authorities and government departments have developed processes to implement the 2012 Social Value Act, assessing the wider impact of a decision at the start of the process and considering cohesively how particular actions can help meet wider

¹⁵⁶ Finding Britain's role in a changing world, FPC and Oxfam, March 2020, <https://fpc.org.uk/publications/finding-britains-role-in-a-changing-world/>. Image by OPCW under (CC).

principled objectives.¹⁵⁷ Learning from best practice in social value would include ensuring that international policy decisions, aid spending, contracting and procurement incorporated:¹⁵⁸

- clear criteria in determining the (social) value goals the Government wishes to achieve;
- an understanding and explanation of the cost and practicality of targets, including where diplomatically possible transparency about the potential trade-offs;
- a clear definition of the outcomes being sought and that they are, where possible, measurable and reviewable and if necessary overtime renegotiated to meet emerging challenges;
- those implementing a policy or providing a good or service having a clear understanding the goals they are being asked to achieve and the rationale for them – where appropriate co-creating these with the Government;
- consideration of proportionality between the scale and focus of a particular action and its impact on the wider values agenda- with the weighting of values in any decision matrix varying on a case by case basis and with the political priorities of the government of the day;¹⁵⁹
- a regard for and sensitivity to local perspectives, in the community being worked in and with, whilst making decisions in line with UK and international standards;
- transparent procurement and contracting, with full compliance with anti-corruption and bribery standards both at home and abroad; and transparency of performance including publically available information about how Government money is spent; and
- those involved in decision making including all politicians, officials, contractors and other third parties, abiding by high standards of governance including the Nolan principles for standards in public life (Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership), except where there is a clear national security rationale for limiting the 'openness' dimension.¹⁶⁰

Strengthening such an approach would help give UK foreign policy, not an ethical dimension that sits as one of potentially competing criteria, but both an ethical foundation upon which its approach is based and an ethical core running through each policy providing a solid structure around which to build a Global Britain.

As to what those principles and values at the heart of the UK's future international approach should be that can be enumerated in a Global Britain values statement, the comments by the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary, and the Integrated Review high-level outcomes give a clear and understandable indicator of the Government's overall direction of travel around 'free trade, democracy, human rights and the international rule of law'.¹⁶¹ It should build on the Gaskarth's idea of the national interest as closely aligned with the concept of 'public good' – the collective safety, prosperity and contentment of the political community of the UK, though with space to consider how this relates to responsibilities to people outside its border and to the planet itself depending on the priorities of the government of the day.

¹⁵⁷ Cabinet Office, Social Value Act: information and resources, May 2016, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-value-act-information-and-resources/social-value-act-information-and-resources>; Social Value in Commissioning and Procurement, NCVO Know How, July 2019, <https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/funding/commissioning/procurement/importance-of-social-value-to-commissioning-and-procurement#>

¹⁵⁸ Many thanks to the input here of social value and procurement expert John Tizard.

¹⁵⁹ By a case by case approach it means that in practice it a greater proportion of the decision matrix would be devoted to the Government's values objectives when choosing where to deploy human rights grants funding versus the FCDO catering contract, but in the latter it could and should still seek to incorporate for example climate objectives and labour rights objectives (such as the London Living Wage) as part of the decision as values should be a core part of all decision making.

¹⁶⁰ For more information see: Committee on Standards in Public Life, The Seven Principles of Public Life, Government, May 1995, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life>

¹⁶¹ Dominic Raab – 2020 Statement on Britain in the World, UK Pol, January 2020, <http://www.ukpol.co.uk/dominic-raab-2020-statement-on-britain-in-the-world/>

This publication makes the case, both ethical and strategic, for focusing on the need to defend liberal democracy and international systems based on rules rather than zero-sum power politics. The UK can build on its strengths and expertise in civil society, academia and the legal sector to ensure human rights, rule of law, conflict and atrocity prevention are at the heart of the UK's approach. Similarly important should be building on recent progress with its transparency rules to end the UK's position and reputation as a home for dirty money, while supporting good governance and anti-corruption efforts internationally. These are not only important principles to abide by at home and abroad but they also make clear the importance of accountability and value for money to the British taxpayer.

International perceptions post-Brexit mean that, as Nicholas Wright points out, the UK needs to actively show its vision for and commitment to international institutions and some conception of a rule based international order, albeit recognising its current somewhat fragmented state.¹⁶² The UK can use the policy platform that emerges from the Integrated Review to reaffirm its commitment to multilateralism, both through existing organisations and new collaborations as discussed in future publications in this FPC project. From what can be seen so far, the Government's approach to the international systems displays a preference for looser, more fluid arrangements with a focus on trade and security (particularly in the digital sphere), adopting broadly a liberal realist¹⁶³ or liberal conservative approach to the (liberal) international order.¹⁶⁴ In theory not a million miles from the approach taken when the Conservatives first returned to Government in 2010, but with dramatic changes in practice following the departure from the EU and the closure of DFID. Having a clearly articulated set of principles to govern by would enable UK policy makers, diplomats and aid workers to effectively use the full range of tools available to the new FCDO and across government (including its newly independent trade policy) to better support the UK's values.

The publication recognises however, the need both to listen to the views of the British people and to work with them on the future direction of policy not only to improve accountability but to enhance the democratic legitimacy needed for policies to be sustained into the long-term, irrespective of who is in power. This should not only include opinion polling and focus groups, but by maintaining and strengthening dialogue with a broad range of civil society and diaspora groups (a clear source of strength for the UK) to retain an iterative dimension to policy making. Once the Government has finalised the core principles it sees as being behind Global Britain, hopefully with such public opinion information informing its thinking, it needs to work to encourage domestic political buy-in not only by consistency in messaging and policy but also through a programme of public diplomacy directed toward the British, rather than overseas publics. This could and should be centred on the strategic importance of defending liberal democracy and open societies as set out above. There is a strong moral and strategic case for a UK foreign policy more firmly rooted in values and prioritising the positive role the UK can play in the world. However, in order to build public trust over the long-term,

¹⁶² Dr Malcolm Chalmers from RUSI has previously argued that 'The UK should cease to promote the narrative that there is one single Rules-Based International System. There is not. Efforts to tackle pressing international problems through collective action are more likely to succeed if they involve coalitions between major powers than if they are only based on rules-based systems that lack clear and binding obligations.' Malcolm Chalmers, Taking Control: Rediscovering the Centrality of National Interest in UK Foreign and Security Policy, RUSI, February 2020, https://rusi.org/sites/default/files/202002_whr_taking_control_web.pdf. While perhaps not going as far as Chalmers it is clear that any UK efforts to reinvigorate international cooperation will have to contend with a deeply dysfunctional UN system and WTO, an international approach to climate change currently without its second largest CO2 emitter the US and serious problems facing regional bodies such as NATO, the OSCE and Council of Europe.

¹⁶³ For a summary of Liberal Conservatism see: Honeyman, VC orcid.org/0000-0003-2084-1395 (2017) From Liberal Interventionism to Liberal Conservatism: the short road in foreign policy from Blair to Cameron. *British Politics*, 12 (1). pp. 42-62. ISSN 1746-918X. In the book: *Realpolitik: A History* by John Bew, (408 pp, Oxford University Press, 2016) the author (currently leading work on the Integrated Review on behalf of the Johnson Government), traces the history of the concept of 'realpolitik' to Ludwig von Rochau and to the idea of using pragmatic, non-sentimental means to achieve broadly liberal ends - an approach that seems to chime with the Government's initial framing of its vision for Global Britain. The possible potential alternative term for some of these tendencies - 'classical liberal' - being somewhat tarnished by its adoption by some of the more controversial sections of the internet.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

even over issues where people disagree, when the Government decides to take a decision that it believes is in the national interest but that comes into conflict with its stated values it should be more open and honest about why it is making such a decision in that instance rather than pretending there is no contradiction between the two objectives in every case. This is of course an argument for greater transparency and accountability in decision-making rather than to automatically accept the prioritisation of short-term interests, the opposite of the approach being encouraged.

There are a number of areas which will be focused on more in future publications in the Finding Britain's role in the World series on which it is important to state the importance of the values dimension here. The UK's 2021 chairing of the G7 provides an opportunity to refocus the organisation as the group of leading democracies, clearly demarcating its role from that of the G20. This will be addressed in the upcoming 'Partnerships for the future of UK Foreign Policy' publication, though in his contribution here Michael Allen rightly calls for cultivating democratic solidarity to confront the authoritarian resurgence with improved collaboration in international forums and through the creation of new arrangements, alliances and ad hoc collaboration. As Allen argues this 'smaller, deeper order of industrial democracies would (be able to) reaffirm liberal principles while limiting the scope of membership of the liberal order to shore up its integrity legitimacy and resilience' strengthening organisations like the Community of Democracies as well as new groups.¹⁶⁵ This work needs to be buttressed by ongoing support for international mechanisms that support these values such as the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and its Representative on Freedom of the Media, the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights, UN Special Rapporteurs and human rights mechanisms, and the International Criminal Court.

Similarly, the diplomatic power of the UK's new trade policy, and its ability to support or undermine the values dimension to foreign policy will be addressed in the 'Projecting the UK's values abroad' publication, but mutually beneficial trade deals could become a central part of the UK's approach to international poverty reduction and support for human rights with the right objectives and safeguarding clauses. The UK's approach to aid will also be addressed in future publications but there is scope to more clearly align priorities for poverty reduction with human rights and governance objectives, including the targeted use of conditionality on human rights and good governance grounds where appropriate to ensure aid relationships do not distort the protection of our other values. In light of the strategic challenge facing democracy, human rights and the rule based international system there is a strong case for increasing the proportion of aid and other spending by the new FCDO and other departments used to support these objectives. Overall, the promotion of values in UK foreign policy will be fundamentally important in helping to define Britain's place in the world after Brexit positively and proactively, both strengthening and using its soft power. It should take a whole of government approach using all available tools to supporting its values agenda and vision for Global Britain.

The practical machinery of government questions will also be addressed in more detail in the upcoming publications however, there are a couple of potential changes that might assist in ensuring principles are at the heart of the Government's future strategy. It should strongly consider Alexander Thier's suggestion of a 'department for democracy' (or more broadly democracy and human rights) at the FCDO giving priority and focus to these central issues of principle that lay within the FCO's Multilateral Policy Directorate. Similarly, in this publication Kate Ferguson argues for the creation of a

¹⁶⁵ Allan was adapting a quote from Miller, Paul D. 2016. *American Power and Liberal Order: A Conservative Internationalist Grand Strategy*. Washington, DC; Georgetown University Press.

cross-cutting analysis unit and internal coordination mechanism that would act as the focal point for the Government's work on atrocity prevention and the Responsibility to Protect. It is worth noting that the FCDO's new management board seems to be leaning more towards organisation by region rather than thematic areas, though it must be hoped that there will be scope at the level below this to root the values agenda in its evolving structures. Whatever policies and processes are put in place it is imperative that the UK's emerging foreign policy has a strong ethical foundation and core to help achieve a coherent and ambitious conception of Global Britain.

Recommendations

In the Government's Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy and the future evolution of its foreign policy the UK should:

- actively engage the British public in developing foreign policy, looking to 'listen, reflect, explain, and respond' to their concerns to enhance the legitimacy and longevity of decisions, while undertaking targeted 'public diplomacy' to them to improve understanding on issues of strategic importance;
- organise a coherent strategic response to the global erosion of liberal democracy and the buckling of the rule-based world order in the face of revisionist powers and systemic decline;
- continue to 'get its own house in order' particular on areas of transparency and anti-corruption to enhance its soft power and ability to promote its values;
- cultivate democratic solidarity and partnerships with like-minded consolidated democracies within international institutions, as well as 'mission-coalitions' and other forms of ad hoc collaboration;
- support international mechanisms that defend and promote democratic and human rights values, rooted in the principles of informed popular consent and universal capabilities;
- draft a Global Britain values statement that clearly articulates the principles and values it wants to be the ethical foundation of its approach to the world;
- use a Global Britain values test and social value approach to decision making to ensure an ethical core to each foreign policy decision; and
- develop a whole of government approach ensuring that the institutional structures and all available policy tools, including trade policy, can support this agenda.

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