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lecture trust

**‘Foundations of Freedom: the Promise of the New  
Multilateralism’**

**Speech by Rt Hon David Miliband, Foreign Secretary**

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William Wilberforce's campaign to end the slave trade is justly lauded as an example of how values can influence the course of history. And although the issue itself was of its time, the abolitionist movement still feels remarkably contemporary.

It allied the use of force, and the dominance of the British navy, to moral suasion. It showed that social change comes through pressure from civil society combined with the power of the state - a partnership echoed in many of the key challenges of our time, from blood diamonds and third world debt to climate change. But more than anything else, it embodied a belief in the rights and freedoms of individuals.

Earlier this month, nearly 150 years since the United States abolished slavery, and less than 50 years since segregation remained legally enshrined in some states, we saw the election of Barack Obama. His success is another step on the journey of moral progress that William Wilberforce helped to shape.

Yet, in many parts of the world, the freedom advocated by Wilberforce remains unfulfilled. Today, in the church where William Wilberforce worshipped, we are commemorating another foot-soldier in the fight for freedom - Anna Politkovskaya. Her life's work was to shine light on parts of the world where freedom and democracy have not yet taken hold. Anna Politkovskaya once said that ‘words can save lives’. In the end, it was words that cost Anna her life.

In countries from Burma to Zimbabwe people struggle for basic rights. They are part of a human claim across history and across geography asserting humanity over brutality.

Their struggle can only be imagined by those, like us, who enjoy the fruits of liberty. And there is no easy way for us to promote these values, however vital we feel they are. Nonetheless we have a duty. A duty to



mark the bravery of those who stand up for democracy and freedom. And a duty to support their demands.

On the day of Anna's funeral, the head of the journalists union in Russia said that Anna died 'because she stood alone'. I hope, in commemorating her struggle her today, we send out a message to those fighting for freedom around the world. We stand with you, we will not give up on the fight for freedom, and we will do all we can to support your cause. The right to think and speak for yourself marks a free society, not just elections and politics.

The fight for freedom is often associated with the liberation struggles of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries: the abolitionists, the suffragettes, the civil rights movement. In many parts of the world, we still need the courage and moral impulse of those movements.

But freedom has always depended on rules and responsibilities as well as rights. Order without freedom is authoritarianism; freedom without order is anarchy. They are two sides of the same coin.

Today, our freedom is founded on an increasingly elaborate set of rules: the European single market has opened up the opportunity to trade, travel, and communicate, but it is governed by rules to avoid abuse of power and exploitation; the freedom to communicate through the internet would never have worked without a global internet protocol that ensures we don't have dozens of different programming languages; we live free from fear of a nuclear attack because most nations are prepared to accept rules and mutual surveillance of their weapons.

And our freedom in the UK increasingly depends on order in the world. We cannot afford to ignore the collapse of states in Asia or Africa when terrorists use them as the base for their attacks. Nor can we ignore Iran seeking to acquire nuclear weapons if it starts a chain reaction of states seeking nuclear weapons. And we all know how our high streets have been affected by the chaos on Wall Street.

That is why today, I want to talk about how, if we are to preserve our freedom, the great goal of Wilberforce, we need to address global disorder. We need to do so in a new context: not just the end of Empire but the fact that no country, however strong, can bring the world to heel on its own.



Nor is there a single threat or enemy, be it communism or the war on terror. The sources of disorder are multiple, from weak states and from strong states, and from the failure of states to cooperate over shared threats.

Weak states need external help to stabilise conflict and build the authority of the state. Strong states that threaten the security of their neighbours need to understand that force will not help them to achieve their objectives. And all major powers need to cooperate through multilateral institutions.

That is what I want to talk about today.

### Stabilising weak states

The first threat to order comes from weak states, which lack the money, force of arms, or trust to control their territory. States that in the current financial climate are particularly vulnerable to total collapse.

Afghanistan and Iraq show how difficult it is to re-build the authority of states following a military campaign. The danger is that, as a result, the international community grows increasingly reluctant to intervene in countries scarred by conflict and lawlessness.

The impact of this would be devastating. There are around 110 thousand international peacekeepers deployed on UN missions around the world. Without this international support, many parts of the world would descend into chaos, with privation, starvation and war not far behind. We have a moral duty as well as a national interest to help establish the authority of states where it is absent.

In 1999, Tony Blair, in his Chicago speech, defined what became known as the doctrine of liberal interventionism. Much of this rationale remains valid. But to restore belief in the efficacy of intervention we must learn the lessons of Iraq and Afghanistan. We must work differently.

Intervention should not always be military and only rarely be forcible. We must focus on intervening early, before a country descends into full-scale conflict - much as the international community did in Kenya, following last year's election.



Where troops are needed, we must plan rigorously for the immediate aftermath. The first months after a military intervention are critical to maintaining local support and legitimacy.

We must recognise that military solutions alone will not stop conflict. We need a civilian force – police, judges, engineers and others - with the professionalism and responsiveness of the armed forces. There needs to be clarity about who is in charge of the international presence, rather than fragmentation between countries and between military and civilian operations.

And perhaps most important of all, we must recognise that it is politics not gun fire that ends wars. Military and civilian capacity can play a supporting role, but the real solutions are political and driven by the people who live in the country.

The current crisis in the DRC provides a clear example. I visited the region earlier this month, and my colleague Lord Malloch- Brown is there now. Though the ceasefire around Goma is holding, the military situation in North Kivu remains precarious. The UN has already redeployed a number of its troops in response. Yesterday, the UN Security Council authorised a resolution, co-sponsored by the UK, for an increase of 2785 troops and 300 police. We are pushing for these additional troops to be deployed as soon as possible, and we are looking at what logistical and other support we can provide to assist them.

But though necessary to address humanitarian needs and prevent the escalation of fighting, this will not itself resolve the conflict. A viable political process is key. Progress depends on taking steps to address both the CNDP forces under General Nkunda, and Rwandan Hutu rebels the FDLR, as well as meaningful political dialogue. That is why we will be giving our full support to the newly-appointed mediator, former president of Nigeria Obasanjo, who has met recently with rebel leader Laurent Nkunda and the Presidents of the DRC and Rwanda.

### Integrating Strong states

States that are too weak to establish authority within their borders and enforce the rule of law pose a major challenge. But so do strong states that seek to extend their authority over their neighbours.



Historically, the failure to deal with nation-states growing in power and influence has led to conflict. The rise of Germany in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was never dealt with, and we all know the consequences. So how should we respond now?

In many cases the answer is simple. To ensure that countries can secure more wealth and power in the world through global cooperation and integration rather than through zero-sum power politics.

This method can bear fruit. For a power experiencing such rapid growth, China, by all historical standards, is showing remarkable restraint in its external relations. Through cooperation on climate change, financial instability, and development, China is using its external muscle in a 21<sup>st</sup> century way rather reverting to 19<sup>th</sup> century methods of aggression. In fact there are many calls for China to do more: to use its muscle around the world to stand up against conflict, for example in Darfur. But it is clear China wants to work within the international order, not challenge it. India too, is playing a role in creating more regional stability, enjoying far better relations now with Pakistan that at any time since independence. That is why we must continue to integrate China and India into the global economy and the rules that go with it.

However, some countries, perhaps because their rise is based excessively on resource wealth, are behaving more aggressively. When this happens, as with Russia's action in Georgia over the summer, the international community is challenged. We play by certain rules; what happens when others don't?

There never was a possible military response to Russian aggression in Georgia. But we need to use the tools we do have to make sure that the fact that Russia is in a rules based order – in trade, in international relations – is used to deny long-term gains.

In and around Europe, this means a critical role for the EU. The European Union has historically used its soft power to great effect. The attraction of joining the world's largest single market has been so great that countries have reformed their constitutions in order to meet membership conditions. But the EU must also accept that, in some situations, even in a post-cold war world, it will have to use harder edged tools to protect its interests and values.



In the next year, the most pressing threat to global order, one in which EU action is vital, comes from the actions of Iran. Its refusal to address the international community's concerns about its pursuit of nuclear enrichment threatens to spark a nuclear arms race throughout the Middle East. Others, such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Turkey might feel forced to recalculate whether nuclear weapons were essential to protect their interests.

During the cold war, mutually assured destruction may have contributed to a fragile peace between the two superpowers. But creating a 'balance of power' system in the middle east is not viable. Iran has rights in the international sphere. It is a country of great education and culture. But it can only exercise rights if it accepts responsibilities. Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty rights to a civilian nuclear programme are dependent on responsibilities to curb the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

This issue is not one for the long grass. It requires the world to use economic power to assert the need for order, to avoid having to use military power.

### Cooperation among major powers

Since the cold war, much of the world has looked to the US to underpin orderly relations between states. But the scale and nature of the challenges, and the shift in economic power eastwards means that the US can no longer be expected to shoulder such a disproportionate burden. No problem can be solved without the US, but few can be solved by the US alone. It is out of pragmatism as well as principle that we need a new multilateralism.

This message is subtle. The US will remain the only economic and military superpower for much of my lifetime. It is the message of the Global trends report published today by the US National Intelligence Council, which has been interpreted as arguing that the sun is setting on US power. It says that: "By 2025, the US will find itself as one of a number of important actors on the world, albeit still the most powerful one." As Brent Scowcroft, National Security Adviser under George Bush Senior explained last year, the US is a superpower which needs allies.

For a new multilateralism, we need a new bargain. The US must be prepared to share power and act in collaboration. But China, India,



Europe, Brazil and Russia must be prepared to take on more responsibility as global players.

This can be the basis of a new rules-based international order. It will take many institutional forms: a UN security council with reformed membership that includes India, Japan, Brazil, Germany and African representation as permanent members; International Financial Institutions that reflect the new distribution of economic power; expansion of the G8. Regional institutions like the EU, AU and Asean will also play an increasingly critical role.

But we not only need to widen the representation of these transnational institutions, we need to vest new authority in them. As Gordon Brown has argued, the IMF needs to develop an early warning system for financial crisis; the World Bank needs to become a world bank for the environment as well as development. And in 2009, we need to develop new rules covering trade and climate.

On trade, we need to prove that protecting people is not achieved by protectionism. History provides a warning. In June 1930, the ill-advised Smoot Hawley tariff act helped turn the stock market crash into a decade-long depression. Within four years, global trade had fallen by 60 per cent. This time, we must react to the financial crisis by completing the Doha trade round. Unless we revive work on a global trade deal, we may slip back into trade disputes and spiraling trade barriers.

On climate change, if we are deliver an ambitious global climate change deal in Copenhagen, we need to show that low-carbon investment can kick-start growth, not neuter it. There is a risk over the next year that the fight against climate change is relegated to a second order priority, to be deferred until the global economy gets back on track. But investment in energy efficiency cuts fuel bills for consumers and businesses and creates jobs.

The fiscal stimulus provided by the major economies is a major opportunity to do this. For example, China's \$400 billion stimulus package includes investment in energy infrastructure, including the expansion of nuclear power and water conservation measures.

To support this, at next month's EU-China Summit, we want to see agreement to take forward low-carbon development zones linked to the



EU economy. The idea is simple: targeted EU support for China's low carbon entrepreneurs; and incentives for the EU and China to trade and invest in the low carbon technologies on which our climate and energy security depend. By linking the world's biggest single market with the world's fastest growing major economy, we can begin to incentivize both low-carbon investment and remove trade barriers.

### Conclusion

We live in a world where no one knows where the next crisis is coming from. Volatile stock markets, brutal conflicts, a new wave of piracy.

This world calls for order. Order nurtured through shared rules because it cannot be imposed by a single power. Nobody has a monopoly on the truth. The brave words of Anna Politkovskaya are surely testament to that. But without order, without the rule of law, there can be no foundation for freedom.

In January, the inauguration of Barack Obama as US president, offers the chance for the world to lay new foundations. When any new President takes office, there are many reasons to be cautious and to restrain expectations. President Obama, as has been widely understood, faces an extraordinarily constellation of challenges.

Over the last month I have travelled in the Balkans, in China, in the Middle East. No one is starry eyed. But everywhere there is at minimum curiosity and in most places nervous hope. The reason is simple: the values of equality and democracy are timeless and universal, and when they are clearly expressed they inspire hope and make people march. The new multilateralism is technically difficult but politically simple. We either tackle shared risks together, with shared power, or we don't tackle them at all. And the modern case for multilateralism is that without it, not just order but also freedom is under threat.

The agenda is clear. In weak states, we must help nations establish authority where none exists. In strong states, we must ensure one country does not seek to extend their authority over others. Among all states, we must find new ways to share authority. New ways to deal with the shared risks that rage all around us.

This is what I will be working for in the next year.