
By Baroness Williams of Crosby
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Douglas W. Bryant, who was born in 1913 and died in 1994, was educated at Stanford, Munich and the University of Michigan. Following service as a U.S. naval officer in World War II, he returned to his home state and served as Associate Librarian of the University of California at Berkeley. He was recruited into the U.S. foreign service to manage the American libraries in Britain and arrived in London in 1950. In 1952 he began a long career at Harvard University during which he maintained a continuing association with the British Library. In 1964 he became University Librarian of Harvard and, in 1972, Director of the University Library, a post he held until his retirement in 1979 when he helped found the American Trust for the British Library. This was established to augment American materials in the British Library’s collections. He served as a Trustee and Executive Director of the Trust between 1979 and 1990 and as its President between 1990 and 1994. In recognition of his work and support for the British Library, the Eccles Centre annual lecture was named in his honour in 1995.
Introduction

Let me begin by thanking you all for coming. For me it is a real privilege to be invited to give such a distinguished lecture, named in honour of an outstanding librarian and bibliographer, the late Douglas W. Bryant. It is a particular pleasure that his widow, Mrs. Rene Bryant, is present this evening. Douglas Bryant was, from 1972 until 1979, Director of the Harvard University Library, among the most prestigious positions in the United States. His retirement year coincided with the beginning of my own association with that great University, first as a Fellow at the Institute of Politics at the John F Kennedy School of Government, subsequently as Acting Director of that Institute and then as Public Service Professor at the School.

With typical generosity, Douglas Bryant agreed to become Executive Director of the American Trust for the British Library, and was subsequently the Trust’s President. The British Library has reason to be extremely grateful to him, for he was instrumental in raising substantial sums towards the enhancement of the Library’s North American collection. For someone as passionate about education and the sharing of information as Douglas Bryant, the role of the ATBL in helping establish the splendid Eccles Centre must have been deeply satisfying.

This lecture series, started in 1995, is a living memorial to him, the best kind of memorial there can be. We are all also very grateful to the members of the Trust – many of them here with us this evening – for their generous contributions.

I am sorry it has not been possible for Mary Eccles to be with us tonight. After their endowment of the Eccles Centre in 1991 Mary, Viscountess Eccles and the late Viscount David Eccles maintained a very active interest and continued to be great supporters of the Centre. They faithfully attended all the Bryant lectures together until David’s death, since when Mary has continued to travel from her home in New Jersey for this event, and has continued to show her commitment to the Library and the Centre. As a former Secretary of State for Education and Science myself, I still recall how highly Viscount Eccles was respected in that Department, twenty years after his own service as a Minister, not least for his encouragement of technology colleges, and his support for vocational excellence. It is pleasing that so many members of his family are with us this evening, among them Viscount John Eccles, and Baroness Diana Eccles, the Honourable Simon Eccles, and Lady
Lansdowne, as well as David Eccles’ granddaughters Annabelle and Katherine.

Last year, in a brilliant lecture, Ambassador Raymond Seitz spoke about the impact of September 11 on the American mind. He compared it to events that shaped earlier generations: Pearl Harbour on 7 December 1941; the assassination of John F Kennedy on 22 November 1963.

Yet September 11 went deeper even than these. The US had long been invulnerable: never conquered, never occupied, never invaded (apart from a brief foray by British troops in 1812 to burn down the White House.) The terrorist actions were a violation, the rape of a country, and Americans reacted with horror, anger, and determination. Much of the world responded. The US won its sympathy and admiration.

Thinking of a title for this lecture, a phrase ran through my mind – it comes from the Declaration of Independence: “A Decent Respect to the Opinions of Mankind...” Earlier this month, June 2003, a respected poll, the Pew Global Attitudes survey, was published, registering a massive change in attitudes towards the United States. A year ago, a clear majority in most countries held a favourable view of the world’s only superpower. The poll showed that only seven countries worldwide maintain that position. In the entire Muslim world, Kuwait apart, the United States is viewed with disapproval and fear. Even in much of Europe, Russia, and Asia only a minority view the United States favourably. Yet, as I’ve said, the September 11 terrorist atrocity against New York’s World Trade Centre attracted huge sympathy and admiration for Americans.

In the twenty months since, most of that has been dissipated by the war against Afghanistan, and even more, by the invasion of Iraq. Few outside the United States believe there was a link between Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden. Added to that is the failure so far to find weapons of mass destruction. The Iraq war is becoming increasingly difficult to justify. The stability and peace promised by those who launched it are proving elusive, and fierce popular resistance in growing.

Furthermore, the administration of George W. Bush uses a harsh, moralistic and sometimes bullying language that grates on allies’ ears. Its leading figures reiterate the importance of establishing unchallengeable US military predominance. Allies are presented as sometimes useful, never essential. International
treaties, protocols, codes of conduct and all the rest of it are seen as so many petty encumbrances threaded by Lilliputians around a purposeful and upright Gulliver with much work to do.

To the long-standing friends and allies of the United States all over the world, this new stance is a bitter and troubling conversion. Whatever happened to the far-sighted, imaginative and restrained America of the post-war world, the America that shaped and empowered a peace settlement so imaginative that the cultivated Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, entitled his autobiography “Present at the Creation”?

Recalling those immediate post-war years is indeed to recall one remarkable achievement after the other: the setting up of a United Nations with the Great Powers at the centre, permanent members of the Security Council; the foundation stones of economic prosperity, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade; the Marshall Plan to make possible the rapid reconstruction of Western Europe; the encouragement of European integration with the early steps towards a Coal and Steel Community. The American vision was generous, the commitment to multilateralism not just words, but in the day-to-day implementation of that vision, heart-warming.

Yet the post-war settlement in Europe was not multilateral just because a far-sighted United States wanted it that way. Then, as now, Congress was suspicious of overseas entanglements, and contained powerful isolationist elements. There were many who disliked the Marshall Plan. President Truman, who took over responsibility for the post-war settlement on Roosevelt’s death, often pointed out that he would have found it difficult to get Congressional backing without the brutal intervention of Joseph Stalin in the new post-war governments of Eastern Europe, in Poland, Czechoslovakia and elsewhere. Multilateralism was, quite simply, the only effective way to reconstruct the post-war world in a Europe of sovereign and mainly democratic states, most of them wartime allies. Further, the habit of working together had developed among them. There were friendships, shared experiences and mutual learning to hold them together. Germany apart, an occupation administration would not have been acceptable to their peoples.

Outside Europe, however, the United States acted on the whole unilaterally. The administration sought no partners for its occupation of Japan, although Australia, New Zealand and the UK
had all been involved in the Pacific war. Nor did the United States seek allies in its attempt to sustain the Chiang Kai-Shek regime against Mao Tse Tsung’s People’s Liberation Army. In Asia, as in Latin America, the United States wanted its own way, and often got it.

**The Cold War**

The great prize in the Cold War was Western Europe, and in particular Germany. After the first three years of an uneasy peace, in which the United States and her European allies were repeatedly tested by the Soviet Union, above all in the blockade of West Berlin in May 1948, the two sides settled down into an acceptance on the lines of control established by their respective territorial occupations: the Soviet Union to the East of the Oder-Neisse line, the Western allies to its west. The borders were guarded, and those that crossed them were returned.

The defence of Western Europe was guaranteed from 1949 on by the establishment of NATO, with the commitment of all its members to defend any one that was militarily threatened. NATO bound even its greatest member, the United States, into a multilateral structure of consultation and consensus, though none doubted who had the greatest influence.

The Cold War was fought militarily through surrogates in Asia, Africa and Latin America, against Communists and nationalists. What mattered was neither democracy nor human rights, but whose side the government was on. In Western Europe’s democracies, however, the battles turned on hearts and minds. Could Italy be stopped from going Communist? Could Social Democrats in West Germany be counted on as reliable allies in the ideological war? The only way to win that war was by persuasion and by economic recovery. By the later 1950s, the establishment of the European Economic Community complemented through economic security the military security provided nearly a decade earlier by the creation of NATO.

**The End of the Cold War**

By the end of the 1970s, there were signs that the Soviet Union was struggling economically: uncompetitive in civilian markets, increasingly unable to finance its huge military establishment. Most serious of all, its rigid state controlled economy could not adapt to the forthcoming information revolution.
Personal computers were anathema to any society which depended upon control of information to maintain its power. Mainframe computers, which could be kept under central control, were not flexible enough to adapt to a competitive market.

The technological obsolescence of the Soviet economy was compounded by President Reagan’s decision to raise military expenditure, notably on new advanced weapons, and thus to outspend the Soviet Union to the point of its near collapse. The last disastrous chapter in the country’s military decline was the long and brutal war in Afghanistan, which bogged down the Soviet army for a decade, until it was withdrawn, defeated, by Mikhail Gorbachev in 1989.

So the Cold War ended, with the disappearance of the other military Great Power, leaving a unipolar world. In that world, the point of post-war military alliances was no longer obvious. Cherished habits and relationships of course survived, so that NATO was allowed to continue, but was transformed into more of a political institution to reassure and eventually consolidate the central and eastern Europeans into the Western framework, instead of a serious defensive alliance. Countries that emerged from the Soviet bloc put on the multilateral trappings of independence, signing treaties and conventions on their own behalf.

Yet in this new post Cold War world, the point of multilateralism was blunted. Europe was no longer threatened; Germany was re-united without loss of life. Central and Eastern Europe set out on the difficult but feasible road to membership of the European Union. And Russia, no longer Communist, struggled with the grim aftermath of the transition to an unregulated market economy.

**Missed Opportunities**

The 1990s were a decade of self-absorption in Europe. The economy was doing rather well, the external threats had gone away. Only Yugoslavia, painfully disintegrating, troubled an otherwise peaceful scene. Some Europeans did realise that the crisis was also an opportunity for the European Union to show leadership and accept responsibility for the problems of its own continent. The President of the Council of Ministers, M. Jacques Poos of Luxembourg, proclaimed proudly that this was the hour of Europe. Unfortunately he was wrong.
In Bosnia, the European allies proved unable to act either unitedly or decisively. The big European powers each had their own axe to grind, recognizing Croatia in the case of Germany, supporting Serbia as a counterweight to German influence in the case of Britain and France. They failed to protect the persecuted Muslim minority, failed to intervene effectively against the besieging of Sarajevo by Bosnian-Serb nationalists, and ended up seriously damaging their own multilateralist cause.

Eventually, after allowing plenty of time for the Europeans to solve their own problem, President Clinton sent his envoy, Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs Richard Holbrooke, to impose a settlement, the Dayton Peace Accords, on the squabbling parties. It was a tough, crude and not wholly satisfactory solution, but at least it brought the killing to an end. What it did not bring was a stable peace: Bosnia, even today, eight years after the formal end to the war, still has some 13,000 NATO soldiers under American command maintaining order.

When Slobodan Milosevic, the Yugoslav President, turned his attention to Kosovo, mounting a systematic ethnic cleansing of Albanian Muslims (a majority of the population in that region) Clinton gave the Europeans much less time. Together with Tony Blair, now Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, he bypassed the United Nations, and put together a coalition of the willing to intervene in Kosovo on humanitarian grounds. Subsequently, he won the support of NATO and the tacit consent of the United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan. As in Bosnia, U.S. involvement was decisive. The European Union proved ineffective and weak, its member-states unable to agree. So unilateral leadership, sustained by a “coalition of the willing” became the only way forward. If George W. Bush is accused of unilateralism, then European weakness and division have played their part in bringing that about.

*Neo-conservative Unilateralism*

The big difference is that Clinton was reluctantly driven towards unilateralism partly by European weakness, partly by Congressional antipathy towards the United Nations and other multilateral structures. The neo-conservatives in the Bush administration, on the other hand, deeply distrust the United Nations on ideological grounds. Richard Perle, in an article in *The Guardian* on March 21, coinciding with the beginning of the military action against Iraq, declared his delight at the anticipated demise of
the United Nations. The article was titled ‘Thank God for the death of the UN’, and Richard Perle argued vehemently against “handing great moral and even existential politico-military decisions to the likes of Syria, Cameroon, Angola, Russia, China and France.” (Members of the UN Security Council at that time.) Nor were the neo-conservatives enthusiastic about alliances, which they saw as complicating and slowing decisive and radical American international policies. Donald Rumsfeld indicated on March 11 that the United States would go ahead with the war on Iraq even without its British ally, if opposition to the war in Britain made its cooperation difficult.

American unilateralism is buttressed by an evangelical sense of mission to remake the world, and to begin with, the Middle East, in America’s image. The nearest analogy is with the British Empire during its high Victorian period, perceiving itself as having a mission to carry Christianity and the principles of representative government to the benighted countries it had conquered. The Bush Administration’s sense of mission was not at first compelling. After all, the President himself had failed to win a popular majority against his opponent, Albert Gore, despite Gore’s association with a discredited President Clinton.

What made the doctrine of the neo-conservatives triumphant was the terrorist atrocity of September 11. Prominent members of the group recognized immediately that the assumptions on which American foreign and defence policy had been based were utterly destroyed. The United States was now vulnerable to attack. Nuclear deterrence would not deter the likes of Osama bin Laden. Furthermore the new enemies had weapons that could not easily be countered even by sophisticated defense systems. Hence the Administration developed its theories of pre-emptive strike and regime change – theories much of the rest of the world regarded as returning to might makes right – the law of the jungle.

Yet unilateralism is a regressive and dangerous policy, taking the world away from the vision of an international rule of law. The International Criminal Court was intended to be the next great step in the achievement of that vision, a court where crimes against humanity could be judged and punished in the interests of the entire human race, thereby establishing global norms of behaviour. The scope of that court has been curtailed and may even be undermined by the reluctance of the US Administration to cooperate with it. Indeed, the creation of an extra-legal regime at Guantanamo Bay, where detainees have no right to contact a
lawyer or to appeal against their continued detention, is a telling example of what can happen if there is no international court to deal with the crimes of terrorism.

Terrorism itself, in my view more appropriately understood as the agent of crimes against humanity than as the attacker in a war between sovereign states, has to be fought not only by military means, but also by political and administrative means, for example by policing money laundering, inspecting evidence of nuclear proliferation, and regulating the trade in small arms. The United States is now making this discovery for itself. As the coalition contemplates the chaotic state of Afghanistan, 20 months after their military operations began, where President Karzai’s authority obtains nowhere outside Kabul and not even convincingly within the capital itself, it is clear that what is needed is effective policing of the entire country, and a long-term commitment to the construction of a sound and responsible administration.

A similar judgement could be made about Iraq. Services there are still badly disrupted, in particular supplies of electricity and clean water. Widespread looting destroyed much of the equipment and essential infrastructure of the universities and hospitals. The priceless legacy of Iraq’s ancient civilization was wrecked and dispersed. The consequence of this postwar disorder was the loss of popular support for the occupying forces, and the emergence of increasingly systematic resistance especially in those parts of the country most closely associated with the Hussein regime. The optimistic assessment that the lower ranks of the army, police and civil service could quickly resume their jobs and that most Iraqis would welcome the coalition, was badly mistaken. The failure to engage in proper planning for post-war contingencies has been even more serious, as Senator Biden pointed out only yesterday.

Exigencies for Europe

So, what can Europe do? Is our most sensible response to sign on with the world’s only superpower, hoping to influence it towards moderate policies and to pay at least lip service to international institutions? Certainly the alternative of building a multi-polar world, the stated objective of the French President, Jacques Chirac, looks like a very long-term project indeed. American expenditure on defence now exceeds that of the next fifteen most powerful states in the world – its paramountcy is unlikely to be challenged for many years to come.
But there is an obvious need for multilateralism, and it is an important one. The war against terrorism, like the war against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, requires a multilateral response. The United States cannot deal with proliferation, or with the laundering of illegal funds, or with organised crime on its own. The regulatory agencies responsible for banking and financial standards are national, not international. The diligence with which they pursue illegal transactions is determined by the attitudes of national Governments. Dealing with these issues may require institutional reform and certainly requires the committed cooperation, freely given, of national as well as international agencies and organizations.

Fighting life-threatening new diseases, like HIV/AIDS and more recently SARS, cannot be achieved unilaterally. Much depends on the quality of public health provision, and the willingness of governments to reveal outbreaks, clearly lacking in the recent case of SARS and China. Slowing climate change and the warming of the earth cannot be achieved by one nation on its own, however powerful. Some governments convince themselves that technical fixes will be found for all or most of these problems, but the history of earlier “fixes”, like for instance nuclear fusion, is not wholly encouraging. Inevitably governments are driven to work together.

There is a more immediate and urgent need for Europe to take the initiative, and it emerges from the lessons of Afghanistan and Iraq. Although some Iraqi police have now returned to work, the inadequacy of the arrangements for domestic security are achingly apparent. The European Union should begin to build not only a Rapid Reaction Force, but also a well trained body of police able to be seconded to post war or post crisis situations, or to peacekeeping duties. Similarly, the European Union should establish qualified crisis teams able to respond to situations that fall under the Petersberg criteria for humanitarian aid. There are inevitably large gaps in the provision the United States can make, and they are gaps the European Union is in a position to fill.

At the Thessaloniki summit of European leaders last weekend, the European Union began to move decisively towards a better-integrated foreign and defence policy. The new draft Constitutional Treaty proposes that there should be an EU Foreign Minister, combining the present roles of the Commissioner for External Relations, currently Christopher Patten, and that of the High Representative, currently Javier Solana. The summit also proposed
closer EU cooperation on defence. In short, the European Union is giving clear indications that it will accept responsibility for Europe’s own defence.

There is, however, a central confusion in the current relationship between the European Union and the United States. The last American administration favoured a US-EU partnership, and encouraged the EU to contribute more to the military aspect of that partnership. The present administration appears to have sharply divided views. The EU offered at its Copenhagen summit meeting to take over the small military presence in Macedonia, and the much larger NATO role in Bosnia. Europeans form the great majority of that US-led force. Many of us thought that would be welcome to the US, overstretched by its global commitments. But it was not. At the last NATO meeting, the US Defence Secretary objected, making it bluntly clear that he was opposed to any such transfer. NATO sources indicated that the EU proposal had not been discussed with NATO or the Bosnian governments. However, they also expressed puzzlement at the unexpected US intervention. It is crucial that the US administration makes its position clear. Does it, or does it not, want a partnership with Europe?

The chaotic aftermath of the war in Afghanistan, and the growingly problematic aftermath in Iraq, reveal the flaws in unilateralism. Voices are being raised calling for a much more significant UN presence in Iraq, and much more effective policing in Afghanistan. The irrational optimism of the neoconservatives is being heavily criticised. Even powerful America needs help from other countries in peacekeeping and nation-building. It is a lesson we all need to learn.
Questions to Baroness Williams following the Lecture:

**Question:** Thank you for your words today. You didn't go into the road map for Israel and Palestine and the painful matters that are unfolding right now. Would you care to say how you feel? Do you feel reasonably optimistic that the Americans are going to oblige and are going to really insist on good behaviour on both sides to make sure that there will be a proper settlement this time? We have waited so many times and previously there has been so much disappointment about each particular plan falling by the wayside that now the whole world is watching and waiting very closely. I wonder what your views on that particular matter would be now?

**Baroness Williams:** Well I agree absolutely that this is almost certainly the central key to any kind of peace in the Middle East. One finds more and more that the governments that surround Israel and the Palestinian territory all come to the fact that there will be no lasting peace in the region without that problem being solved. And it's a very difficult problem to solve.

I'll say right away that I think it's encouraging that the United States has devoted, certainly recently, as much effort as it has by President Bush and by Secretary of State Colin Powell and that Colin Powell in recent days, has made his position, I think, rather clear. The problem, and we should be direct about it, is that the United States is seen as being essentially biased on the Israeli side of the argument. The European Union is seen as being essentially biased to the Palestinian side of the argument. What that means to me is that the Quartet has to be made to operate as a Quartet and not simply unilaterally, on behalf of one particular member of the Quartet – and just to remind people, the Quartet of course is the United States, Russia, the European Union and United Nations – and that is I think a very important piece of the puzzle without which we won't get a final solution in the Middle East. Why? Well, first because I think it is bound to be the case that if there is going to be any kind of viable Palestinian state – and the United States is of course committed, as is the Quartet, to the concept of two independent nations side by side, Palestine, as it will then be, and Israel – that can't happen without a huge investment of money in the new administration and in the infrastructure of a Palestinian state.
Basically, the Palestinian territory at the present time is virtually dysfunctional. It doesn’t have any very useful or good infrastructure and it has of course suffered immensely in the course of the last 30 years, being almost continually at war of one kind or another. So, it will mean a huge investment. And let us put it quite bluntly – most of that investment will come from the European Union, if it comes from anywhere.

The United States on the other hand is clearly seen by Israel, quite rightly, as its closest ally, the country that will never let it down. It has incurred a huge amount of trust from Israel and therefore Israel won’t move without the United States being completely committed to the outcome and that’s an important thing to remember as well. I don’t think the present approach has been completely even-handed, but I think if one brings in the Quartet then it will begin to become even-handed and we will need the UN there as the final arbiter to determine that it will support whatever the outcome is.

So, put it like this: I am much more hopeful than I would have been if you had asked the same question to me last year. I think there is still a very long way to go and I think what's important is that the Quartet should be operative and in this respect I think that the EU has been, if I may say so, somewhat limp-handed as the major contributor over many years now to the financial needs of the Palestinian territory or Palestinian Authority. It has been, I think, rather poodle-like in being willing to accept that it’s the paymaster that has very little voice in the outcome. I don’t think that’s very good for the EU and I don’t think its very good for the outcome of the Middle East imbroglio.

**Question:** The member of the EU who was most successful in empire-building historically is Great Britain. If the EU is to be an effective junior partner in rebuilding countries along lines that we all respect and understand, doesn't Britain have to be a fully fledged member of the European Union? Would you comment on that?

**Baroness Williams:** What a very nice question! If I was in the business of ensuring that my backbenchers asked a question I wanted to answer, I would have slipped you a note before this lecture began. I couldn’t agree with you more. The Government ended its statement today – and I apologise for having arrived in rather short order, because we had to take today the report of the Thessaloniki summit on the draft constitution for Europe; a huge
subject which was taken in about 45 minutes and I had to take it for my party so we only ended about an hour before this lecture began – but the Government ended that statement with a ringing phrase about how Britain was to be at the heart of a Europe that spread from the Baltics to the Balkans. And I thought to myself well that’s a ringing phrase but it’s a pretty empty one. Because let’s be quite honest, the United Kingdom has been sitting on the fence for a very long time about the issue of its relationship to the rest of Europe. And this is exemplified, in a way, by the fact that we talk nowadays about ‘Britain and Europe,’ as if Britain wasn’t actually geographically part of the continent which of course it has been since God made the world, I suppose one might say. So you get this endless assertion that ‘we are at the heart of Europe’ and I agree with you, we should be, and if we were we would be a much more effective ally of the United States than by sitting on the fence which is where we normally now find ourselves.

I think, and I shall put it very bluntly – I’ve been pretty blunt in the Lecture, I’ll be blunt about my own dear country – I think the problem is that the government is running extremely scared of the huge Eurosceptic campaign mounted by some of the tabloids and some of the media and as a result it always ends up looking as if it doesn’t know which side of the fence it’s actually on.

Now, fundamentally, my whole argument is that if we are going to have a world order, or at least reasonable order, and if we are going to deal with failing states and collapsed states and rogue states and all the rest of it that comes with the modern world, there has to be a strong Europe, partnering a strong United States. And that strong Europe has to have the United Kingdom really at its heart, not talking about being at its heart. And what that means, I'm quite clear and I will say it quite clearly, is that we have to accept a greater degree of coming together and of creating common positions, especially in foreign affairs and defence, than we have done so far. And we've really got to stop kidding ourselves that we can be both part of Europe and yet conduct our own isolated foreign military policy.

**Question:** My question is that with regard to the USA as role leader, how amenable do you think America will be in terms of accepting non-unilateral participation of the UK within their world stage and what's the prognosis, do you think, of the USA as world leader in that respect?
Baroness Williams: Well, what I think I'm saying fairly directly is that the US could be the military world leader very easily. It is already a military world leader. There is nobody that can touch it and it's unlikely that anybody will get anywhere near being able to challenge it for a very long time to come. Of course, that doesn't say as much as we once thought it did because nowadays the technique used by weak nations and by terrorist groups does not depend on sophisticated weaponry, nor on having major nuclear weapons; it depends on the willingness of young men and women to go on committing suicide. And let's be honest about it, that's a devastating weapon. It's a devastating weapon and we Westerners haven't got many ways of knowing how to deal with it. It is that that makes me think that actually the United States will increasingly accept the contribution of other countries, not just of Europe but of others as well, because that contribution is probably, in the end, the effective way to begin to sap or poison the roots of terrorism.

I could give many examples, but I'll just give a couple. In the European context, I mentioned that what we need to do is to have many more ready peacekeeping forces and police forces and things of that kind which can immediately move into a crisis situation and provide a non-military solution before things get out of hand. Or, if need be, sometimes a military one like the French intervention in the Congo which one hopes and prays may actually nip the possible genocide in the bud. Something which should have happened over Rwanda and didn't is now happening over the Democratic Republic of Congo.

And in the case of the developing world, I think that, if I may say so, examples like that recently given by the Prime Minister of India, Mr Bihari Vajpayee in establishing a new relationship with Pakistan, is an example of the way in which even a very dangerous situation may be able to be defused by negotiation, conflict management and issues of that kind. That, I think, is quite a telling example to the rest of South Asia and beyond.

So it's these aspects, it's the non-military aspects of trying to create a better approach to the problems of the world that I believe the European Union and other countries too, like India, like Taiwan and so on, can actually contribute, and that's why I think that partnership is essential if we are going to have a world of peace.
**Question:** Thank you. Every day in the United Nations, before their various committees, there are condemnations of certain states who are not upholding the accepted norms of behaviour, particularly in the abuse of human rights. I suppose, in theory, those reports and those condemnations could make their way up to the Security Council but they rarely do because the members who are condemned are possibly even members of the committee who do the condemning. I wonder if the Speaker considers that the concept of sovereignty in the United Nations might be amended in some way, so that within the confines of the United Nations these matters could be resolved more easily?

**Baroness Williams:** You are absolutely right. You put your finger on one of the, I believe, perfectly fair criticisms made by the neo-Conservatives of the United States: that is, that the UN is very good at passing resolutions but very bad at implementing them. Also, in some cases, it makes an ass of itself: for example, by electing Libya to be the Chair of the Committee on Human Rights. I think we all recognise that. I mean, the question is: would it be sensible to drive Libya out or not? Probably it would not be sensible at the present time given that the UN played a very large part in finally getting Libya to recognise its responsibility for the terrible aircraft accident at Lockerbie in Scotland, and that was a useful thing to do.

Having said that, however, I think two things need to happen. First, the UN needs to be persuaded that it shouldn’t readily pass resolutions simply for their nominal value. Second, I think I have already mentioned that in my view countries like the EU and other countries should actually build up forces – and in particular rapid reaction forces and police forces – that could implement United Nations resolutions. Without such forces these resolutions are as weak as laws without police or courts to carry them out.

These measures would result in a lot fewer resolutions but we could actually act on them if we needed to do so. And in that context I think it is very important to go back to what I was saying earlier about the possibility of being able to name a state as a systematic breaker of the normal human rights of other people and its own citizens, or of being likely to pose an imminent threat with weapons of mass destruction to one of its neighbours. If one has a structure in which that state can be brought before the Security Council then there is at least the beginning of a multilateral mechanism for dealing with threats that have not yet emerged into an actual, physical attack.
Finally, I would say that I agree with you that the United Nations will have to move, eventually at least, to a unanimous minus one situation. This of course is the case with the European Union Charter of Human Rights which makes it possible – for example in cases of racial, sexual or religious discrimination – for a country that practices such discrimination within the Union to be essentially unanimously named by the other countries and then acted against, even to the point where it could be actually driven out of the European Union. So there are, I think, models that we could look to for a reform of the United Nations and I would absolutely agree with you that the United Nations needs to be reformed. However, I also believe very strongly that without the United Nations we would be very much less well off than we are today.

**Question:** I was interested in your remarks about hard power and soft power. Given the fact that we can’t hope to match U.S. investment in hard power, where would you be making investments in terms of developing soft power to act as a counterweight to America’s hard power?

**Baroness Williams:** Well, the obvious example is the international organisation where the EU and the United States have equal power: the World Trade Organisation. It’s not altogether a happy model because what’s actually happened in a number of cases – like GM foods, to take an obvious example – is that the two major groupings have simply ended up eyeing one another with a sort of mutual incomprehension and not actually working out a compromise. But I think the WTO will lead the way towards a number of compromises on issues ranging all the way from the cost of drugs for HIV/AIDS in the Third World, all the way through to issues like whether there should be environmental conditions attached to the production of certain products by developing countries.

So I think we are seeing at the WTO what a dialogue would look like. We are not seeing that in the military field; nor are we likely to see it in the intermediate field of security in the sense of domestic non-military security. I am pleading very much for there to be an establishment which would enable a closer dialogue to take place and that’s where I think the United States is now beginning to see that with respect to reconstruction, peace building, and nation building it does need a substantial contribution from the European Union and other countries and it is beginning to move in that direction, as the Thessaloniki conclusions about Iraq now very clearly show.
Question: Thank you. Yes, it was Henry Kissinger, I think, who said that he didn’t know who to call when something cropped up in Europe. I think that must have been the better part of 30 years ago now and I believe the Americans in those days were in favour of the idea of a united Europe. The evidence of recent months is that the neo Pauls and Richards [Wolfowitz and Cheney] and all those chaps are not so keen. You said that we must be at the heart of Europe and that that meant giving up all control of our foreign policy and our defence policy and all that sort of thing. Do you think there is any evidence that even if we did the French and the Germans would also do so?

Baroness Williams: Well, I don’t think I quite said that we should give up all control of foreign policy. I don’t believe that’s necessarily the case. For example, I’d see no reason at all why the British intervention in Sierra Leone should suddenly become the EU’s responsibility any more than the French intervention on the Côte d’Ivoire became the EU responsibility. One can argue about whether it was right or wrong but there was no question that it was not as such on the EU agenda.

What I'm being very precise about, or what I want to be very clear about, is that I think that we have to commit ourselves – we the United Kingdom – to the common defence of the European continent which means multilateral not unilateral positions. I think it also means that we may have to extend that to some extent to the neighbours, the Balkans and the borders of Russia, Central Asia and so forth and I think it clearly has to be the case when we consider whether we should unite with the United States in their military action of a major kind outside the borders of the EU itself. I think there is a very substantial area which lies beyond that where I am not suggesting that we should give up all control over foreign policy but I really don’t think we can say any longer, that we want to keep ourselves in a way separate from the attempt to build a central defence force which will act and look after the European continent and not expect the Americans to do so.

Reverting to what Henry Kissinger said, it was the most damaging comment and it was absolutely right: “I don’t know who to speak to if I speak to Europe.” I suppose that Dr Kissinger would now prefer to speak to the new foreign minister – though that is still subject to whether the UK agrees to it – rather than to 15 heads of states (soon to become 25), which of course is an impossible number. And in this respect the UK’s suggestion of a permanent President of the Council is creeping a bit closer to that person who
would pick up the phone. Not, however, quite close enough, because the President of the Council will not outrank the other presidents and prime ministers of the other member states. The new foreign minister will, if a proposal goes through on these issues we've talked about, outrank the other foreign ministers of the European Union which means at least a common position can be put to the heads of state which is the first step towards getting a sensible integrated policy.

And finally, with regard to Washington’s view of a united Europe, I share your concerns. We all thought for a very long time that the United States favoured the idea of a united Europe, closely allied to the United States. There is now a question mark over that. That’s why towards the end of my lecture I talked about there being a central confusion. If I’m absolutely honest I would say that that confusion arises from a difference of attitudes between the State Department and the Department of Defense towards whether there should be a united Europe with whom the United States would be closely allied. The State Department is still largely favourable to that concept. The Department of Defence clearly has very grave doubts about whether it favours that concept and is therefore opposed the idea of a European Union takeover of the presence of forces in Bosnia. We have to resolve that. It isn’t any good Washington speaking with several voices, any more than its any good Brussels speaking with several voices, and what I’ve just said about the drake or the gander applies equally to the goose!

**Question:** I'm head of a history department at a local comprehensive school and I'm very concerned by the continual reference to Europe and other countries and the assumption that Britain necessarily has shared interests which are much greater with Europe than with America. My own experience of teaching children at the moment from quite a wide mix of backgrounds is that they are very aware of the very common values which Britain has with America which, specifically in the context of foreign policy, overrides many of the things which hold British children to European children.

**Baroness Williams:** Yes. Its an absolutely serious point and of course it’s a choice that confronts us. The problem is, frankly, geographically there isn't any likelihood whatsoever of the United Kingdom becoming the 51st state. Its just not possible. So what I'm trying to say is that in the world of multilateral institutions, the United Kingdom's voice would be very small if it remained outside either of the big groupings. And because I don't think its feasible for the United Kingdom to be part of the big
American grouping, for reasons I've said, the question then is whether it’s willing to be marginalised without any longer being an effective part of the European side either. I quite agree with you that there are many, many youngsters who do feel closer to the United States. That isn't really my main point. My main point is that the UK, if it wishes to have a voice in the strategic pattern of the world in the future, can only expect to have that voice respected by the United States itself if it is part of, and at the heart of, the European Union. Now, this may no longer be true but for a very long time – and that’s why we were arguing about whether the United States did or didn’t want to see the United Kingdom in the European Union – the central issue there was that if she does want to see her in the European Union we had better be more effective than we have been. If she doesn’t want to see her in the European Union, that’s OK but we have to accept that then United Kingdom becomes effectively a marginalised voice in world affairs, which I for one would not want to see.

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