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Put Britain's National Interest Before Blank-Cheque Utopianism, says Politeia pamphlet. Blair fails to tackle the new challenges for the UK: the European mega state, relations with the US and the threats of terrorism.

Politeia's next pamphlet *Why Britain Needs a Foreign Policy* argues that Britain at present lacks a coherent foreign policy and that the country badly needs one. The author, Dr Robin Harris, explains that such a policy should be based on a realistic analysis of power and should explicitly serve, and promote, British national interest.

Such an aim contrasts dramatically with that currently pursued by the Prime Minister, for whom British foreign policy and indeed armed intervention is justified on idealistic and internationalist grounds - as in Kosovo and currently in Iraq. The author explains that Mr Blair's declarations imply a blank cheque policy for this country for they 'would suggest the removal of all ordinary understood limits to interventions around the globe'. By contrast, a foreign policy based on a realistic pursuit of British national interest would look very different. '[It] would be characterised by the establishment of priorities, by the adoption of attainable objectives, and by the unhesitant and speedy exertion of all necessary force. Conversely, it would be marked by the unwillingness to surrender freedom of action.' The author applies this approach to five current preoccupations.

Military overstretch - 'British forces are currently heavily committed in the Balkans, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, Iraq and Northern Ireland...Some disengagement soon has to take place. New unpredictable threats are bound to emerge in the War Against Terror'.

Europe - 'Britain continues to lack allies in Europe, having failed either to find a way of breaking the Franco-German axis or of uniting the rest of Europe against it. A re-ordered policy would involve a fundamental disengagement from the EU project in its present shape.'

America - 'Britain's most important international role is as America's chief ally. For this some sacrifices have to be made. Cooperation does not, however, imply an attitude of subservience.'

NATO - 'An active British policy within NATO would yield greater benefits to the national interest than involvement in the various other international organisations'.

Terrorism and WMD - 'America alone has the economic, technological and military resources to fight back against these threats ...[But] we can try to ensure by our influence in Washington that messages are more suitable for the international audience than they sometimes have been'.

Publication will be marked by a Round Table discussion of the themes with the author at 10, Carlton House Terrace, SW1 on Wednesday 9th June, 6-7. 30 p.m. Lord Salisbury will be in the chair. There are a limited number of places available for journalists. If you would like to attend, please let Guy Sich at Politeia know. * The text will be available by e-mail in advance on application to Guy Sich.

Dr Robin Harris is Consultant Director of Politeia. He has been a member of the Downing Street Policy Unit and an advisor to Lady Thatcher since the 1980s.

Why Britain Needs a Foreign Policy* will be published by Politeia on Wednesday 9th June 2004, and is available from Politeia, 22 Charing Cross Road, WC2H 0QP at £5-00.* **The text will be available by e-mail in advance to journalists on application by response to this message.

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