

DIMBLEBY LECTURE

Thank you David

Britain and France can be proud of our record. For most of our history, we were the “best of enemies”. A hundred years ago, the Entente Cordiale brought us closer together. And since then, we have been united in the same European destiny after the tragedies and the sufferings of the two world wars.

For several centuries, we went through the same ordeals. Democracy prevailed over absolute monarchy. Decolonization restored peoples’ freedom and replaced our dreams of empires with new forms of solidarity. The Second World War brought the resistance to the Nazis. And I haven’t forgotten that the man whose memory we are honouring today, Richard Dimbleby, was the first reporter to describe the horrors of the Nazi concentration camps on BBC radio. Out of all this shared hardship, we forged a common heritage. We have the same fierce sense of independence, a certain national pride, the refusal to surrender, and an absolute faith in justice and freedom.

This is the spirit which inspired the French officer shouting on the battlefield at Fontenoy : "Messieurs les Anglais, tirez les premiers" : which means, "Englishmen, please shoot first.". And Nelson's dying words at the Battle of Trafalgar : "Thank God I have done my duty". orui0.41z les premier

political games ; your art of brevity and pregnant pauses, our liking for theoretical debate. It's a pity we can't resolve these differences on the cricket field, but rugby and football provide us with plenty of opportunities. However, there is one area where the referee has blown the final whistle: cuisine.... Although I am told by my sources, there are one or two pockets of resistance.

And yet, there's still and always will be the magic of our mutual fascination. About a quarter of a million French people have made their homes here. On your side, many Britons believe they have found in Normandy or in Dordogne a corner of "Paradise Lost". Many of you have turned "your year in Provence" into a second life.

In France we have a profound respect for your acute awareness of your identity.

Our two peoples are curious about each other. They know they can find, on the other side of the Channel, a mere 35 kilometres away, pardon my French - 22 miles! that

otherness which helps them discover something new in themselves. By remaining true to ourselves, we shall best be able to cope with an uncertain future.

Today our world needs security. But it also needs justice and stability. I believe that, together, France and the UK have what it takes to achieve these goals. The path to a new world is one we can truly map out together.

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With the fall of the Berlin wall, the world of 1989 was full of hope. The confrontation between the blocs had ended. Peoples were asserting their right to self-determination. Europe was regaining its unity. New democracies were burgeoning. The dream of a new world order seemed within our grasp.

And yet what do we see today ? Everywhere, tensions are causing havoc. They are threatening to create

faultlines. Everyday violence rears its ugly head. A violence that erupts as a result of a clash of ideologies, religious fanaticism or nationalism. It scars the Middle East, India and Pakistan, the Balkans. But there is also a blind and absurd violence that grows in the areas of crisis and lawlessness in Africa, Latin America or Asia. Violence which sends child soldiers to die on landmines or drunk gunmen to decimate a village.

September eleventh has shown us a third kind of violence: one seemingly intent on hijacking all the others. I remember that fateful day in September two years ago as New York, the town where I had lived, this tall and proud city on the Atlantic, was being defaced. This violence - the violence of Al-Qaeda and the terrorist networks - tries to set the world against itself. It fuses all the grounds for resentment and hatred. It strikes everywhere blindly and without mercy. Opportunistic, calculating, it takes advantage of disorder to spread its influence and establish its networks.

This violence must be fought by all the means at our disposal.

Let's also beware of the possible connections between terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Such a combination can be a destabilising factor for whole regions. More serious still, it could result in blackmail or even a direct threat to our security interests. Here we are facing a major global risk : from North Korea to the Middle East, an arc of proliferation has taken shape with its trafficking in technology and materials, and the underground activities of scientists.

Against this background, one of the first tests of our determination will be the settlement of the Iranian crisis. Here we share the same analysis: the Iranian nuclear programme is raising concerns, which must be allayed. We won't compromise on the strict adherence to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, nor on the mandate given to the International Atomic Energy Agency. Nothing less than full

transparency on the different aspects of the Iranian programme will make the restoration of confidence possible. First and foremost, we are asking Iran to sign and implement immediately the strengthened guarantees protocol which all the European countries have already signed. Once confidence has been established, we would be ready to discuss ways of ensuring that the Iranian people get legitimate access to civilian nuclear technology, with all the necessary safeguards and precautions.

This will not be easy. So it's essential for our two countries, along with Germany, to find the way to break the deadlock. To do this, we also need to work closely with our European partners, the United States and Russia.

At the same time, we must however keep open the

cannot destroy the roots of terrorism. It would risk giving political legitimacy to individuals acting in the shadows. In the area of proliferation, it could incite States to acquire the most destructive military capabilities. It would then soon reveal its flaws : who today would contemplate military action against North Korea ?

Indeed our idea of the nature of power has undergone a complete revolution. Pen knives, explosive belts, suicide cars can today spread horror and death. Today the weak can threaten the strong. An armed group can, in an instant, shatter all our previous certainties. Power is no longer a mere matter of military and technological might. Power also means an ability to listen to others and understand their concerns. At the heart of this revolution in our concept of power, there is, in fact, the assertion of identity. Religions, societies, individuals want to be respected for what they are. They refuse to bow to the pressure of military, technological or economic dominance.

So we must be vigilant. If we wound those identities, we run the risk of provoking an allergic reaction. At a time when we have just emerged from a trial of strength between two ideological blocs which took the world to the edge of the abyss, let us be careful not to recreate the conditions for a new clash between North and South, East and West, Christianity and Islam.

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How can we respond to these global threats without locking ourselves into a spiral of violence ? We must start by trying to resolve the current crises. They are like a sore, always liable to fester and spread the infection. To be effective, a commitment to justice has to be at the heart of everything we do.

Justice in the Middle East first of all.

We cannot accept the status quo. If we go on procrastinating, the situation will deteriorate even further. We share the grief of the Israeli people facing the ever

more deadly and unacceptable violence of terrorist actions. We share the despair of the Palestinian people who see no future. But we cannot resign ourselves to a policy solely driven by security. The time has come for us to ask ourselves the right questions. Is it constructive to blame all the difficulties on Yasser Arafat ? Is the building of the present security fence acceptable ? Does all this strengthen Israel's security ?

The answer is no. For a simple reason : the security of Israel and the sovereignty of the Palestinians cannot be dissociated. We have to realise this : we won't put an end to the present spiral of violence unless we get recognition of Israel's absolute right to security and that of the Palestinian people to a State within the 1967 borders.

We must all, and I mean all of us, take the initiative : the Quartett, Europe, America, Russia, the UN. This time, let's do it together, not separately. As the region's leading economic partner and the Palestinians' main supplier of

aid, Europe has a special responsibility. And France and the UK, which share the same beliefs, have a duty to take action.

Let us speed up the implementation of the road map by convening a peace conference. Let us guarantee the process by means of a collective monitoring mechanism and the deployment of an interposition force. In any case, there is no place for preconditions. We must map out a path towards peace, persuade Israel and the Palestinians resolutely to embark on it. And there must be no turning back.

In Iraq too, justice must prevail.

Judging by the debate here, which I have followed from afar, I am under the impression that our position may have sometimes have been very slightly misunderstood. So, perhaps, you will allow me to come back to it briefly.

Last winter, France advocated Iraq's complete, immediate and verifiable disarmament on the basis of

Security Council Resolution 1441. Along with the UK, France was one of the major architects of the consensus achieved on this text. France made proposal after proposal throughout the first months of two thousand and three to increase the effectiveness of the disarmament efforts. There was absolutely no idea of condoning the existing regime or its behaviour. On the contrary, France's constant aim was to achieve as fast as possible the objectives we had set ourselves together.

Quite obviously, Saddam Hussein's regime inspired only disgust and horror. But we must think seriously about the conditions required for such regime change. Can the use of force without a UN mandate serve as a universal method of settling crises ? France didn't believe so then ; and we do not believe it any more today. Let's face it : unless we all act together with due regard for international law, we will not get acceptance for regime-change by force.

We too were concerned by the security threat of Iraq. But what were we talking about ? Was it weapons of mass destruction ? At that time, there was an inspection system which we had constantly adapted and was working. Was it terrorism ? At that time, there was no established link between Iraq and the Al

occupying forces have always done, that an occupied country is never ready to recover its sovereignty. We, ourselves, made this mistake and paid the price in our decolonisation wars.

In Iraq

Without barriers or borders our world is rich with promise for the future. Globalisation encourages technological progress and the expansion of trade. But it accentuates also prosperity gaps, speeds up the spread of viruses, damages our environment.

I was born in Morocco, on the other side of the Mediterranean, and raised in Latin America. For me, those inequalities are shocking. They are also dangerous. They create a feeling of injustice and fuel resentment. Can we really pay no heed to the lack of development in some African countries because the fight against terrorism is taking up so much of our energy ? Can we turn a deaf ear when social divisions grow and threaten to turn limited tensions into fully-fledged civil wars?

At the Cancún summit, the failure of the World Trade Organization to agree on further trade liberalisation was a wake-up call for all of us. The South, driven by countries like Brazil, India and South Africa, to mention but a few, is

clamouring for its place in the international institutions. We must make room for them. We have to recognise that all countries have equal rights.

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We must realise that, in a radically changing world, we won't regain peace and security if we deal only with emergencies. We can build a new balanced world order only if we forge the conditions for it. Two major trends are emerging today.

Firstly, several new groups are emerging and demanding their say : we saw this not just in Cancún, but also at the time of the Iraqi crisis, when the countries of the South made up their own minds. Strong and dynamic regional organisations are providing these players with new structures.

Secondly, the destinies of these major groupings are now linked. All the barriers have been shattered. There used to be protective borders. Modern means of

communication have removed them. There used to be legal and technological barriers to prohibit the movement of

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No international order can be built upon the power of a single country. So what path must we take ?

To go the unilateral route is utopia. It is also, more importantly, obsolete. We all know that no one State is in a position to respond on its own to the challenge of security, economic growth and social development. People everywhere in the world are no longer prepared to accept solutions imposed on them from outside. The times when a minority decided and a majority obeyed are over. What is true in our own societies is also true at the international level. Only negotiated decisions, only decisions agreed between all partners command support. If we want to be effective, we must have legitimacy.

So the multilateral route is the only realistic one.

This choice is in our interest. If we all share the same risks, we must share decision-making . And it is up to all of

us to define the ways and means to achieve genuine collective responsibility.

My country isn't naive. Every day the constraints on multilateral action are clear to everyone.

Far from discouraging us, all this must prompt all of us to mobilise. Let us not forget : it took two world wars before the international community, at long last, established the UN. This is a legacy we must enrich, expand, and enhance. For, without world democracy, there will be no stability.

France and the United Kingdom are key players in this remodelling process.

In building this new international order, another priority is obvious : transatlantic relations.

For the links between Europe and the US are paramount. It is obviously another area in which it is in our countries' clear interest to co-operate. There is no contradiction between our determination to see Europe play a world role and strengthening the transatlantic link. Only a Europe capable of speaking with one voice, will be a credible partner for the US and respected as such. This is in the interest of the US, our common closest ally. How can we, for example, co-operate with the US in the area of intelligence, if Europe hasn't got its own strategic analysis? How can we fight proliferation together, if Europe hasn't got its own assessment of the relevant programmes and a determined policy to put an end to them?

By a strange paradox, the relationship with the United States too often acts as a brake on Franco-British ambitions when it should, on the contrary, speed up their realisation. The UK and France are both firm and reliable

allies of the US. There are many ways the two shores of the Atlantic can complement each other. We must exploit them. Take NATO : It's our countries which are today making the most active contribution to the modernisation of the Alliance. They are putting forward proposals, ideas and, most of all

put behind us, has transformed us. It imposes upon us a duty to remember. It imposes upon us a duty clear-sighted. But the flame of hope still burns as brightly as ever. The wisdom we have gained at the price of blood must lead to action. That wisdom leads to strength, it is the exact opposite of the weakness which some would like to attribute to the Europeans. This is the point I was stressing in my speech to the Security Council in New-York on the 14 of February this year. And nothing since has led me to change this message.

As holder of its share of the conscience of the world, Europe has the duty to assist in the birth of a new international order. This is a responsibility our two countries must share.

Today a new era is dawning in Europe. As it confronts the challenges and the changes of the world, Europe faces three tasks.

First, Europe's enlargement and deepening. As every one can sense, European integration will be undergoing far-reaching changes in the years to come. To make Europe more democratic, more efficient and closer to the citizens, its institutions will have to be reformed. This is what the draft Constitution is about. European economies will also have to change. They will have to be stronger, healthier and more competitive at world level, in all areas, research and development, the cutting-edge industries and education.

Second, Europe's role in the world. If they want to be able to hold their own on the world stage, Europe must have its own foreign policy and be able to fight for its principles. This is what the current draft Constitution provides for. The appointment of a European Foreign Minister, together with the creation of a European Defence policy, backed by credible assets, will enable Europe to defend its vision and shoulder its responsibilities.

Third, Europe's new frontiers. For tomorrow's Europe, with its thirty or so members, relations with its neighbours will take on new and greater significance. New partnerships will need to be devised with the Mediterranean countries, Russia and other nations. To do this will require dialogue and solidarity.

France wants a strong Europe. We believe that Europe, by pooling together our sovereignties, increases, not reduces, each of our nation's influence. Ours must be a political Union. Were we to confine Europe to a mere free-trade area, we would be betraying the spirit of the Founding fathers and failing to seize the opportunity Europe offers to each of us.

With our strong will to preserve our identities, the British as well as the French people have, at times, expressed reservations on one or other aspect of European integration. But believe me we know that, in order to exert influence on the course of history, Europe represents a key

asset. Unity is the essential condition if we want Europe to take its future into its own hands.

This is especially true in an area where Britain and France can make a major contribution : defence.

There can be no Europe without European defence and no European defence without Britain. And indeed it was your Prime Minister who paved the way for the agreement reached at the Saint-Malo Summit in 1998, which gave a decisive boost to the European security and defence policy. This initiative allowed us both to clarify relations with NATO and to establish the first elements of an autonomous European defence. The operations conducted in Macedonia and very recently in Congo flow directly from our joint initiative.

In the wake of the Second World War, France developed an unparalleled partnership with Germany. This cooperation has made a major contribution to the success

of the European venture. This success has spurred France and Germany to be ever more ambitious for Europe. This drive has stood the test of time. Today, more than ever before, it is very much alive. As Europe enlarges, French and Germans know that the UK's contribution is key to its future progress. The individuality of each of our three nations is a strength. And we must take European unity forward by bringing together the different views across Europe. It is for us to convince people that our old continent has a bright future ahead of it.

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What unites us is stronger than what separates us. This is what we must carry forward into the future. This is what we must now make a reality.

Together with Germany, our three countries have the political will, the economic significance and the military capabilities that can shape our continent. At a time when some Europeans are apprehensive, together we can make a real difference. At a time when the world is dithering between unity and division, we have a duty to posterity : to find the path which will lead to a new world. A fairer, more stable, and more peaceful world.

How far we have come since that fateful day in 1815 when, before boarding the ship Bellerophon, Napoleon pleaded in vain with the Prince Regent: "I come, like Themistocles to appeal to the hospitality of the British people". Several years later, he died, on the remote island of Saint Helena, after being confined to a diabolical tête-à-

tête with the island's governor Hudson Lowe. An encounter, which has still not surrendered all its secrets.

Today, the forces of land and sea, the spirit of fire and water are at last reconciled. And I have come to you this evening as a Frenchman, as a European, as a member of our family. Nothing, neither tea or the Channel will ever be able to separate us. I beg you, stay British. I promise : we shall stay French. Together let us be Europeans because as Europeans, we are strong.

Thank you.