

Humanitarian Intervention and Foreign Policy in the Conservative-led Coalition

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Abstract

This paper examines the role of humanitarian intervention as a tool of foreign policy in the Conservative-led Coalition. The first section of the paper provides historical context and assesses the traditional approaches to humanitarian intervention as an instrument of foreign policy of Conservative governments since the end of the Cold War. This analytical narrative considers the Major Government's response to the Bosnian War. The second section of the paper considers the Conservative-led Coalition's approach to humanitarian intervention in two ways: firstly by an examination of the influence of Blair's humanitarian intervention and secondly, by an evaluation of British involvement in the Libyan revolution of 2011. The third and final section of the paper offers an explanatory interpretation of the Conservative-led Coalition's humanitarian intervention. This interpretation is predicated on an English School theoretical framework for understanding international relations and, in particular, advances the argument that the global worldview of David Cameron, William Hague and their liberal Conservative colleagues can be understood as solidarist.

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The practice of humanitarian intervention by liberal states has increased significantly since the collapse of the bipolar structure that characterised international relations during the Cold War. It has emerged as a central issue in international studies and has therefore been the focus of much academic attention and widespread analysis (Wheeler, 2002; Bellamy, 2003; Holzgrefe and Keohane, 2003; Chandler, 2004; Bellamy, 2008; Daddow, 2009; Peksen, 2012; Weiss, 2012). Inevitably with such a controversial subject there is disagreement of what precisely constitutes humanitarian intervention. For the purpose of this paper the definition offered by J.L Holzgrefe seems to us a useful one namely, humanitarian intervention pertains to:

...the threat or use of force across state borders by a state (or group of states) aimed at preventing or ending widespread and grave violations of the fundamental rights of individuals other than its own citizens, without permission of the state within whose territory force is applied. (Holzgrefe, 2003: 18)

British governments - including Conservative governments - have found themselves engaging the military instrument as part of humanitarian interventions in the post-Cold War era in Bosnia, Kosovo and Sierra Leone.² The Conservative Party of today is more open to humanitarian intervention than ever before. This is in part due to the Liberal influence in contemporary British Conservatism which informs their view of economics, social issues and humanitarian intervention (Beech, 2011a). Those driving this change are centred on David Cameron, whose leadership of both the party and the Coalition has seen the party move the furthest on its road towards this position. Beech states that Cameron's approach to Britain's foreign policy is '...a hybrid of the Liberal and Conservative reading of international relations...' he goes on to state '...this hybrid vision is a fusion of both idealist and realist assumptions and its practical outworking is the traditional Conservative conception of vigorously pursuing Britain's national interests, but one that is tempered by a Liberal commitment to human rights and democracy.' (Beech, 2011a: 268-269) Some scholars have discussed the foreign policy approach of Cameron's Conservatives in light of neo-conservative thought, (Dodds and Elden, 2008); others interpret it as representative of a bounded liberal tradition (Daddow and Schnapper, 2013); another suggests that it appears to be a form of pluralism (Morris, 2011). We contend that the theoretical framework of the English School is a useful means to explain the approach of Cameron's Conservatives to international affairs and their party's change in attitude towards humanitarian intervention suggests a contemporary worldview which emphasises elements of idealism as well as realism and a more solidarist perspective than traditional Conservatives.

Broadly put, all English School scholars share a belief in an international society of states, where they act together on issues out of a sense of having common interests (Bull, 2002). They seek to make the society both orderly and just, but there is a disagreement among

² The Gulf War is understood as a UN sanctioned invasion responding to Iraq's breach of Kuwaiti sovereignty; the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan against the Taliban is not regarded as a humanitarian intervention but rather a conflict of self-defence and national security; the Iraq War of 2003 is deemed to be neither.

English School theorists as to which of these two concerns must come prior to the other. For pluralists, order is prior, as this is the mechanism through which the international society is preserved, which in turn preserves a plurality of ‘good lives’ in a variety of states (Buzan, 2004). This is what Dunne calls a ‘thin’ morality – that is, international law and norms are created by states, and their only subjects are states (Dunne, 1998). The rules do not permeate within the borders of states. Solidarists stand at the other end of the spectrum – for them, morality is ‘thick’ and justice must play at least an equal role in the operation of the international society in order for it to survive. Their analytical framework begins from a cosmopolitan conception of humankind as one unit, rather than from the pluralists’ positivist conception of international society being centred on states. It then works from there, arguing that justice and order require laws that can reach inside states to protect the rights of individuals, including in cases where those rights are threatened by that same state (Buzan, 2004). This clearly marks the distinction between the pluralists and solidarists on humanitarian intervention, with the solidarist conception of the need for rules to protect individuals as well as states making them broadly supportive of such interventions, whilst a focus on the need to protect states and therefore a variety of good lives places pluralists in opposition to such actions (Wheeler, 2000).

The first section of the paper provides an important historical context and assesses the traditional Conservative Party approach to humanitarian intervention as an instrument of foreign policy since the end of the Cold War. This analytical narrative focuses on the Major Government’s response to the Bosnian War. The second section of the paper considers the Conservative-led Coalition’s approach to humanitarian intervention by an examination of the influence of Blair’s humanitarian intervention followed by an evaluation of British involvement in the Libyan revolution of 2011. The third and final section of the paper offers an explanatory interpretation of the Conservative-led Coalition’s humanitarian intervention predicated on an English School theoretical framework for understanding international relations.

The paper adopts a mixed methodological approach. In the first section an historical approach is utilised to provide an analytical narrative of Conservative governments’ response to the Bosnian crisis. The second and third sections rely more heavily on a hermeneutic method towards text analysis of speeches by Cameron and Hague; empirical data in the form of elite, semi-structured interviews with four former Conservative Foreign Secretaries: Lord Carrington, Lord Howe of Aberavon, Lord Hurd of Westwell and Sir Malcolm Rifkind MP³; and academic scholarship on the Conservative Party under Cameron and English School international relations theory. Whilst there is a growing literature on specific foreign policy issues undertaken by the Coalition such as international development (Sharp, Campbell and Laurie, 2010; Vickers, 2011; Heppell and Lightfoot, 2012), defence and national security

³ This is the second paper to emerge from the research project which began data collection in late 2009. It was the intention to attempt to gain interviewees with all of the Foreign Secretaries who served Thatcher and Major. Obviously Lord Pym of Sandy died before the research was undertaken; Sir John Major declined to be interviewed; and the then Shadow Foreign Secretary, William Hague MP, though initially interested in being interviewed eventually declined in the lead up to the 2010 General Election.

(Dover and Phythian, 2011; Martin, 2011; O'Donnell, 2011) and Britain's relationship with Europe (Lynch, 2011; Lynch, 2012; Lynch and Whitaker, 2013) there is relatively little scholarship which focuses on how the Conservative Party's approach to foreign policy has evolved in government under Cameron (Beech, 2011b; Vickers, 2011, Honeyman, 2012) and, even less, on its approach to humanitarian intervention (Daddow, 2013; Daddow and Schnapper, 2013). This article seeks to contribute to the scholarship on the Conservative-led Coalition's foreign policy in general and their approach to humanitarian intervention in particular. As mentioned above, our methodological approach is distinctive and this has given us access to a rich set of data. In addition, the English School theoretical framework employed enables us to explain the Conservative-led Coalition's approach to humanitarian intervention. Specifically, we are able to provide a degree of comparative evaluation between contemporary Conservative attitudes and approaches and those of previous Conservative Foreign Secretaries and New Labour under Tony Blair. Our findings suggest that whilst there are foreign policy continuities with previous Conservative governments, the issue of humanitarian intervention marks a significant discontinuity. On this controversial aspect of foreign policy the Conservative-led Coalition's thought and action is decidedly un-conservative and contra-realist. In fact, their perspective owes more to solidarist idealism. Whilst Cameron and Hague are more tempered about Britain's role in humanitarian intervention their worldview has been affected by, and is not altogether different from, Blair's.

Humanitarian Intervention in the post-Cold War era: The Case of Bosnia

The two principal wars fought by Britain between the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 and the defeat of the Conservative government in the 1997 general election were the Gulf War and the Bosnian War. They offered two very different portraits of the Conservative Party leading the country in war in this period; though, given the very different character of the two wars, this is not altogether surprising. In the former instance, the government was very much concerned with one particular aspect of order in the international society – the preservation of and independence of an individual state (Bull, 2002). In the latter case, the conflict in Bosnia raised questions which are more directly related to the order/justice debate that lies at the centre of the disagreement over humanitarian intervention within the English School (Buzan, 2004). From this we can draw more specific conclusions that relate to the central topic of this paper.

Bosnia presented a radically different problem for the Major government to confront; rather than a comparatively simple case of one state invading another, the war revolved around the violent breakup of Yugoslavia in the early years of the 1990s. In particular, the multi-ethnic state of Bosnia saw the worst fighting as Croats, Serbs and Muslims battled for control of the country (Childs, 2012). The question of intervention was therefore loaded with humanitarian implications from the very start. In comparison to the relative moral clarity and unity which evidenced itself in the response of the Conservative Party to the Gulf War, Bosnia would throw light on deep internal divisions within the party on the question of humanitarian intervention. The reaction of the Conservative Party to the question of whether to intervene in

Bosnia can be broadly described as hostile, though this was by no means a universal response to the issue. Hurd's remarks about the 'Something Must Be Done Club' can be seen as summarising the position of many Conservatives succinctly (Hindell, 1995); not only reluctant to intervene in Bosnia, but actively scornful of those who advocated such a move. Such was the intensity of feeling against British intervention in Bosnia that Major began to fear for the stability of his government (Auerswald, 2000). The feeling would remain intense throughout the campaign, with opponents consistently arguing in the Commons against further commitment of British forces.

In Parliament, opponents of the war argued against it on a variety of grounds, the most important of which centred on Britain's national interest. Arguments such as that made by Cyril Townsend in relation to the practicalities of air power as a means to end the civil war in Bosnia (Hansard, 1995a) were made, but it is argued that they were peripheral to the primary concerns of most Conservative MPs. Indeed, they tie back rather well into that central concern over Britain's national interest, in that many of the MPs who raised such issues asked whether such ineffective tactics or large-scale deployments would not simply leave Britain unable to commit properly elsewhere, should its 'real' interests be threatened by some other party (Hansard, 1994a). Nicholas Budgen put this case most explicitly at the time of Bosnia both in *The Independent* (Budgen, 1995) and on that same day in the Commons (Hansard, 1995b). For these Conservatives, there were quite simply no British interests at stake in Bosnia, and certainly none worth committing any armed forces to defend. This conception of Britain's national interest was shared by Douglas Hurd, who would argue this point in his memoirs (Hurd, 2003). Britain's national interest was therefore defined in what might be called a more realist fashion, in line with Conservative foreign policy traditions. This supports Keohane's observations on these traditions – MPs who supported the Gulf War could oppose Bosnia, as the upholding of international law mattered only when it coincided with Britain's national interests in other areas (Keohane, 2003). In Bosnia, where there was no interest at stake, the legal argument fell aside for these MPs.

Yet, as noted above, this hostility was not a universal position for Conservative parliamentarians. There were fervent disagreements within the Major government, including around the cabinet table, over the question of intervention in Bosnia. Hurd found himself defending the commitments which had already been made against the more strenuous opposition of other ministers to British involvement (Hennessey, 2001). This position seemingly contradicts the one he took in his memoir, yet Hurd's defence of British military commitments after they had been made fits with traditional Conservative themes on foreign policy; particularly a support of the military. It may also be the case that Hurd's own position evolved as he encountered more strongly pro-interventionism arguments among Britain's partners in NATO. Major himself took the side of his Foreign Secretary, arguing that there were good reasons for sending British forces to Bosnia, principally to stop the slaughter and allow time for a solution to be reached between all sides (Major, 1999). However, in his memoirs, he reflects on how deeply divided the party was on the issue identifying four separate camps within the parliamentary party, each with a different view of the conflict (Major, 1999: 536). Wallace narrows the number down to three (Wallace, 1994) but the depth

of the divisions remained as visceral even if the number of Conservatives on the pro-intervention side remained consistently fewer than on the opposition side (Rathburn, 2004).

Perhaps the most consistent and prominent supporter of British intervention in Bosnia on the Conservative benches in the Commons was Sir Patrick Cormack. His arguments in favour of interventionism hinged on the central point of Conservative arguments against; the question of the British national interest. For Cormack, the war in Bosnia created the possibility of a wider conflict engulfing larger parts of Europe in similar strife if it was allowed to fester unchecked (Hansard, 1995c). He also made the case that it was in Britain's interests to act in defence of the principles of both NATO and the United Nations; two institutions where Britain was a key player in both their founding and their on-going operation (Hansard, 1994b). In other words, Britain's national interest was tied to the international organisations and legal structures of which she was a part, and could not be separated from them. It was arguably the beginning of a distinctly Conservative case for humanitarian intervention and it was one that Major would himself side with in his memoirs, where he recalled his own concerns that a pan-Balkan war would seriously imperil the British interest, and so Britain had to commit herself heavily to Bosnia in order to avoid such an event (Major, 1999: 536).

Bosnia saw the Conservative Party and government split deeply over a foreign policy issue - much as they already were over Europe - and the emergence of a coalition of moderate and right-wing Tory MPs, together with Labour left MPs such as Tony Benn, in opposition to the use of force in Bosnia. Whilst it saw some of the most recognisably Conservative articulations of reasons to oppose humanitarian intervention, it also saw the emergence, particularly through the Commons appearances of Sir Patrick Cormack, of the first signs of a distinctly Conservative argument in *favour* of humanitarian intervention; one that draws a much broader picture of the national interest and indeed expands it to include such issues as the maintenance of international law.

Humanitarian Intervention in the Conservative-led Coalition: From Blair to Libya

Humanitarian intervention arguably took a distinctly path-dependent step under New Labour. The established understanding of humanitarian intervention was reframed along the lines of what was politically possible for British foreign policy after the Cold War and what was morally necessary in a global community of states with a growing consensus of universal human rights. It was on 22nd April 1999 that Tony Blair delivered a speech to the Economic Club in Chicago that became known as his 'Chicago speech' (Blair, 1999). In it he set out his moral and political view of humanitarian intervention in international affairs. Blair's foreign policy ventures are often viewed through the prism of the principles set out in this keynote speech but his thinking on the issue and the 'Chicago speech' itself was shaped by the first humanitarian intervention he was involved in as Prime Minister, namely, the Kosovo War of 1998-1999 (Daddow, 2009) which was ongoing at the time of the speech and a means by which to garner international support for the intervention. Some scholars however, argue that with the invasion and subsequent war in Iraq in 2003, Blair's foreign policy is more accurately explained as a form of neo-conservatism which was manifest in the foreign policy

of President George W. Bush (Dodds and Elden, 2008). Jason Ralph asserts that whilst Blair's conception of the international community was politically flawed with regards to Iraq, it nonetheless reveals his moral thinking on humanitarian intervention, one that stands in contradistinction to realist assumptions (Ralph, 2011).

The Conservative-led Coalition is managing the effects of Blair's foreign policy and have had their approach to humanitarian intervention influenced by it (Beech, 2011b). This claim is supported by three data points: firstly, the Conservatives supported Blair's humanitarian interventions in Kosovo (Blair, 2010) and Sierra Leone (Coll, 2010); secondly, Cameron and Hague have made speeches whilst in government endorsing the 'ends' of humanitarian intervention in a manner that Thatcher and Major did not (Cameron, 2011a, 2011b, 2012; Hague, 2011, 2012); and thirdly, when one compares the views of Cameron and Hague on humanitarian intervention with that of the previous generation of Conservative Foreign Secretaries interviewed on the topic, it reveals a philosophical divide. When asked the questions:

1. What is your opinion of the doctrine of 'liberal internationalism'⁴ espoused and demonstrated by the Labour governments of Tony Blair?
2. Is 'liberal internationalism' an appropriate foreign policy doctrine?

The four former Conservative Foreign Secretaries gave the following responses:

Lord Carrington: I think you've got to be very, very careful. It's the nanny state again interfering in other people's affairs. When I was mixed up in all that Yugoslavia thing, I thought that we'd made a mistake in what we did there trying to interfere with other people's affairs without knowing...the Germans were in favour of the Croats...the French were pro-Serb and therefore you got in to a terrible state and you didn't know who you were supporting and then you had this ridiculous business of NATO and the United Nations going in to keep the peace and told they could only fire their weapons in self-defence. As a result you got Srebrenica. I think you've got to be extraordinarily careful before you interfere in other people's affairs. And I'm not sure about Liberal internationalism it's too much do-gooding. I don't mind you saying it all, but to send soldiers in....Blair and others are passionate at interfering in everybody's affairs and in our own affairs. I mean, they've really become intrusive in this country, in one's own private what-not... life. I'm all against that. I'm not in favour of it. Carrington, P. (2010, 11 January) Interview with the author.

Lord Howe: It's hard to know how far it has done, whether it has been supportive of a neo-con militant campaign to secure the promotion of existing governments by so called democratic alternatives. Or whether it's reacting to much narrower and less politically driven problem therefore like Sierra Leone. We'll have to judge the reaction. *MB: Would you say it is an appropriate foreign policy doctrine?* It is a potentially misleading foreign policy doctrine. The essence of foreign policy is that

⁴During the interviews the phrase 'liberal internationalism' was used instead of 'humanitarian intervention'.

you have to judge so many questions by individualistic standards and tests. Howe, G. (2009, 14 December) Interview with the author.

Lord Hurd: I think it is...provided the conditions are applied and the most important condition is, are you pretty sure that you are going to leave country X in a better state than you found it. If you can't answer yes to that then you should keep away. Because the dangers are very great, we've seen that and the test of the outcome, the test of whether the result is a good one has to be quite rigorously applied. Hurd, D. (2009, 14 December) Interview with the author.

Sir Malcolm Rifkind: I think where we would however - and personally would - strongly draw the line, and I would argue that recent history gives added force to this is, that there is a massive difference between a diplomatic, political and social policy of encouraging human rights and freedom in other countries and in that sense liberal internationalism...and to put it bluntly, going to war and invading countries that are no threat to you because you believe that by doing that you will somehow create freedom for those countries... Rifkind, M. (2009, 23 November) Interview with the author.

In their responses all four former Foreign Secretaries are critical of humanitarian intervention practiced by the Blair governments. They consider this form of humanitarian intervention as a potentially dangerous path for British foreign policy. It is here that one detects the innate scepticism of grand plans and idealist philosophical projects that realist Conservatives share. Lord Hurd comes closest to endorsing Blair's gambit but his response suggests the need to be convinced that humanitarian intervention will be bring more good than remaining uninvolved (Hurd, D. (2009, 14 December) Interview with the author).

This is a complex dilemma for liberal states because no single humanitarian intervention is the same. It makes drawing lessons from history useful but not a fool-proof means of preventing ramifications. Also, humanitarian intervention often leads to unpalatable externalities such as civilian deaths. The quandary for liberal states seeking to uphold human rights and, protect where possible, the liberties of the vulnerable is that to do justice can result in actions some would deem morally unacceptable. The difference between those who believe that humanitarian intervention is a duty for a great power such as Britain and those who emphasise the sovereignty of nation-states, the business of national interest and the law of unintended consequences mirrors the conversation between idealists and realists in international relations theory. Cameron and Hague bridge this philosophical divide whereas their Tory predecessors remain firmly in the realist tradition. The impact of Blair's foreign policy idealism with its focus on humanitarian intervention has played its part in the recalibration of contemporary Conservative foreign policy and yet the case-study of the Libyan revolution of 2011 suggests that Cameron and Hague have proceeded with greater caution.⁵

⁵The Conservative-led Coalition's attitudes and actions towards the conflict in Syria will require future evaluation to enable scholars to weigh all available data before making definitive judgements. Therefore, the

The Libyan Revolution

The Libyan Revolution occurred in response to the forty-two year dictatorship of Colonel Gaddafi that mixed Marxism with Arab nationalism and whose statecraft can best be described as authoritarian. Of critical import to the rebels opposing Gaddafi's regime was the spate of civil protests beginning in Tunisia in December 2010 dubbed the 'Arab Spring'. The impact of the Tunisian public demonstrations resulted in President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali fleeing to Saudi Arabia in January 2011. Similar protests also in January 2011 centred on Tahir Square in Egypt in opposition to President Hosni Mubarak. After several weeks of sustained civil unrest and worldwide media attention political authority was passed to the Egyptian army and, in turn, they appointed Essam Sharaf as Prime Minister in March 2011. In addition, the nations of Yemen and Syria experienced civil protests against their respective regimes in early 2011 and a bloody civil war continues to wage in Syria.

Approximately two months after the conflict in Libya had begun, UN Security Council Resolution 1973 was passed on 17th March which, amongst other things, mandated the protection of Libyan civilians and '...the rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian assistance and the safety of humanitarian personnel...' (UNSC, 2011:1). Hague outlined Britain's diplomatic role in the lead up to the resolution:

It was a British-drafted Resolution that was adopted unanimously at the UN Security Council, referring Libya to the International Criminal Court and targeting the movement and assets of the regime; it was Britain and our allies who rightly gathered the sixteen signatures needed to trigger a Special Session of the UN Human Rights Council, paving the way for Libya to be suspended from the Council (Hague, 2011)

Therefore, in the eyes of the Conservative-led Coalition the international community had agreed to come to the aid of the Libyan people to protect them from Gaddafi's regime. On 18th March Cameron gave a statement to the House of Commons pertaining to the UN resolution and in it he outlined his three-point criteria justifying humanitarian intervention in Libya:

Mr Speaker, intervening in another country's affairs should not be undertaken save in quite exceptional circumstances. That is why we've always been clear that preparing for eventualities which might include the use of force - including a no fly zone or other measures to stop humanitarian catastrophe - would require three tests to be met. Demonstrable need. Regional Support. And a clear legal basis. (Cameron, 2011b)

On 19th March Britain, in partnership with the United States and France, took the lead in a broader international coalition of states to protect Libyan civilians from Gaddafi's forces in accordance with UN Resolution 1973 with NATO taking responsibility for the intervention

conclusions in this section of the paper, because they relate solely to the Libyan intervention, must be seen as tentative and only part of an analysis of the Conservative-led Coalition's approach to humanitarian intervention.

on 31st March. This was achieved over a period of seven months and entailed the enforcement of a no-fly zone, a naval blockade and air strikes on Libyan state assets. Britain's contribution to the intervention involved 2,300 service personnel, 8 warships, a hunter-killer submarine, 36 aircraft, in excess of 3,000 air missions and 2,000 sortie strikes (Cameron, 2011c). NATO's involvement reduced the military capacity and eroded the morale of the Libyan state forces. This in turn aided the rebel's mission to take the Gaddafi strongholds of Tripoli and Sirte. On 20th October Gaddafi was killed by Libyan rebels during the Battle of Sirte and, with this, power effectively shifted to the National Transitional Council. Speaking of Britain's role in the intervention to returning armed services personnel, Cameron said: 'Gaddafi was hell-bent on going to Benghazi and murdering and massacring his own people and it was the action that NATO countries, that Britain, that France, that America took – that you took – that stopped that massacre taking place.' (Cameron, 2011c).

In diplomatic terms the decision making process which culminated in UN-sanctioned action against Libya was relatively swift but the role played by the Conservative-led Coalition was more cautious and tempered when compared to humanitarian interventions under Blair. Firstly, much of the Coalition's caution was financially driven as their over-riding aim at the time was to clear Britain's structural deficit and humanitarian intervention is very costly. Discussing the Coalition's National Security Strategy (NSS) (Cabinet Office, 2010) and Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) (HM Government: 2010), Christopher Martin points out:

The NSS and SDSR are fundamentally financially driven. Whatever the Coalition's claims, the SDSR is not a normal security review; it is an interim measure designed to meet current financial problems, (Martin, 2011: 190)

Secondly, at the time of the intervention, Britain's armed forces were over stretched with commitments in Afghanistan and, to a lesser extent, in Iraq (Wyatt, 2011). Thirdly, from the publication of its NSS the Conservative-led Coalition emphasised that Britain's approach to humanitarian intervention would be marked by a step-change, as Rhiannon Vickers notes:

One notable shift from the NSS of the previous Labour Government was that the 2010 strategy focused on preventing rather than intervening in conflict, and appeared to herald the end of liberal interventionism so that if a Kosovo-type situation arose, the new government might take a different approach from Blair's. (Vickers, 2011: 212)

When taken together these three factors suggest that the Conservative-led Coalition's involvement in the humanitarian intervention in Libya was more tempered in tone and emanated from both financial and foreign policy priorities which determined a smaller, cheaper and less ambitious armed forces. Therefore, one can sense that the Conservative-led Coalition desire on the one hand a more restrained global role for Britain which in their opinion suits the age of austerity and moves foreign policy on from the zeal of the Blair years and yet on the other hand, retains an element of idealism which continues to place Britain near the forefront of humanitarian intervention by the international community.

Conclusion: Cameronite Foreign Policy - The Rise of Solidarism?

Cameron's own personal response to questioning about the need for humanitarian interventionism from Dylan Jones reveals a critique that focuses more on the way such interventions were executed by the Labour government, rather than a specific attack on the idea of humanitarian interventionism itself (Jones, 2008: 263). This in itself represents a significant underlying shift in Conservative foreign policy since the days of the Thatcher and Major governments, when, as discussed above, much of the party rejected the very principle of humanitarian interventionism outright. Cameron is not alone in his thoughts on this; another prominent member of the Conservative Party, Michael Gove, has publically expressed his support for interventionism in other states on similar grounds (Gove, 2006). Perhaps most critically for Cameron and the Conservative Party, the Foreign Secretary William Hague has also become a firm advocate of humanitarian intervention on what can be described as solidarist grounds, as we have seen above in the case of Libya. His talk of needing to promote Britain's 'enlightened national interest' (Hague, 2011), when seen in light of the evidence presented above, fits well with Cormack's arguments at the time of Bosnia – Britain's national interest is more than its own physical defence, but ties into the upholding of international laws and norms.

Indeed, first as Shadow Foreign Secretary and then as Foreign Secretary, Hague has had the greatest opportunity of any senior Conservative politician to flesh out the party's approach to foreign affairs. In a speech in the Netherlands in 2012, Hague spoke on the importance of international law, stating that:

The rule of law is crucial to the preservation of the rights of individuals and the protection of the interests of all states. To borrow Erasmus' words, justice "restrains bloodshed, punishes guilt, defends possessions and keeps people safe from oppression". (Hague, 2012)

This is an explicit argument that order in international affairs cannot be achieved without justice. Hague's speech in the Netherlands draws together the rights of the individual – the cosmopolitan vision of mankind as a single unit – and the rights of states, more akin to the positivist vision. Hague's argument hinges on the idea that, in a changed world where problems freely cross - or indeed do not recognise - borders there is a need to pursue justice across them in a more radical fashion. This is a classically solidarist account of how the world should operate; that order and justice must be seen on a parity with each other and one cannot be achieved without the other. Indeed, Hague pushes even further in this speech, arguing, 'The idea of sovereignty as a barricade against international justice has been all but eradicated.' (Hague, 2012) Thus, the attempt to draw together and balance the two rights gives way, in places, to a more completely solidarist, or even cosmopolitan account of international affairs. No longer can those who perpetrate injustice expect to hide behind the shield of sovereignty; when their actions threaten justice as well as order, the international society can reach in to that state and respond. Whilst Hague is talking more of international

criminal law than the use of force in this section, the language can, it is argued, be readily appropriated for that cause.

But that is not to say that this generation of Conservative leaders has completely abandoned traditional Conservative foreign policy perspectives, of the sort identified by Keohane (Keohane, 2003). Arguably, Cameron's critique of the New Labour humanitarian interventions has much to do with these traditional approaches that focus on defence, the British national interest and a more realist conception of international politics (Keohane, 2003). Whilst he does favour intervening in states for humanitarian reasons, Cameron still criticises New Labour for a failure to use the military instrument properly and cautiously; he still identifies his foreign policy with Conservative themes on defence (Jones, 2008: 263), even if those themes now serve as a case-by-case critique, rather than a buttress to a more fundamental argument against idealism in the form of humanitarian intervention. Honeyman directly identifies this trend within Conservative foreign policy; writing while the party was still in opposition, she notes that their focus was on mistakes made, rather than a fundamental critique of the Labour governments' foreign policy (Honeyman, 2009: 185-186).

The Conservative-led Coalition have retained a commitment to realist foreign policy themes, but it is clear from Conservative support of Blair's humanitarian interventions in Kosovo and Sierra Leone; speeches in government by Cameron and Hague; the divergence of opinion between Cameron and Hague and previous Conservative Foreign Secretaries over humanitarian intervention; and, most notably, the Conservative-led Coalition's involvement in the Libyan revolution that a solidarist idealist ethic has been incorporated into their foreign policy thinking.

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