



## St. George' House, Windsor Castle

# Should there be a new World Order – and if so, what form should it take?

Report of a House Consultation, March 4-5 2002

### Introduction

The decision to convene this Consultation, as the first in a new series of St. George's House Consultations devoted to this theme, was prompted by the appalling atrocities of September 11.

Shortly after the events of that day, our instinct was that we should spend some time exploring the concept of a "new World Order" in the sense in which it was then being used, to refer to the idea of an Order capable of ridding the world of terrorism with a global reach. We were most concerned by the way in which religious fanatics were being driven by an ideology of "religious totalitarianism", and wanted to think through what sorts of core values would need to be embedded in a new World Order able to attract broadly-based support and marginalise the fanatics.

A few weeks before the Consultation we invited those attending to say what key

issues they felt we should cover. There was a strong view that we should approach this debate about a new World Order in broader terms than those of fighting terrorism, vital though the anti-terrorist campaign might be. As one participant asked, *"Is a new World Order that is **against** terrorism and **for** world peace being used selectively by powerful nations for blatantly imperialist reasons?"* He went on, *"The wider issues of injustice between the wealthy North and the poor South – especially Africa – must be addressed. If there should be globalisation, its rules should be designed to promote social justice, particularly for those being excluded and on the margins of our societies, rather than just ever greater wealth for those with the political and economic power to make the system work for them. Whose World Order are we trying to build? If you want a World Order, you need a governance structure that isn't just Pax Americana."*



These sentiments were shared by quite a number of participants, which is why we agreed to broaden the agenda somewhat and engage with four key issues:

- ❑ what the core values of a new World Order should be
- ❑ who would take the lead in establishing it
- ❑ whether there should be some sort of global democracy, and
- ❑ whether a new Order would be able to impose settlements on nation states unable to resolve violent conflict on their own.

As we approached the event, we were conscious that on most if not all of these issues we could not expect to be of one mind. We felt it important that we should feel free to disagree with and challenge each other as part of the process of trying to gain some fresh insight into what a new World Order might look like. That is why, right at the outset of the Consultation, we agreed to see ourselves as 'free spirits', each ready to accept that we might be wrong and encourage each other to sharpen up any differences in approach, rather than blur them.

In the tradition of St. George's House events, we also agreed that comments made in plenary or small group sessions would not be attributed to individuals afterwards.

Accordingly, whilst this report seeks to capture the main themes of our debate, it does not seek to represent the views of all participants at all times.

In St. George's House, our belief is that good ideas will commend themselves in their own right, and that what matters is their free flow rather than the particular number of participants that favoured them at any one point in time.

We view the movement of ideas as a **continual process**, and hope that through this new series of Consultations we will be able to focus on some of the most important and most difficult issues that need to be engaged with, as we think through what form a new World Order should take.

At the end of the report we include a list of participants. We are grateful to everyone who took part in this Consultation, and especially the nine participants who travelled from overseas to join us. We are also extremely grateful to BP International for their sponsorship of the event, as well as to St. George's House itself, which set aside funds to assist with the costs of bursaries.

Before embarking on the report, it is important to acknowledge that through our discussions we realised that the title we had set for this event when we sent out invitations early in the New Year had already become out of date. The issue is no longer whether or not there **should be** a new World Order, because one is already developing.

The key question now is whether that is the sort of Order that the world really wants or needs.

And the challenge for us all is to try and influence the **direction** in which this new World Order is developing.



## Is “global tyranny” a real possibility?

Towards the end of our discussions, one participant said that if there were to be “a series of events like the destruction of the World Trade Centre, it would change the world for the worse”. It was one of those statements that makes you think “yes, of course”, since in many ways it’s completely obvious. And yet it also stops you in your tracks.

On the back of September 11<sup>th</sup>, there has been much talk about how we must all now realise that what happens to the poorest citizen in the poorest country can directly affect the richest citizen in the richest country; how America now has to recognise that there is simply no alternative to engaging with the rest of the world, and how Islamic countries have to recognise (as, say, General Musharraf in Pakistan has done so publicly) that action must be taken to deal with those in medrasas and elsewhere who preach hatred of other faiths.

After the initial reactions of shock and anger, we have all tried to focus on some of the **good things** that have come out of September 11<sup>th</sup>, and have wanted to believe that the message of interdependence is now much better understood even though the means to us receiving that message was so utterly diabolical and shocking.

Yet there was a strong sense in our discussions at Windsor that the lasting consequence of September 11<sup>th</sup> might be a world in which the United States is more arrogant and self-regarding than ever in its exercise of power, and that in the quest to

deal with terrorism, democratic and human rights might be treated as evermore expendable.

We feared that there is a real danger of **new barriers** being erected between different cultures, at the very time when what we really need is to be taking down those already there. There was a profound concern among many that on the back of the struggle against terrorism we are witnessing a **loss of respect** for values that should sit at the very core of our World Order.

We all wanted to see the defeat of terrorist groups, but were genuinely fearful of the price that the world might end up paying for their defeat. When one person warned that “*global tyranny is a real possibility*” if terrorists keep on striking against the United States, it was noticeable that we couldn’t just dismiss this as scaremongering.

The world **is** a more dangerous place, not just because of al-Qaeda but also because the weaknesses in our global structures for co-operation between nations have been so exposed by the aftermath of September 11<sup>th</sup>.

Now, writing this report exactly six months after September 11<sup>th</sup>, one can not but fear that the current build-up of militarism might pose one of the greatest dangers to our freedom and democracy, unless we are at least **alert to that danger** and able to speak out without being instantly dismissed as soft on terrorists.

When one participant said that the best we could realistically hope for was some 30 to 40 years of American-led “*benevolent imperialism*”, he was delivering a message



that quite a few people didn't want to hear, but no-one could readily demolish.

The fact is that he might well be right – which is why it is even more important now to engage with the debate about what form an alternative World Order might take. If we end up with Pax Americana, let us at least have explored whether that is the only option now facing us.

## A vision for a new World Order

Against this background, we knew how important it was that we should spend some time discussing what our vision for a new World Order should be.

Our starting point was that the new World Order needs to be based on *"principles, rather than power"* – which we immediately saw as different from the current World Order, which was characterised as being driven too much by power rather than principles.

These principles need to command a very wide base of support if the international community is to be able to carry out the major *"restructuring of the global political and financial architecture"* that is now necessary to create a more multi-lateral World Order, better able to manage the process of globalisation and minimise violent conflicts.

### "A big inside and no outside"

One idea which prompted quite a bit of debate was that there should be what was described as a new *"global creation myth"*. This would involve an imaginative and

ambitious campaign to build popular support for a new social contract between all peoples and all states, on the basis that we are all members of *"one global human family"*, and find ourselves *"in the same boat, which is now in danger"*. It would advance the notion that we are all bound together with each other, irrespective of which part of the globe we live in, as citizens of one world.

The message would be that whilst the world is a big place, it has *"a big inside and no outside"*.

Those who favoured this approach (and there were some who were unsure about the concept, and distinctly unimpressed by the language!) felt that such a myth should promote a very strong sense of commonality of purpose among all peoples, with *"positive and neutral symbols of co-operation, not conquest and domination"*.

One participant told of how he had recently attended an event for young people from many different nationalities and faiths, as part of a process of trying to embed a new peace culture among the young. They had started off by seeing the film "Star Wars", which he described as being structured around *"a myth that crosses cultures"*. All of the young people had been moved by it, and prompted to explore some deep issues to do with the nature of mutual responsibilities and the battle against evil.

It was said that our monotheistic faiths tend to have values that they see as **exclusive** to followers of their faith, whereas the core values of the new World Order need to be *"cross-cultural and inclusive"*. Rather than promoting a male-dominated and



competitive view of the world, the symbols of a new World Order need to be "*altogether more spiritual, more sharing and more feminine*"; and to focus on the fundamental needs of all people, such as the need to live at peace without being conquered or occupied.

There was clearly a sense of deep conviction on the part of those drawn to this line of argument. They went on to urge that any new "*global creation myth*" should respond to the mood in so many countries since September 11<sup>th</sup>, where there has been an upsurge in the numbers of people who say they are searching for **greater meaning** in life.

It should "*look forward and not backwards*", and help people to understand what could be achieved through much more sharing and openness between people on a global basis.

As one person told us, with great enthusiasm, "*We all know that biotechnology will be the next big scientific thing that could eradicate disease and cure cancer. It could, literally, revolutionise the control that we all have over our lives, and that is something that should be shared by the world*".

It was said that this would be a complex message, but that the campaign for reducing the debt burden of poorer countries had already shown how some very complex messages can be distilled into a very powerful and simple message. What we now need is "*an accessible narrative*" that is able to "*mobilise non-elite public opinion*".

Some were confident that this would be possible, on the basis that "*everything begins with imagination*", and that with

greater imagination on the part of our leaders it should be possible to create "*a political process that makes **cultural diffusion** more legitimate*".

This was an extremely important point for the group: we really wanted to see a World Order that promotes greater cultural diversity. We were wary, as one person put it, of "*countries that begin by talking about shared values and end up talking about their own*".

### Focusing on the reduction of suffering

What was striking about our discussions was that whilst we (predictably) saw conflict prevention as central to the vision of a new World Order, we were keen that this should be set in a wider context.

One participant argued very powerfully that the new World Order should focus especially on the reduction of suffering:

- "*Every day, between **60,000 and 100,000** people in this world die, for no good reason, due to lack of food, lack of housing and lack of healthcare. It is their suffering that should be the focus of a new World Order*".

We knew that some would regard such an approach as too idealistic, although we took heart from telling ourselves that the position could be defended as that of "*idealistic realists*".



## What should be the future role of the UN?

We had some discussion about the future role of the United Nations, and found that the UN evokes strong reactions in people – reactions that fall into two distinctive camps.

### “The UN should be deconstructed”

In one camp, there was the view that the UN has lost any *“capacity to inspire”* that it might have had in the early years. The UN is now *“too bureaucratic”*, and *“too compromised”* by all that it has promised to do and failed to deliver on, for there to be any merit in *“tinkering at the margins”*. It should be *“deconstructed”* by the international community.

In its place there should be a new body, as part of a new *“global political architecture”*, based on some sort of **new World Constitution** enshrining the principle of the sovereignty of the people at a global level. We generally felt that the case for a World Constitution had been strengthened by the recent establishment of a European Convention, which is widely expected to develop a Constitution for Europe.

As someone remarked, *“If it’s now agreed that the people of Europe need their own Constitution, how can anyone argue that the people of the world don’t?”*

This World Constitution would establish the role of the successor body to the UN. It would be truly democratic and transparent, without any particular states being given the right to veto the wishes of the majority, in the

way that Permanent Members of the Security Council can block change.

It would also have a *“more modular structure”* than that of the UN, involving not only politicians and diplomats but also representatives of different sections of the community, ranging from business organisations to the voluntary sector and major faith organisations.

The terms on which organisations and individuals could participate in its work would be clearly set out in a Code of Conduct.

### “Let’s make the UN work better”

The other camp disagreed with this view – and it must be said that even though we had no votes, they appeared to be in the majority.

They argued that we must *“walk on the ground of what is feasible”*, and that the best way ahead now is to try and *“make the UN work better”*.

Instead of creating yet more international bodies from scratch, our aim should be to *“reform, improve and refine”* the UN to enable it to offer true global leadership. We should be careful *“not to cause any crises unnecessarily”*, or to *“destroy the tools that we already have”*.

This process of reform should focus on the Security Council, and particularly the use of the veto and the need for action to deter members from pursuing their own national interests. It should also look at how the General Assembly might become more effective.



The end result should be a series of reforms that enhance the *"representativeness"* of the UN, and enable it to *"reach out more to civil society and industry"*.

Whilst we recognised that UN reform is an extremely important issue, there was a strong sense that debate about creating new bodies and mechanisms at a global level could easily **divert** our attention from an issue that is altogether more important. This is that we need more consistent behaviour by states (and especially our one remaining global superpower) in *"adhering to international law"*.

As for the UN, there seemed to be general agreement that it has *"a good track record in **creating** the rule of law, but a bad record in **implementing** it"*. How far the UN itself should be blamed for that is a matter of opinion.

## The force of law versus the law of force

It was said that throughout the world there is much criticism of the United States, on the grounds that it *"chooses which laws it wants to apply"*. This, we were told, is seen as *"hypocrisy"*, and confirmation of the view that *"international laws are applied on the basis of power, rather than justice and fairness"*.

One person argued that *"It is the US that has violated the rule of law most consistently in its foreign policy"*, and has demonstrated that it is more interested in *"the law of force than the force of law"*.

Whilst these words might seem rather strong to some, it should be said that there was wide support for them within the group. We appeared to be unanimous in our view that *"acceptance of the rule of law must be the **basis** for the new World Order"*, and this must be honoured by **all** states. As two people said,

- *"If the law is **not consented to** by those with real power, it can not be enduring and effective"*
- *"**Unequal applications** of the rule of law are what make people angry. Excluded groups say that they want a rule of law which is fair, and that's what they haven't got at the moment."*

We also agreed that for action to be more effective at the global level, there should be some sort of new fund-raising mechanism devoted exclusively to global causes. One idea was that there should be a UN lottery. This didn't particularly capture the enthusiasm of the group, and there seemed to be more support for the idea of a tax on currency exchange transactions (known as a "Tobin tax"). We were keen that this proposal should be taken further forward, although we were conscious that it would be bound to come up against the rallying cry of *"no taxation without representation"*.

It was difficult to see how any new tax-raising powers for the UN could be agreed in the absence of a broad consensus about how best to make the UN more representative of those who would be paying the new taxes.



## “We kill each other because our symbols clash”

Whilst our commitment to the international rule of law shone out from the discussions, it is important to set it in the context of our general discussion, as can be done by capturing one moment during our final session. It came with an outburst from one participant who has been a soldier for many years, and was one of those who was very keen that we should focus on the core values of a new World Order, and especially the “*symbols*” which we want the public, worldwide, to associate with it.

He did not dissent from anything that had been said about the importance of the rule of law, or the selectivity of the Bush Administration in its approach towards applying international laws and conventions. But towards the end of the discussion, after some concerns had been expressed about rather loose talk about symbols, and someone had reaffirmed the importance of international law, he exploded with the words, “*Look! We kill each other not because of the lack of a rule of law, but because our symbols clash with yours.*”

In recalling this moment, it is important to stress that this person wasn’t in any way against the rule of law. He recognised that **both** the rule of law **and** symbols are important to explaining wars.

But what came across so powerfully was his experience that, at a cultural level, it is the symbols rather than laws that count.

If one nation is seen as ready to abuse its military power to achieve what it wants, at any price, then it is the symbol of the power-

hungry predator that inspires rebellion and intifada.

Of course, those leading the rebellion will claim that the aggressor is in breach of international law, but the **symbol** that dominates in the public mind is that of the predator rather than the law-breaker.

## Reaching out to “Joe Sixpack”

One of the most chilling warnings in our discussions came when one person said that there is much evidence of a “*drawing together of the managerial elites*” in many different countries, with, at the same time, “*a growing gap between those elites and the vast multitudes*”.

This concern was taken up by a number of other members of the group, and one or two increased our sense of gloom when they argued that within these “*non-elites*” there is now much evidence of a “*permanently disenfranchised minority*”, who will provide the main reservoir of support for terrorists in years to come.

Those who favoured this analysis argued that any vision for a new World Order needs to offer a shift in our overall model “*away from an elite to a non-elite paradigm*”. To achieve this, the vision needs to be communicated in terms which “*get through to people*”, and offer much more than simply telling everyone to “*be nicer to each other*”.

Clearly the use of TV, radio and the internet will be absolutely vital to the process of trying to narrow the gap between elites and non-elites, and it will be especially important to find ways of reaching out to the many



millions of Americans (those like “*Joe Sixpack*”, to use the words of one of our American guests!) who do not see themselves as in any way political.

There have already been success stories in mobilising public opinion, not least in relation to environmental issues, and much can be learnt from them for the future.

At the same time, governments need to plug in more to the developing range of **issue-based movements** that have harnessed the power of the internet to work globally, and have a real impact on thinking across national boundaries.

## Defining what we mean by global democracy

There was some discussion about the importance of “*global democracy*”, although it quickly became clear that there was no consensus about what this **meant**.

Did it mean that in order to be admitted to a democratic global ‘club’, nation states would first have to demonstrate that they themselves had applied the maxim of ‘one person, one vote’ fairly and equally in the way they had secured office? Or were we relaxed about how states handled their own internal affairs, so long as the ways in which states jointly arranged their affairs at a global level were truly democratic, and “*based on respect for human rights*”?

We were not clear about this. On the one hand, we found it difficult to challenge the proposition that “*democracy is valid at every level of society*”, and therefore, by

implication, just as valid at the global level as at the national or local level. On the other hand, there seemed to be quite a strong view that we should show some respect for nations’ own political traditions, whether or not these happen to be democratic.

It was felt that China, for example, with one-fifth of the world’s population and no democratic tradition of its own, should not necessarily be expected to abide by our Western views of democracy.

We all readily went along with the proposition that “*democracy is not just a tick in the ballot box*”. That was the easy part. What was more difficult was knowing what we meant by terms such as “*a mature democracy*” - which, we were told, “*some countries aren’t yet ready for*”.

When someone asked what that meant, the answer came back that “*effective democracy is predicated on an informed electorate*”. This invited the riposte “*on that basis, would you have kept apartheid?*” The question was left hanging in the air.

These are difficult issues that are not amenable to over-generalisations, but it is fair to say that our general mood was that it should be quite legitimate for states in the early stages of developing their own democracies to say that “*work is in progress*”. Each nation needs to find its own road towards greater participation and democracy.

We talked a lot about the importance of accountability, as well as democracy, and agreed that accountability at the transnational level can be more difficult than at the national level, since the number of



potential constituencies that might claim the right to have a dialogue with the UN and bodies like the World Trade Organisation and the World Bank is virtually limitless.

As for accountability at a national level, there was a concern that democracy does not always lead to systems of government noted for their transparency.

Some felt that the symbolism of 'one person, one vote' is sometimes exploited by governments as part of their excuse for **not** developing greater accountability and transparency.

### Might the EU become a counterbalance to the United States?

During our discussions about co-operation at a global level, there was a strong assumption that power will continue to move upwards from nation states to a regional/continental and global level, as well as downwards to a sub-national and community level.

There seemed to be general agreement that *"the role of the nation state is being diluted"*, although some went further than this and argued that *"the days of the nation state are numbered"*.

In general, we felt that the regional blocs of states, such as the European Union, the Association of South-East Asian Nations, the Asia-Pacific Co-operation Group, the new African Union and the Arab League are becoming increasingly important, and helping to accelerate the move towards a **more federal structure** of global governance.

A number also felt keenly that the European Union should develop as an extremely important **counterbalance** to the United States.

However, few of us seemed to have much faith in the idea that the European Union would be able to put together a common foreign policy, which is sufficiently consistent and robust for them to be treated by the United States as anything approaching an equal.

### When is intervention justifiable?

In the run-up to this Consultation, one of the ideas that had generated much interest had been promoted by Afif Safieh, Palestinian General Delegate to the UK, for the United Nations to be able to impose a *"permanent settlement"* on nation states unable to resolve conflicts between themselves, even if this involved the *"imposition of a mutually unacceptable formula"*.

We were keen to discuss this at Windsor, and to ask whether one of the main challenges for a new World Order should be to impose a framework for peace on states (such as Israel and Palestine, or India and Pakistan in relation to Kashmir) that could not resolve their differences on their own. If only there could be some *"elegantly imposed solution"* that would bring the violence to an end, the attractions would be enormous.

We decided not to let ourselves be diverted by concentrating too much on specific disputes, and to start by discussing the general idea of imposed settlements. It was striking that the idea did not attract wide support among the group, which manifestly



**wasn't** because a lack of commitment to the ending of violent conflicts.

To the surprise of some, there was quite a strong view that, historically, military interventions by the UN had been a **bad thing**. Two participants in particular, who are responsible for different networks that support deprived communities internationally, argued that the record of military interventions by the UN and NATO in recent years shows that the result can actually be **"peace prevention"**.

When others expressed surprise at this, we were told of how military interventions had created *"humiliation"* for groups that had *"lived their conflict as a subjective reality"*, and then found themselves on the receiving end of *"an objective assessment that was fundamentally flawed"*.

This only served to **prolong** inter-ethnic and inter-faith enmities long after NATO and the UN had withdrawn.

It was argued that what we need is not so much *"conflict prevention"* (on the grounds that *"conflict isn't always a bad thing"*) as **"violence prevention"**. And *"rule number one for all interventions needs to be: do no harm!"*

Not everyone accepted this analysis, although we did generally agree that *"a good World Order should **minimise** the need for military interventions"*, which should *"only become an option when there are no more good ideas to try out"*.

In saying this, we were fully in favour of **"consistent engagement"**. We felt that much more should be done by the international

community to offer *"leadership"* and *"quiet, curative diplomacy"* to countries bogged down in protracted disputes.

One idea, for example, was that the UN Secretary-General should create a Special Representative for Conflict Prevention and Resolution, backed up by a team to advise nation states on the *"matrix of agreements that have been found to work in other parts of the globe"*.

### The State as a threat to civil liberties

More generally, some felt that the nation state *"as an independent agent"* is now the *"biggest threat to civil liberties and freedom"*. This helps to explain why, notwithstanding concerns about the record of military interventions so far, there was wide support for the **principle** of the UN being able to intervene in the affairs of a nation state.

We recognised that the *"inviolability of the sovereign state has been much eroded"*, and that the UN was now under growing pressure to embrace fully its *"responsibility to protect"*, to use an excellent term adopted by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty in its report under that title at the end of last year.

Our discussion about UN intervention ended up focusing mainly on humanitarian intervention, to protect citizens against threats from within their own state. In that sense, we did not engage as directly as we might have done with the conflicts between Israel and Palestine, and India and Pakistan.

And we did not engage at all with whether there is a case for intervention where, say, a



rogue state is known to be building up weapons of mass destruction and might threaten to deploy them against other states, for no good reason.

Could the **risk** of unwarranted deployment ever be good enough to justify intervention, or must a state have first deployed weapons of mass destruction against another state, without justification, for the UN to be able to intervene militarily?

The whole issue of UN intervention in the affairs of nation states now needs to be put under the spotlight. We plan to explore this topic at our next Consultation in this series, on June 9-11, and hope to involve some Americans who are prepared to reflect the thinking of the Bush Administration towards Iraq - together with others who will have keen views either way on whether the UN or anyone else should be allowed to intervene militarily in a state's affairs.

We do not expect to agree, but by the end we hope to understand much better the core arguments behind the different positions that people bring to this debate.

And if we are able to come up with some fresh insights into what should constitute legitimate grounds for UN intervention, that would be time extremely well spent.

## Final comment

In looking back on this Consultation, there are two strands of the discussion that immediately come to mind.

## Not tying down Gulliver, but seeking to point him in a positive direction

The first strand is one that involves the participant who challenged us early on to come up with a strategy that could stop us having to live under a 30-40 year "*regime*" of benevolent American imperialism. In the final minutes, we asked him whether anything that had been said had persuaded him that there might, just might, be the chance of something else in its place between now and 2042. He said that most of the ideas that had come up were "*not practical politics*", and little more than a "*wonderful outpouring of elitist idealism*".

He remained unpersuaded that his original challenge to us was anything other than the most accurate prediction of our shared fate, which we would do well to come to terms with sooner rather than later, so that we could get on with our main task of trying to "*point the hegemon in a more positive direction*".

It is because of this message about needing to influence the "*hegemon*" that we had rejected the characterisation that someone came up with earlier on in the debate, of the Europeans taking on the role of the Lilliputians in Jonathan Swift's novel "Gulliver's Travels", and seeking to tie down Gulliver – representing the American President and his Administration.

This wasn't just because we liked to think of Europeans as rather taller than some six inches! Rather, it was because we felt that the role of true partners should not just be to try and restrain Gulliver, but to do what they can to point him in the right direction.



This seems a fitting thought to reflect on, because it reminds us that the new World Order will be determined, more than anything else, by the attitude of the United States of America. If we drive the United States away from us by appearing to pour scorn on what the American people genuinely believe to be a morally-driven war against terror, we do so at our peril.

No-one will be doing themselves any favours if they seek to deny the basic reality that *"the United States will remain the dominant military and political power for the foreseeable future"*. It is **already** the major player shaping a new World Order, and will continue to be, either with or without us.

When we were accused of coming up with *"elitist idealism"*, there was a fair sentiment behind that. With the benefit of hindsight, it must be said that we were not always asking ourselves how the American Administration, and the American people, would react to our thinking.

We didn't really ask how we might best take them with us on either a modest or a fully-fledged reform of the UN, or down the road of a more robust system of international law. At times we were tending to view them as the 'bad guys', who just need to see that they are in the wrong and we are in the right.

So long as we let ourselves assume the worst of the Bush Administration, we continue to make Pax Americana that much more likely.

## What would it take to wipe the slate clean?

The second moment that comes to mind is the exchange that we had in this final session about the concept of a new *"global creation myth"* (not the easiest of phrases), and the idea that at some particular stage the world community would be persuaded to *"wipe the slate clean"* by writing off all of the debts of developing countries and agreeing that we are all *"starting from the same point as members of one world"*.

We all knew that this global creation myth would need to be much clearer before such a stage could really be envisaged. And yet, whilst a few were clearly unimpressed by this idea, there was a sense of its **potential** for inspiring all of the institutional change that we knew would be necessary to create a more democratic global community.

In recalling this moment, one has a horrible thought, which is one of those thoughts that you instinctively want to suppress. **What sort of catalyst** would create such a moment for the world to agree to *"wipe the slate clean"*? Another atrocity similar to September 11<sup>th</sup>, except much more devastating in scale?

One can't help fearing that if the world **were** to agree to *"wipe the slate clean"*, that would have been the catalyst. Without it, national self-interest seems set to get in the way.

What an awfully depressing conclusion! It spurs one on to want there to be **some other way** in which the global community might engage with the idea of taking a quantum leap forward in the way the major players relate to each other, and how they relate to those many, many millions within their



communities who see themselves as having no stake in the existing World Order.

Can we contemplate wiping the slate clean **without** another September 11? Let us hope that we can, and we will all work that much harder to ensure that these sorts of "*idealistic outpourings*" have a chance of being converted into tomorrow's reality.

After all, when in 1776 the Founding Fathers of the United States of America declared it to be "self-evident" that "all men are created equal" and "endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights", there were many (not least in Great Britain!) who felt that this was little more than an idealistic outpouring.

Yet their vision was so strong and commanding that it helped to found the strongest and most commanding nation in the world today.

And the language of their vision was not that of a narrow nationalism, but of a fundamental **universalism** which shines through those opening sentences of the Declaration of Independence.

If there could be some sort of world vision with that degree of clarity and confidence, who is to say that it would not transform the world in the same sort of way as that Declaration transformed the whole development and history of the United States of America some 226 years ago?

Peter Ashby  
St. George's House  
March 11 2002



## Should there be a new World Order – and if so, what form should it take?

A Consultation at St. George's House, Windsor Castle, March 4-5 2002

### Participants

<b>General Sir Hugh Beach</b>	formerly Director, Council for Arms Control/ Deputy Commander-in-Chief, UK Land Forces/ Warden of St. George's House
<b>Keith Best</b>	World Federalist Movement (Chair, Executive Committee) & UK Immigration Advisory Service (Chief Executive)
<b>Nick Butler</b>	BP (Group Vice-President, Policy Development)
<b>Amos Davidowitz</b>	Institute of World Affairs (Executive Director, Mediterranean and Middle East Office)
<b>Troy Davis</b>	World Citizen Foundation (New York Head Office) (President) and World Democracy Campaign (Secretary)
<b>Jonathan Day</b>	NATO (Director of the Private Office of the Secretary-General)
<b>David Devlin-Foltz</b>	Aspen Institute (Colorado) (Head, Global Interdependence Initiative)
<b>Revd. Mark Edington</b>	Centre for the Study of World Religions, Harvard Divinity School, Massachusetts and Chaplain to Harvard College
<b>Sir Timothy Garden</b>	Centre for Defence Studies, King's College, London (Visiting Professor)/ former Director, Royal Institute of International Affairs
<b>Karl von Habsburg</b>	Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation (based in the Hague) (Director-General)
<b>Malcolm Harper</b>	United Nations Association (UK) (Director)
<b>Heiner Klebes</b>	Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (Honorary Secretary General) and Centre for Democracy in Washington (Senior Counsellor on Rule of Law issues)
<b>Bronwen Manby</b>	Human Rights Watch (Deputy Director, Africa Division)
<b>Jan Oberg</b>	Transnational Foundation for Peace and Future Research (based in Sweden) (Director)
<b>Dr. Syed Aziz Pasha</b>	Union of Muslim Organisations (General Secretary)
<b>Stephen Pattison</b>	Foreign and Commonwealth Office London (Head, UN Department)
<b>The Revd. Donald Reeves</b>	Soul of Europe Project (Director)
<b>Afif Safieh</b>	Palestinian General Delegate to the UK
<b>James Sherr</b>	Conflict Studies Research Centre, Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst (Fellow) and Lincoln College Oxford (Lecturer in International Relations) & Consultant to NATO on Ukraine
<b>Dr. Wayne Smith</b>	Centre for International Policy (Washington, DC) (Senior Fellow)
<b>David Waller</b>	Agency for Co-operation and Research in Development (ACORD), supporting development in Africa (Executive Director)
<b>Patsy Knight</b>	Associate Fellow of St. George's House
<b>Peter Ashby</b>	Fellow of St. George's House & Consultation facilitator