



the
progressive
conscience

**Does West
know best?**

Will HUTTON
Sir Malcolm RIFKIND
Con COUGHLIN
Peter TATCHELL

 **bright blue**

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Contributors



Sir Malcolm Rifkind MP

Matt Cavanagh is the Associate Director for UK Migration Policy at the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR)

Con Coughlin is the Executive Foreign Editor of *The Daily Telegraph*

Brendan Cox is the Director of Policy and Advocacy at Save the Children

Stephen Crabb MP is MP for Preseli Pembrokeshire and Leader of Project Umubano, the Conservatives' social action project in Rwanda and Sierra Leone

Richard Dowden is Director of the Royal African Society and author of *Africa: Altered States, Ordinary Miracles*

Maurice Fraser is a Senior Fellow in European Politics at the London School of Economics (LSE) and an Associate Fellow at Chatham House

Will Hutton is a columnist for *The Observer*, executive vice-chair of The Work Foundation and Principal of Hertford College, Oxford University

Professor Eric Kaufmann is Professor of Politics at Birkbeck College, University of London, the author of *Shall the Religious Inherit the Earth* and was a Visiting Fellow at the Kennedy School, Harvard in 2008-9.

Sir Malcolm Rifkind MP is MP for Kensington and was Foreign Secretary, 1995-7

Victoria Roberts is Deputy Chairman of the Tory Reform Group

Henneke Sharif is an Associate at Counterpoint and a Board Member of Bright Blue

Guy Stagg is the Online Lifestyle Editor for *The Daily Telegraph*

Peter Tatchell is a human rights campaigner

Garvan Walshe is the Publications Director at the Conservative Environment Network

Max Wind-Cowie heads the Progressive Conservatism Project at Demos and is the Editor of MuscularLiberal.com



Peter Tatchell



Will Hutton



Professor Eric Kaufmann

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The liberal realm needs defending

By Ryan Shorthouse

The riots this summer, a freak occurrence conducted by a disillusioned minority, gave many opinion formers ammunition to trash the supposed sorry state of modern Britain.

Voices on the political left blame commercialism and inequality. For the political right, family breakdown and the crumbling of morality are the reasons why angry young men are so hungry to cause mayhem.

What we are seeing is yet another attack on economic and social liberalism - the consensus of the establishment in most developed countries in the West. Lest we forget, this consensus has - for the overwhelming majority of citizens - enhanced freedoms and improved living standards. Society still has problems, yes, but we should not shy away from championing the successes of modern, liberal democracies.

Still, the liberal-bashers cry apocalypse and spread ideas based on dangerous and dogmatic assumptions. Just look at some of the ideas advocated in recent months. Order desperately needs to be restored, they say, so bring back the death penalty. Family life is in chaos: reward marriage and therefore penalise single mothers. Wealth is corrupting, apparently, so apply higher taxes on

income. These problems - and the proposed solutions - are all based on prejudice, not evidence.

Those of us who believe in evidence-based policy making should expose and fight dogmatism. Loudly and strongly. For it threatens the values system which the West has built since the Enlightenment: rational thinking, scientific evidence and progressive ideas about individual freedom.

"What we are seeing is yet another attack on economic and social liberalism - the consensus of the establishment in most developed countries in the West"

There is a danger that ideologues, in the future, could tighten their grip on public discourse. Professor Eric Kaufmann, in an insightful essay at the end of this magazine, warns that the population growth of religious people - particularly fundamentalists - is racing ahead of atheists and agnostics, potentially undermining the hegemony of secularism and liberalism in Western democracies.

The liberal realm we currently enjoy is often taken for granted. It needs

trumpeting, again and again. There lies the hope of its sustainment. In fact, here in the UK, that realm could well be expanded. You'll find a few examples of how in later pages. Peter Tatchell calls for greater equality for same-sex couples and Matt Cavanagh pleads for politicians to have a more considered approach to immigration.

As we ponder internal threats to modern Western life, just remember that around the world there are millions of people who crave the liberty and democracy we enjoy. Just look at the Arab Spring.

Never again let cynics say that these values - democracy, gender equality, respect for minorities - are just Western, and are not yearned for in different societies, especially in the Middle East. They are universal values. They are freedoms commonly craved for across humanity.

Professor Francis Fukuyama, the American political scientist, once predicted in the 1990s in his book *The end of history and the last man*, that the world was seeing countries gradually converge to liberal democratic capitalism, and that this system is the final, most mature form of human government. The future would be more benign since democracies do not go to

war with each other. How wrong and naive that looked when the aeroplanes crashed into the Twin Towers on that miserable day on September 11th 2001.

But the road to more liberal democracy was never going to be smooth. We must not give up hope. The perpetrators of evil, of hatred towards the West and liberal democracy, are a minority, repressively controlling whole nation-states. Most people within these countries want the same fundamental things as people in the West, surely: to get on with their lives, and to have good friends and a loving family.

“Yes, this is a leading component of the thinking of liberal conservatism, a strong and growing vision which Bright Blue wholly supports and seeks to promote”

We must support these people, fight for them against tyrannical regimes if needs be. Call this liberal interventionism if you like. Or muscular liberalism, as Max Wind-Cowie labels it.


But, as Sir Malcolm Rifkind MP reminds, though we should be prepared to intervene militarily to support defenceless people, we should be

careful and selective when doing it.

Our involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan has been riddled with error and heavily criticised. The experience in Libya - though some lessons do need to be learnt, as Con Coughlin argues - should make the West more confident about its abilities to defend people overseas against repression.

The West has other grounds to be positive. The rise of the East - specifically China - could well be exaggerated. Will Hutton explores this further in this magazine's leading essay. However, the West does face big problems: a shaky global economy, an unstable EU, extreme poverty, the threat of terrorism and climate change.

Quick, robust and effective responses are needed: a range of authors - Maurice Fraser, Garvan Walshe, Brendan Cox - will offer possible courses of action.

The West has much to celebrate. It should be confident of its future. But the liberal realm which it champions is constantly under threat, both at home and abroad. That realm needs defending. Yes, this is a leading component of the thinking of liberal conservatism, a strong and growing vision which Bright Blue wholly supports and seeks to promote. 

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The Progressive Conscience

Editor: Ryan Shorthouse

Design: Dinc 76

The Bright Blue Executive

Director

Ryan Shorthouse

r.p.shorthouse@hotmail.co.uk

Alexandra Jezeph

Tim Flagg

Guy Staggs

Philip Clarke

Liam Scott-Smith

Jonty Olliff-Cooper

Rebecca Loi

Rebecca Kerr



<http://brightblueonline.com>

The rise of China is overrated

China does not have the economic or political structures to become a 21st century superpower.

By Will Hutton

China is both powerful and weak - a new economic continental powerhouse whose rise is often compared to the US's in the late nineteenth century, but simultaneously poverty stricken, paranoid and striven with fatal contradictions. Nobody better understands this paradox and its threats better than the Chinese communist party - keenly aware that it has created a monster with a capacity for self-destruction but hoping against hope that it can continue to manage it.

I describe the Chinese system as Leninist corporatism - corporatist because this is an economy organised around networks of large enterprises owned directly or indirectly by the state and Leninist because it is directed by the Communist party. Every enterprise larger than eight people has a communist party committee to shadow the work of the actual board. Every decision has the imprimatur of the party.

The growth that is so much admired is the result of a very simple economic model; massive peasant saving is diverted by state owned banks into massive investment that makes derisory returns or even losses, even if it does represent state of the art technology. China's efficiency is astonishingly low; corruption is endemic; but the huge

investment in proven technologies can hardly do anything else but deliver growth given the very low base from which the country began. The question is whether it will continue so that on simple extrapolation China in terms of gross GDP will surpass the US sometime before 2025 - and the rest of the century will be Chinese and Asian.

"China will face a double crisis - the breakdown of its current economic model and the need to enfranchise its people, both impossible to solve while sustaining one party rule"

I don't think so. China has yet to get beyond mobilising peasant saving into technologies developed by others. Its efforts to develop its own indigenous innovation base have proved desperately disappointing and squandered an enormous amount of capital. Of course there are areas where it is making inroads - underwater robotics and space - but they soak up enormous resources.

The recent calamitous crash of the high speed train in Zhejiang with some 39 deaths is a more honest indicator of China's prowess.

One-party states where dissent and argument is suppressed cannot do innovation well. The deep plumbing - free universities, peer-reviewed independent scientific research, risk-taking entrepreneurs who get a chance to develop their ideas free from political fixes, rich early adopters, neutral public procurement, open markets - that drives innovation in capitalist economies is absent in China. Its capacity to generate great new technologies and successfully commercialise them is very low.

To innovate requires autonomous institutions with a mind of their own who can experiment: anathema to Leninist corporatism.

Yet the story of the twenty first century will be the onward rise of great general purpose technologies like the internet, automobile and steam engine on which first Britain and later the US built their economic supremacy. There were four such transformative technologies developed between 1750 and 1900; eight between 1900 and 2000. Because the acquisition of scientific knowledge is cumulative - the more we know the more we can know - the expectation is that there will be as many as 16 in the twenty-first century.

However it is unlikely as matters stand



that China will develop a single such technology in the decades ahead as they crowd in thick and fast. Its destiny is not to overtake the West as a generator of the new, and on which ultimately economic and political power rests.

“The deep plumbing that drives innovation in capitalist economies is absent in China”

Rather, it is to become a very large middle-income country which as long as its currency is not fully convertible - impossible, because the scale of capital flight would undermine their current

economic model and the basis of communist power - will be an important but not hegemonic power.

Indeed, there is growing evidence in development economics that once average per capita incomes broach a critical threshold two things happen. First, there is a demand from an emergent middle class for political and social enfranchisement. Second, and that such enfranchisement is vital for the next phase of innovative growth to drive the next phase of development. Some time in the next decade China will

pass this threshold and thus face a double crisis - the breakdown of its current economic model and the need to enfranchise its people, both impossible to solve while sustaining one party rule.

The west has fearful problems - dealing with the vast overhang of private debt from a twenty year credit boom without creating a great depression - but they will be solved. Its innovation and investment ecosystem is in much better order than any in Asia, except Japan's.

Don't write off the west just yet. ⑤

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The West must be careful when choosing which campaigns to fight

The west must be selective, not ideological, about military intervention.

By Sir Malcolm Rifkind MP

Political revolutions are usually seen as internal events. This is unsurprising, as the overthrow of a ruler has the most direct consequences for those who have endured their rule. We have seen this throughout the year. The departure of the ancien regime in Tunisia, Egypt, and now Libya, heralds a new dawn for the people of each country.

However, there is always an external corollary to the overthrow of a government. Though sometimes not as pronounced as the impact on the governed - or misgoverned - the effect on international affairs can be just as consequential.

"We were mistaken in our reading of the Kosovo situation, and foolish to topple Saddam in the way that we did. Yet our intervention in Libya was the right decision"

Consider the fallout that resulted from the overthrow of Saddam Hussein in Iraq. At one level, it removed a despot who had brutalised his people for decades. Yet it also tore asunder the power structure within the country,

elevating Shia factions at the expense of Sunnis. The dynamics of the region shifted greatly as a result. Iran was emboldened, increasing support to terrorist groups within Iraq and beyond it. By contrast Saudi Arabia, the key Sunni state in the region, fretted about the emergence of a 'Shia crescent' stretching from Tehran to Damascus through Baghdad. The regional positioning sparked by the Iraq War continues to this day. It is demonstrated in Iran's support for the Assad regime, and explains Riyadh's eagerness to denounce the Syrian crackdown despite participating in similar activity in Bahrain.

Such geopolitical shifts are not only the result of revolutions. They also tend to accompany foreign interventions. A classic example of this was witnessed in the late 1990s, when NATO intervened in the former Yugoslavia to come to the aid of the Kosovo region. At no stage did NATO wish to prompt further changes in the region's borders. However, seeing that the bombing campaign marked their best opportunity for self rule, those in Kosovo embarked upon a quest for independence. That outcome ultimately proved to be something NATO countries were forced to concede.




The unintended consequences of revolutions and interventions can often be counter-productive, and are always unpredictable. It is for those very reasons that I opposed both the interventions in Kosovo and Iraq.

"Domestic revolutions and overseas interventions are inherently chaotic and haphazard. No one example has a true equivalent"

Why then, did I lend such backing to NATO's mission in Libya, an external intervention in an internal revolution? The answer lay in the likely consequences of the conflict's outcome for the Arab world as a whole. Unlike many revolutions, the uprising in Libya was not an isolated event. While it was motivated by Colonel Gaddafi's decades old legacy of ineffective authoritarianism, it was triggered by the

broader awakening of democratic elements in the Arab world. The success of these movements is in the fundamental interests of the region, and the developed world. However, the result in Libya could have governed their success or failure.

Effective repression by the Gaddafi regime would have jeopardised them by providing a roadmap for other despots, and undermining the willingness of ordinary citizens to demand more from their government. Such a setback was witnessed in 2009, when Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's post election crackdown succeeded in postponing moves toward political reform in Iran. By contrast, the toppling of Gaddafi has given new impetus to democratic movements across the region. The fall of Tripoli has strengthened Syrian activists, who have placed further pressure on the Assad regime, and given renewed hope to Iran's silent majority.

Domestic revolutions and overseas interventions are inherently chaotic and haphazard. No one example has a true equivalent, as the people of Libya, Tunisia and Egypt will testify. Yet for that very reason we must approach each situation on its own merits. We were mistaken in our reading of the Kosovo situation, and foolish to topple Saddam in the way that we did. Yet our intervention in Libya was the right decision, made for the right reasons. 

Cameron the muscle man

Join the Prime Minister and get real about liberal intervention, urges Max Wind-Cowie

David Cameron made it perfectly clear, in his Munich speech earlier this year, that our Government doesn't regard anyone as too big, too small, too precious or too primitive to live by the liberal norms of our society. He described his attitude and approach as 'muscular liberal' - confident, aggressive and tough in defending the tolerance, acceptance and choice that is the bedrock of modern Britain. But terror, as we know to our recent cost, is not a domestic problem alone.

Extremists in our mosques do not operate in a British vacuum, somehow limiting the scope of their conspiracies and ambitions at our borders. Nor, if early evidence is to be believed, did Anders Breivik deal solely with fellow Norwegian fascists - he had links to organisations across Europe and in the UK in particular. The enemies of our liberal society are not parochial they are international - we cannot hope to defeat them with muscular liberalism 'in one country'.

Thus, despite his early dismissal of the active and intervention-heavy foreign policy of Blair, Cameron is a muscular liberal abroad as well as at home. He may not believe that he can "drop democracy from 40,000 feet" but he has clearly abandoned the somewhat

haughty, patrician isolationism that was hinted at before power was won. Our successful mission to protect Libyan civilians from Gaddafi would never have happened had Cameron not defied global nonchalance and, with muscular liberal fellow-traveler President Sarkozy, forced the issue upon both NATO and the UN.

**"The Coalition is spending
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- are doing so with all the
modesty of a footballer's wife"**

The Coalition is spending brashly on aid in areas that ferment and fertilise extremism here, from Pakistan to Somalia, and - most importantly - are doing so with all the modesty of a footballer's wife. In international development, where the aim is both to help and to make friends of potential enemies, conspicuous consumption is very much the name of game.

Neither of these courses of action are necessary politically - Libya was not a particularly popular war until it was a won war, and the public remains highly

suspicious of our generosity overseas - but they are absolutely in keeping with the muscular liberal ethos that the Prime Minister has cultivated since arriving in office.

Britain is ill-served at home when it turns a blind eye to bigotry, fascism and deep cultural inequality - when it adopts a moral neutrality that allows our values to be degraded and deformed. So too, in our inter-connected and inter-dependent world, we suffer when we attempt neutrality and amorality abroad - all that 'realpolitik' we hear so much about from the foreign policy establishment. The Prime Minister is discovering that a moral foreign policy is no longer a childish alternative to the 'realism' and pragmatism urged by diplomats, it is the only sensible and strategic course for a country such as ours.

Consider the results of 'realism'. It was this amoral philosophy that steered Blair into the desert and into Gadaffi's embrace - in search of both a strategic economic partner and a neutralised threat. In the end it returned neither and, when the time came for the Libyan people to overthrow their tyrant, it threatened our standing and our moral authority in the region. Or Mugabe, feted by British leaders and diplomats even as he stole elections and locked-up opponents: he is no longer the useful

bastard we once thought he was and we pay a price totted up in new asylum cases and freshly required aid. Or China's communist cabal, with whom we have played nice and whose people's suffering we have ignored, who reward us by propping up an atomic madman in North Korea and demand changes to our economic policies whilst holding our debts ever-more menacingly over us.

Had we chosen to ignore the suffering of the Libyan people - if we choose to ignore that of the Syrians and of the people of Bahrain - we not only betray the values we espouse but we create new threats for ourselves. As Tripoli was liberated rebels flew US flags and cheered NATO whilst cursing the callousness of those in Beijing and Moscow who had tried to temper their revolution. We have a new ally in North Africa because we were guided by our belief in freedom and in liberal democracy. Had we chosen 'stability and realpolitik' as our guides we would be faced now with yet another country predisposed to loathe us.

What is more, contrary to the dark premonitions of the cynics and the manipulated potted histories presented by isolationist commentators such as Peter Hitchens and Simon Jenkins, the history of liberal intervention is littered with success stories. West Germany, Japan, South Korea, Serbia, Kosovo,

Sierra Leone, and - slowly but certainly - both Iraq and Afghanistan, are all better places, and better friends to Britain, thanks to our role in saving them from barbarism. The important lesson of our difficulties in Iraq or elsewhere is not that liberal intervention doesn't work - it patently can and does - but that there are better and worse ways of intervening.

Cameron and muscular liberalism were proven right on Libya. Our success there may well have healed some of the wounds left by Iraq. But there remains much work to be done if Britain is to become a truly active and moral player on the world stage. We must throw off the shackles of colonial guilt and constant self-doubt. We must be clear, confident and robust in our defence of liberal democracy as the only future for nations of every colour and faith.

But most of all we must stop listening to the patronising cynicism of our realist foreign policy establishment. Their creed of amoral national greed may once have served some base interest for Britain but - in a world where threats are multinational, where famine is a security issue and where people across continents communicate daily in real time - it is woefully unhelpful and fundamentally unreal. Liberal intervention is this country's future - that's just a pragmatic reality. ⑤

SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE DIGITAL AGE: INFORMATION OVERLOAD OR GENUINE CHOICE?

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Pragmatism yes, but more vision please Mr Cameron

*Cameron's foreign policy is a refreshing change from the Blair Years, argues **Victoria Roberts**. But the PM must articulate a bold vision for Britain's role in the world*

When it comes to foreign policy, is there such a thing as the Cameron Doctrine? To date it seems not, and it is a welcome change from the dogma of Blair and Labour's "ethical" foreign policy, which was as often honoured in the breach as in the observance. Under Cameron, the Government's foreign policy has been characterised by pragmatism.

In terms of policy successes, two key areas stand out: the commitment to international development, and relationship building.

Protecting the aid budget is in our national interest, as well as being important for the Conservative brand. To quote Damian Green MP, "it is both morally and politically right to want to keep our aid budget generous and well-targeted." It is vital to our soft power, along with the BBC World Service and British Council, and develops future trading partners.

"The failure to articulate vision makes it easy to overlook our successes, or to ascribe them to the Liberal Democrats"

David Cameron's ability to build relationships is another great asset.


Though the Special Relationship is overrated, we saw with Thatcher and Reagan how important personal relationships between leaders can be, and Cameron's relationship with Obama is in that mould. Similarly, he has looked to build relationships with key partners in Asia and has not been afraid to broach difficult subjects, such as the poisoning of Alexander Litvinenko during his visit in Russia.



As Daniel Finkelstein pointed out earlier this year, a Prime Minister's foreign policy is driven by events. Cameron's responses to the Arab Spring and the intervention in Libya are his greatest successes. When Blair had all but destroyed international support for liberal interventions post-Iraq, the proportionate and pragmatic NATO

action is a testament to Cameron's approach. So too was the use of oil revenues, in a scheme led by Alan Duncan MP, to support the Libyan rebels.

The main weakness of the Government's foreign policy, however, is the lack of strategic vision. Though we should shy away from a prescriptive doctrine, the Government does need to set out how it sees Britain and her role in the world. As with other areas of policy under the Coalition, the failure to articulate this vision makes it easy to overlook our successes, or to ascribe them to the Liberal Democrats.

Trade is one of the central principles that guides our approach to foreign policy, but it cannot be the only factor. This is especially so with the arms trade, where the Government needs to reconcile the promotion of exports with our commitment to human rights. Selling arms to authoritarian regimes is not in our long-term national interest, a fact brought into sharp focus during the Arab Spring. British principles of fairness, justice, human rights and support for democracy must inform our foreign policy. In opposition, Conservatives championed the cause of democracy in Burma. In Government, we must do more to help. 

Rethinking Africa

Richard Dowden reminds us that Africa is not just about poverty and commerce

Following the death of the Victorian missionary David Livingstone in 1873 two powerful narratives emerged from Africa.

The first was Livingstone's: "Help heal this open sore of the world"- calling on the world to save a suffering continent.

The second was the message of Verney Lovett Cameron, a naval officer, who retrieved Livingstone's body after his death at Ulala. That task done, Cameron walked off westwards to the Atlantic coast, the first outsider to walk across Africa. The message he brought back was that Africa was empty, had a healthy climate and was rich, stuffed with everything that industrializing Europe wanted from fertile land to ivory, copper and coal. His message was "come to Africa and fill your boots".

"In public the Chinese speak the language of equality and respect for Africa.

Unsurprisingly Africans like that"

So what has changed? At the Foreign Office, Henry Bellingham MP asked every African ambassador and High Commissioner at his first meeting what their trade figures with the UK were. At

DFID Andrew Mitchell MP is shoveling aid into Congo, Somalia, Rwanda and Sudan to save and improve African lives. We still only look at Africa through the lenses of commerce and aid. These two aspects of Africa are not untrue - there is wealth, and there is poverty and suffering - but our idea of Africa is limited to these two elements and has not changed in 150 years.

Compare our approach to that of the Chinese. From their first encounters with Africa in the 16th century the Chinese sought respect, trade and a few African animals for the Emperor's menagerie. They had no mission to save Africa, or to change it, or to recreate it in the image of China and convert its peoples to Confucianism. The Chinese no doubt felt - like the British - that their civilisation was the only Civilisation and the rest of the world was barbarous. But unlike the British they never tried to turn Africans into imitation Chinese people. It is the same today.


Despite being in a different economic and political league, in public the Chinese speak the language of equality and respect for Africa. They make no public judgements on Africa's politics or ways of doing things.

Unsurprisingly Africans like that. They

may be deeply suspicious of China's motives and objectives, but they do feel treated as equal partners.

"There is wealth, and there is poverty and suffering - but our idea of Africa is limited to these two elements and has not changed in 150 years"

The best thing that the British government could do for Africa is to change the way it thinks and talks about the continent. Poor starving Africa and rich profitable Africa are but two aspects - not untrue but exaggerated and utterly unrepresentative of 95% of the most diverse and rapidly changing continent on the planet.

Think of African nations as any other in the rest of the world, each with its own vital history and culture which extends far beyond the colonial legacy. Try to understand the outlook and attitudes that have grown out of that history. Meet its people as equals looking for mutual interests and ideas, not as victims needing to be saved or former subjects that have yet to grow up to be like us. Nelson Mandela is not the only African we have something to learn from. 

Celebrating the Commonwealth

The Commonwealth is a surprisingly modern institution - and uniquely suited to the challenges of the 21st Century, says Guy Stagg

The Commonwealth is perhaps the most extraordinary international body in the world. Made up of 54 independent nations, the Commonwealth's membership comprises around 31% of the world's population. The Commonwealth counts amongst its number all the world's major faiths, and some its oldest and largest democracies. It has grown to contain leading economies from almost every major trading block.

But it is the Commonwealth's demographic makeup that shows the greatest potential. Not only has its middle class expanded by one billion people over the past two decades, but over half of the Commonwealth's members are 25 or under. And it is this generation who will come to decide and define the organisation's role in the 21st Century.

However, as it stands few from this young, aspirant majority have any concept of the Commonwealth at all. In a survey of seven member nations, including India, only a third of respondents could name anything that it did. And the benefits of membership have certainly diminished. This can be seen in Britain, where the looser

migration channels and privileged trading relations once afforded to Commonwealth nations have been substituted by those of the European Union.

"The Commonwealth counts amongst its number all the world's major faiths, and some its oldest and largest democracies"

At the same time, the Commonwealth itself seems a weaker body, without a shared purpose or political will. The Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group took three years to suspend Fiji after the Fijian military seized power in 2006 and refused to hold democratic elections. Equally, before Mugabe pulled out of

the Commonwealth, several other Commonwealth nations were lobbying for Zimbabwe's membership to be reinstated, despite its complete rejection of the 1991 Harare Principles.

Furthermore, the Commonwealth has failed to speak out against human rights abuses by its members, most notably the treatment of homosexuals in Gambia and Malawi. Delay, inconsistency and silence all damage the organisation's credibility.

On becoming Foreign Secretary Rt Hon William Hague MP vowed to put the Commonwealth "back at the heart of British Foreign Policy". But to do this, he must prove that the Commonwealth still has a role to play in international relations. What is more, he must demonstrate that Britain can benefit from greater engagement. However, recent global events make Hague's task easier. Because they show that the Commonwealth's strengths make it uniquely well-placed to meet the challenges of the 21st Century. What are these strengths? First is the instinctive bond among its members. The shared networks of history and language, not to mention culture and sports, bind each



nation together. These relationships are in essence complex, diffuse and hard to quantify. They rely far more on influence than on enforcement. But in world that is increasingly interconnected and, as LSE's Charlie Beckett has argued, more "mediated", this influence is an ever more vital diplomatic tool.

Second is the example set by the Commonwealth's commitment to democracy. The Arab Spring has given new conviction to the belief that the yearning for democracy is universal. Yet that same belief was articulated by the Commonwealth's founding fathers. A shared commitment to a tolerant and civil society offers a powerful example. But more than that, it provides a democratic model that can be used throughout the world, while setting a moral standard that has been upheld across religious and racial divisions.

Third is the Commonwealth's own structure. Because it is a 'club' each member nation is treated equally. The concerns of the smallest countries are voiced alongside those of the biggest; the challenges for the poorest economies are given a platform next to those of the wealthiest. A club strengthens bilateral relations, while fostering a sense of shared responsibility. This makes it an ideal forum in which issues such as international aid or the damage caused

by climate change can be raised, where smaller countries are often the most adversely affected.

"The shared networks of history and language, not to mention culture and sports, bind each nation together"


In short, the Commonwealth's strength lies in its capacity to spread prosperity and democracy. This finds a parallel in the causes and concerns that unite the next generation. Therefore, although the Commonwealth came into being through historical relationships, it is a surprisingly modern institution. What is more, this modernity - the tolerant, equal and informal forum which the Commonwealth provides - should make it confident when meeting the challenges of the 21st Century.

By its very nature this forum allows for greater international security. That was the most important conclusion of Amartya Sen's essay *Peace and Democratic Society*. Drawing on the findings of the Commonwealth Commission of Respect and Understanding, Sen called for a global debate on the causes of violence, and a united political response. And, if the world is to agree on an international policy in response to such threats, then

"the Commonwealth, with its history and experience of dialogue, multilateralism and civil initiatives, can play a crucially important role."

If the UK is to maintain a global presence despite diminished resources, then the Commonwealth will be central to this ambition. William Hague is right to recognise the importance of the Commonwealth, and to emphasise again Britain's role within it. But how will his rhetoric be matched by action?

Education perhaps points the way forward. One of Hague's first measures on becoming Foreign Secretary was to weight the awarding of Chevening scholarships, for international students to study in the UK, towards applicants from Commonwealth countries. This serves not only to strengthen cultural ties, but to celebrate the Commonwealth.

And this celebration can be an end in itself. Because traditional institutions need not be outdated ones. Indeed, the process by which traditions evolve means they often contain greater complexity and sophistication than we can understand. When we celebrate these traditions, and the institutions which protect them, we recognise their lasting value. And recognising the wisdom of tradition is much of what it means to be a Conservative. 

Learning lessons from Libya

Con Coughlin claims the Government have made disastrous cuts to military capabilities, meaning our Armed Forces were insufficiently prepared in Libya

If any lesson is to be drawn from Britain's military involvement in NATO's Libya mission, it is that our Armed Forces still have a vital role to play in the conflicts of the future.

During last year's highly controversial re-evaluation of Britain's military capabilities, there were many in Whitehall who argued forcefully that Britain's recent involvement in the long, drawn-out conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan had done enormous damage

to our international reputation, and should in future be avoided at all costs.

"There were many in Whitehall who argued that Iraq and Afghanistan had done enormous damage to our international reputation, and should in future be avoided at all costs"

This was certainly the approach adopted

by the newly-established National Security Council, which in turn had a direct bearing on the outcome of the Government's Strategic Defence and Security Review. As a result, a number of key military capabilities were consigned to the scrapheap, including the aircraft carrier HMS Ark Royal and its fleet of Harrier jets, and the RAF's Nimrod reconnaissance aircraft.

And yet, no sooner had the Government instituted these draconian measures than



it found itself involved in yet another messy conflict in Libya, where a mission that originally began to protect Libyan civilians against the murderous designs of government forces quickly morphed into a campaign to overthrow the regime of Libyan dictator Colonel Muammar Gaddafi.

The limitations of the NATO mission quickly became apparent, as only a handful of member states were prepared to undertake combat missions against pro-Gaddafi forces.

Crucially, the disinclination of the United States to continue its involvement in the campaign beyond its initial assault on Gaddafi's air defence batteries exposed the limitations of NATO's Europe-based capabilities. As a result, it fell to Britain and France to conduct the lion's share of combat operations, with the Royal Air Force and its French equivalent undertaking around 75% of the combat sorties flown against Gaddafi's forces.


Britain's contribution, moreover, was severely handicapped by the fact that the Armed Forces no longer had an aircraft carrier strike capability and the retirement of the Nimrod surveillance aircraft a few weeks into the air campaign. The French, who were able to deploy the Charles de Gaulle aircraft carrier, were able to generate three times more combat sorties than the RAF,

which at one point was required to fly long-range bombing missions from its bases in Britain. The withdrawal of Nimrod, meanwhile, severely curtailed NATO's ability to monitor the activities of pro-Gaddafi forces.

The NATO mission was ultimately successful in achieving the overthrow of Gaddafi's regime, but the British Government nevertheless needs to learn a number of important lessons.

"The French, who were able to deploy the Charles de Gaulle aircraft carrier, were able to generate three times more combat sorties than the RAF"

The main lesson is that, despite its disinclination to involve itself in overseas military adventures, the Government cannot ignore the fact that events beyond its control will force its hand.

Indeed, the recent wave of anti-government protests that have erupted throughout the Arab world has made future military interventions more, not less, likely. It is therefore incumbent on the Government to ensure that, rather than cutting key military capabilities, it provides the Armed Forces with the equipment and manpower they require to guarantee future overseas military interventions are able to achieve their stated goals. 

"The recent wave of anti-government protests that have erupted throughout the Arab world has made future military interventions more, not less, likely"

Intelligence on immigration

Conservative policies simply reinforce the impression that immigration is to blame for social ills. Matt Cavanagh argues that ill-considered immigration policies will damage Britain's interests

Like Labour before them, the Conservatives are determined to reassure voters that immigration will be more tightly controlled and more selective: Britain will choose the migrants we want or need - the 'brightest and best' - and keep out those we don't.

But will a Conservative-led government succeed where Labour was seen to have failed? The stubborn refusal of immigration numbers to fall, and the increasingly quixotic-looking decision to focus on 'net migration' - inherently harder to control, as well as less intuitive than simple immigration, or non-British immigration - have led some to wonder whether this issue might become a vulnerability rather than a strength.

The hope must be that numbers will start to fall eventually, and even if they don't fall far enough, more people will praise the Conservatives for having tried, than attack them for missing the target. They shouldn't need reminding, however, of the risks of politicians breaking promises, particularly on an issue as emotive as this one.

Immigration and Britain's interests

A second and equally fundamental question is whether the Coalition

Government's efforts to reach this elusive target will damage Britain's wider interests. Over the last year, the immigration debate has tended to focus on the potential effects on business and on the economy - rightly so, given the broader context.

"Shorter-staying migrants send more money home in remittances, which contribute far more to the developing world than either aid or foreign investment"

This makes some of the individual policies hard to defend. For example, Tier 1 of the points-based system insists on a category of migrants who deserve an opportunity not through being tied to a particular job or employer but based on their individual qualifications and talents. This might have needed reform, but it remains attractive as well as having a sound economic basis. Maybe not all who were coming here through this route were the right ones, but considered purely on its merits, would Conservatives really choose to close it down, to achieve a reduction in overall immigration of less than three per cent?

This highlights the wider risk that the net migration target is driving some of

the harshest restrictions on the kinds of migrants who are the most valuable economically, simply because these are the easiest numbers to cut - a big risk at a time when returning to growth is our national priority.

As well as the short-term risk to the economy, there is the longer-term risk to our influence abroad. In a speech in early September 2011, William Hague argued that if we want to protect our national interests, and escape "strategic shrinkage", we must invest in bilateral relationships with an increasingly wide range of countries, "putting in place now the relationships we will rely on to remain a prosperous, influential and secure nation in twenty years, when configurations of global power and influence will be very different to today".

Viewed in this context, being a country with relatively high immigration starts to look like an advantage.

Rather than worrying about immigrants coming over here and taking our jobs, we should consider the benefits of young people coming from a huge number of countries to study in our universities, or simply to live and work in London or other cities for a few years and then return home - with a lifelong affiliation

and, we might hope, affection for this country, as well as a network of British contacts.

Even without major shifts in policy, migration is becoming less permanent and more temporary, or 'circular'. This increases the benefit to both countries, as returning workers take skills and capital back home, while maintaining strong links with Britain. Shorter-staying migrants tend to use fewer services and also send more money home in remittances, which contribute far more to the developing world than either aid or foreign investment.

"Fears of accelerating population growth may be misplaced: throughout history, birth rates of migrants and their descendants have tended to converge on that of their host country"

Recent Government proposals on settlement aim to exploit temporary migration, but in a crude way, by compelling all economic migrants to return home after five years. While it is always tempting to talk tough on immigration, this is one of many areas where carrots - schemes which incentivise returning workers - are better than sticks. Other countries have

tried the compulsory approach in the past and failed: the policy proves almost unenforceable.

Just as importantly, it risks putting off those migrants we most want to attract. Not all economic migrants intend to settle: in fact, fewer than half settle even when given the opportunity. But most of them value the option, and it is often a significant factor in their choice of destination.

Taking that option away makes sense if our sole aim is reducing net migration, but not if we are serious about attracting the brightest and best, and cementing Britain's place in a networked world.

The facts behind the figures

Since it often seems to be the net migration target which is driving the most damaging policies, Conservatives - along with the other mainstream parties - should take a hard look at the prevailing wisdom that Britain is 'full up'.

It is really London and the South East which is crowded, rather than Britain as a whole, and the crowding is driven by economics more than immigration - though clearly immigration adds to it. Suppose we had a net migration rate fluctuating around 100,000 or even 150,000 per year. Over ten years, that

would add a million and a half to our population: far from trivial, and definitely in need of proper planning, but a lower rate of growth than Britain experienced between 1900 and 1970, and much lower than most of the countries whose influence in the world is growing.

Of course, natural population growth has to be added to that, and as opponents of immigration quickly point out, this is higher among recent migrants. But their fears of accelerating population growth may be misplaced: throughout history, birth rates of migrants and their descendants have tended to converge on that of their host country, just as birth rates of country folk moving to the cities have tended to converge on their new neighbours.

And if you look at the countries which actually achieve the alternative of zero or negative net migration, it is hardly a list of countries which are happy and confident in their position in the world.

Cross-party consensus?

The deeper point is that in the long run, all political parties share an interest in being more honest with voters about the extent to which immigration levels are really driven by government policy, rather than global trends, or the state and shape of our economy. For example, neither Labour nor the Conservatives



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know what to say about the immigration of low-skill workers from Eastern Europe.

They are desperate to reassure people that there won't be a zero-sum game with the jobs and wages of those already here.

The Spectator's Fraser Nelson recently characterized David Cameron's problem as the "nightmare that the economy recovers, but does so by sucking in immigrant labour rather than shortening British dole queues." This is strikingly similar to Labour's last manifesto, which committed to "ensuring that as growth returns, we will see rising levels of employment, skills and wages not more immigration".

It turns out that the difference between the parties is small, given that neither seriously contemplates leaving the EU.

They argue about the relatively minor issue of transitional controls, when they should be confronting the real problem that too many British firms are stuck in low-skill, low-value business models, arguably over-reliant on migrant labour but also holding back national productivity and contributing to wage stagnation and the "squeeze" on middle incomes.

The debate would be healthier and more constructive if all sides admitted that

immigration can be influenced, but not neatly controlled - and avoided the easy option of blaming immigration for problems which run far deeper.

The message is key

Finally, politics is not just about the right policies, but also the right language: sending the right message to the public at home and our friends and allies abroad. Conservative ministers choose to keep sending the message to the domestic audience that immigration is not just high but "out of control", the economy not just reliant on immigration but "addicted" to it, and so on. Talking up the problems you have inherited is a perfectly respectable political tactic, but is also a limited and limiting one.


"I would hope those who accept the responsibility of balancing short-term popularity with long-term national interest would try to steer their party back to a confident language of global influence rather than insularity and fear"

Meanwhile, potential friends abroad are hearing the message that Britain is fearful, turning inwards, 'closed for business'. I am not one of those who believe politicians are responsible for creating public concern about

immigration. That concern is genuine, and goes beyond the perceived pressure on jobs and wages, beyond concern about our "crowded island", to a feeling, cutting across social classes, that our way of life is under threat.

Politicians are responding to this feeling, not leading it. In some ways this is more comfortable territory for the Conservatives, but in truth it uncovers fault-lines within both major parties, between those most worried about a declining sense of national identity or solidarity on the one hand; and on the other, those who take a wider view: the notorious 'metropolitan elite', and the business lobby, but also those who believe that globalisation is here to stay and that despite our problems, Britain remains well-placed to benefit from it, because of our geography, history, and culture.

I understand why many Conservatives, especially those who feel frustrated by coalition politics, want to see their party being ever tougher on a popular issue like immigration.

But I would hope those who accept the responsibility of balancing short-term popularity with long-term national interest would try to steer their party back, sooner rather than later, to a confident language of global influence rather than one of insularity and fear. 

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A stronger Europe

*The EU must embrace and deepen the transatlantic relationship to stop the decline of the West, says **Maurice Fraser***

From progressive eclipse to ultimate obscurity - such is the fate of the West, confidently announced in a steady stream of monographs, in the client briefings of management consultancies, in every half-serious weekly in the world's airport lounges, and at seminars, conferences and high-level meetings from Davos to Mumbai to Singapore. Is this true? And if so, does it matter? There are good reasons why the West is worth saving from the quaint and dusty iconography of the Cold War and the spy thriller genre. That is the subject of another essay. The question for now is what, if anything, can Europe do to mitigate or, better still, arrest a seemingly inexorable process of decline?

But let's remember briefly why the concept of the West speaks to something important in our lives. It is a shared space of values, inherited from the Bible and the Greeks. It is a foundational concept in the humanities and the social sciences, and in the conversational currency of geopolitics. And it denotes a powerful community of interests - one which underpins the world's only credible, tried and tested organisation for collective security, NATO. For the UK, membership of the Atlantic Alliance has for over 60 years been one of the two central planks of our foreign and security policy. And, for nearly 40 years

(to our overwhelming national advantage), membership of the European Union has been the other plank - one which, perversely, the eurosceptics resolutely refuse to allow successive British governments to explain to the British people through any public information campaign, as this would apparently constitute 'propaganda'. But the UK will remain a full member of the EU, and it is in the British national interest to use that membership to the West's advantage.

The challenge facing policymakers remains the perennial one: how to translate the ties that bind Europe and North America into shared analyses and common strategies? NATO has done so, impressively, through Article 5 and its collective security guarantee. But for much of the last 20-odd years, the narratives of transatlantic unity and Western leadership have taken a series of batterings. To the usual cast-list of suspects - much of the left-wing intelligentsia in Europe, isolationists and flat-earthers in the US - we have had to add rather more mainstream voices, who have found a wider audience than that of Europe's far-left voters. Their influence has been baleful.

First was the attempt in the 1990s by some of the more enthusiastic

supporters of European integration to shape a European identity against rather than alongside its US ally. It found expression in the aspiration of a handful of EU member states, led by France, to build a European defence identity separate from NATO.

Then came the mission to make the EU a powerful actor on the world stage, championing multilateralism, the international rule of law and the peaceful resolution of disputes - a laudable ambition, but conceived more as a riposte to perceived US adventurism and high-handedness than as a valuable complement to the US-led hard power which some crises will demand.

Fortunately, even before the end of George W. Bush's second administration, wiser counsels were prevailing, transatlantic bridges were mended, and the idea of a free-standing defence capability for the EU outside the Atlantic Alliance was shelved. The arrival of 12 new, overwhelmingly Atlanticist, EU members helped, as did the election of US-friendly heads of government, first in Germany with Angela Merkel and two years later, mirabile dictu, in France, with Nicolas Sarkozy. France's re-integration into NATO's military structure set the seal on the improving trend in transatlantic relations.

All EU members are now agreed that NATO will remain the main security show in town. Meanwhile, President Obama has (not before time) found a language - most ringingly, in Westminster Hall in May - to reassure his European allies that the Western alliance will remain the lynchpin of US foreign and security policy, to be used in the service of freedom, democracy and human rights across the world.

“All European governments urgently need to invest in their militaries if NATO defence guarantees - let alone its capacity for out-of-area operations - are to remain credible”

So far, so good, but there is a lot more work to do on both sides, if the managed decline of the West is not to become a self-fulfilling prophecy. For Europeans, economic reforms to rebuild competitiveness, a credible system of governance for the euro, boosting innovation and Research & Development (especially in green technologies), and concentration on the high end of the value chain will all be crucial to mitigate the economic and demographic shift from West to East.

But it is as a global security actor that

the West's self-belief most urgently needs to be re-kindled. For Europeans the first challenge is to maintain credible defence capabilities in the face of massive budgetary pressures. The fact that the US military is set to undergo large cuts - including to its presence on the European continent - should not be taken as an excuse to renege yet again on the goal of more effective burden-sharing with the Americans.

In the Libyan conflict, only eight out of 28 NATO allies were able to send combat forces. On present trends, it is unlikely that the Europeans will be able to mount another such operation in future.


With Germany writing itself out of the military script in Libya, to the dismay of London, Paris and Washington, it is clearer than ever that the main burden of Western security will be carried in future by the US, the UK and France. This has an inescapable logic, but it is not a sustainable solution: all European governments urgently need to invest in their militaries if NATO defence guarantees - let alone its capacity for out-of-area operations - are to remain credible.

Meanwhile, the EU needs to raise its game in foreign policy. Its member states do in fact take common positions and agree measures on a day-to-day basis - no mean feat after centuries of

rivalry and conflict. But these seldom grab the headlines. And national interests - usually commercial - all too often trump coherent policymaking towards China and Russia, for example.

The establishment of the European External Action Service suggests a determination to will the means as well the end of an effective European foreign policy. Its expertise should make it easier to develop common analyses, strategies and policies. It is still early days, and the cynics would do well to suspend judgement for now - or propose something better.

In all the world's zones of instability - the Middle East, North Africa, the EU's eastern neighbourhood of Belarus, Ukraine and the Caucasus, the Horn of Africa - there is a clear western interest, which happens to be the global interest too. Common sense dictates that these threats can only be confronted and managed if Europeans and North Americans see themselves as committed partners, not reluctant allies.

The Libyan conflict has shown, for the first time, that Europeans are ready to take responsibility for their own neighbourhood, with all the costs and risks attached, and to positive effect. Let us hope that the lessons are quickly drawn, in Washington and EU capitals alike. 



A liberal climate

The West has always championed individual choice and entrepreneurship. This is the way to tackle climate change, says Garvan Walshe

Freedom distinguishes the Western political tradition. People, choosing their own gods, lives, and political leaders; men and women discovering new scientific truth, creating new art, starting radical new businesses. Never mind the received wisdom, orthodox aesthetics, or entrenched position of the dominant firm. The Western mind is restless, impatient and disruptive.

It's also infectious. People everywhere, as we've seen so clearly this year in the Middle East, rush to this ideal, embracing it even as politicians, intellectuals and captains of industry in the West insist that it's far too inconvenient to spread democratic politics, liberal culture and capitalist society. New democracies are less pliable allies; globalising culture less pure; and the companies they produce

more formidable competitors. But when it comes to climate change, we seem to have forgotten the source of the vitality of Western civilisation that so inspires non-Westerners. There's no question we took the issue seriously. Institutions of state and international organisations commissioned rigorous research by top-notch scientists and leading economists.

This told us that if Western nations, acting rationally, in coordinated fashion, could identify the scientifically determined steps that needed to be taken, then they could keep the large costs of climate change mitigation and adaptation to a minimum.

Governments rich, poor, and somewhere in between, would agree to the framework of policies the experts had derived. Their costs would be


distributed impartially according to a sound ethical model, and all this central coordination would keep cost low. The deal was to have been sealed at Copenhagen almost two years ago.

"We need to get to the supply side: to harness the profit motive so that the products and services people want - the cars, the steaks and yes the flights abroad - use fewer and fewer greenhouse gases every year"

To the intelligentsia, this was exactly how it should be, but too many others remain unconvinced. People in the rich world who resent costs imposed by a political elite because of complex scientific conclusions they don't

understand. People in emerging economies suspicious of their former colonial masters' claims that Western-style industrialisation is not sustainable any more (Is this, they ask, thinly disguised protectionism?) In the UK, the Coalition has borrowed wholesale the technocratic, top-down, big government Brown-Miliband decarbonisation.

Its momentum will carry it on for a while, but it doesn't have public support for the higher energy bills this plan intends to make consumers pay. Perhaps at the height of the boom people might not have noticed. Things will be different at the next election. We need to think about how to adapt green politics to this harsher climate.

It seems we may have overestimated the ability of elites to direct and coordinate policies that drill into every aspect of people's lives. So far green policy has been led by the demand side: from taxes to deter consumption, to subsidies for solar power. We need to get to the supply side, not just energy but the firms that use it: to harness the profit motive so that the products and services people want - the cars, the steaks and yes the flights abroad - use fewer and fewer greenhouse gases every year. This isn't the conventional environmentalist way, but the West has become what it is by experimentation, trial and error, and progress from the bottom up. It's time we lived up to that tradition. 

A new chapter in Rwanda

Stephen Crabb MP describes the successes of Project Umubano

In 2007, 43 volunteers travelled to Rwanda to begin a new social action project for the Conservative Party.

If you had told those people that by 2011 they'd have built a school and a health centre, set up two libraries, seen 5,000 medical patients, trained 3,000 teachers and 1,300 school examiners, held football coaching sessions for 2,000 children, advised 150 businesses, pioneered a government research department, started plans for a cricket stadium and begun legal, medical and educational programmes in Sierra Leone, they would probably have laughed. But that is just a part of what Project Umubano's volunteers have achieved.

What began as a small mission has become the UK's largest political social action project in Africa. We're now helping two of Africa's poorest countries, and over 250 people have travelled to work on our projects there. Our numbers grow each year, as does the ground we cover.

When David Cameron MP and Andrew Mitchell MP set up Umubano, they were determined that the project would provide more than just donations. They wanted to establish something that would make the most of the skills of the

Rwandan people, using their advice to offer help to where it was most needed.

They wanted volunteers to work alongside Rwandans to develop partnerships that would last long after our return to the UK. With that in mind, they pioneered schemes to teach skills in education, sport, health, justice, community and the private sector.

Now, Umubano volunteers travel the country with ever-growing partnerships. We work with Rwandan teaching colleges giving teachers the skills to pass on English to their classes. We help small companies develop business plans that can be built on in the future. We train football coaches in partnership with the Football Association (FA), so that they may go on to train young children. We have established a Post Graduate Degree in Surgery with the Rwandan Ministry of Health. We even hope to train a new generation of Rwandan dentists.

We've also built lasting UK partnerships on the ground. Umubano has been a direct catalyst for a major partnership between a UK city law firm and Rwandan justice officials. We have helped to establish an emerging football coaching relationship between the English and Rwandan Football



A. Doorey

Associations. Several schools in the UK are also now twinned with schools in Rwanda with teachers engaging in two-way exchanges. In a unique move by the Conservatives, Parliamentary Resources Unit (PRU) representatives have travelled out to develop a new bipartisan research department in the Rwandan Senate to provide research facilities for Senators. In Sierra Leone, we are helping to train lawyers and medics across the country. For the first

time this year we have joined up with UK charity Street Child of Sierra Leone, working in the classroom and on the streets of the capital to bring vulnerable children back into the education system.

Some volunteers have even returned to begin projects of their own. In 2007, Brooks Newmark MP was so struck by his visit to a school on the verge of closure that he set up an education charity and helped to save it.

The charity did so much more than to fix the roof - they worked to reform the school's education structure, providing the tools for teachers to continue their learning framework for years to come.

Girubuntu primary school is now ready for its 300 pupils to begin the new school year and was officially opened by Rwandan President Paul Kagame, who thanked Umubano and Brooks for their dedication. It's the same story in rural Kirambi, where London GP Sharon Bennett saw villagers carrying their sick children more than 5km to see a nurse.

She returned each year, bringing physicians, dentists, surgeons and psychiatric nurses to teach their skills.

In 2011 Sharon had raised enough to build a rural health outpost that will provide better access to services like

child immunisations for many years to come.

"In rural Kirambi, London GP Sharon Bennett saw villagers carrying their sick children more than 5km to see a nurse. She returned each year, bringing physicians and nurses to teach their skills. In 2011 Sharon had raised enough to build a rural health outpost"

And the greatly missed Umubano pioneer Christopher Shale also returned every year to build on the success of his community project, working with charities helping genocide survivors.

In 1994, one million Rwandans were slaughtered in less than three months. The project Christopher began supports the charities giving hope to the thousands who were orphaned, widowed or deliberately infected with HIV during the massacre. Many Rwandans still need help beyond the power of the state, and Umubano's work with those charities will continue in Christopher's memory.

We're often asked if the government pays for our visits. It doesn't; every volunteer pays for their own trip, as well as independently appealing for

donations. In fact, this year we helped to transport school equipment, Asda cricket sets, footballs, school uniforms and a metric ton of English dictionaries to Rwanda. We've also had outstanding fundraising efforts, particularly one of our football coaches who appealed to British football clubs and sports charities and brought out 2,000 donated football kits. But Umubano is much more than a fundraising initiative.

As project leader, it's my responsibility to make sure that we don't just arrive in Africa, work for two weeks and leave

nothing behind. Though our donations have value, it is the legacy of Umubano that is key. To uphold that legacy, we focus on a long-term solution that works. The projects develop with the initiative of the people in both countries long after we return to the UK, and the progress made between visits is testament to that approach. There's no specific thing that makes the project work, but the variety of skills and abilities in the group has made it a truly unique venture. As Christopher Shale said: "We're absolutely interdependent: none of us, individually, has all the skills

we need, but the whole is so much greater than the sum of the parts." As our numbers increase, we bring together greater skills and experiences, overcoming greater challenges and building new ideas. Together, in Rwanda and Sierra Leone, we are writing the next chapter.

For more information about Project Umubano, or if you are interested in joining or supporting Project Umubano 2012, please contact Abi Green at abo.projectumubano@live.co.uk or visit www.conservatives.com/umubano



Two wrongs don't make a right

Peter Tatchell says gay marriage is a Conservative value

Marriage is a Conservative value. So why did David Cameron, George Osborne and Theresa May take so long to support the right of lesbian and gay couples to get married?

The government has announced that it will consult on legalising same-sex marriage. But not until March 2012. Why the long delay? The consultation was supposed to start last June.

Moreover, the terms of reference explicitly exclude legalising opposite-sex civil partnerships and same-sex religious marriages by faith organisations that wish to conduct them.

It is odd that the Prime Minister wants to maintain the discriminatory laws that prohibit gay couples from having a religious marriage and heterosexual couples from having a civil partnership. Surely everyone should have a free and equal choice?

While religious bodies should not be forced to marry same-sex couples, those that want to marry gay partners - such as the Quakers, Unitarians and Liberal Judaism - should be permitted by law to do so.

The Prime Minister's proclaimed liberal Conservatism rings hollow by opposing

this - he can't trumpet the western values of liberty and equality abroad when denying it here in the UK. Can't he see the contradiction?

Conservatives rightly encourage and approve loving, stable relationships because enduring care and commitment are good for individuals, families and for the well-being of society as a whole.

"Prohibiting black people from getting married would provoke uproar and accusations of racism"

Contrary to what the critics say, gay marriage doesn't undermine marriage, it strengthens it. At a time when large numbers of heterosexuals are cohabitating and not getting married, isn't it a good thing that many same-sex couples still believe in marriage and want to be part of it?

The elimination of discrimination in marriage law is consistent with modern, liberal Conservatism, and with the Prime Minister's personal pledge to eradicate homophobia and ensure gay equality.

The Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, understands this. That's why he wants the law changed to allow same-sex

couples to marry. So do Tory MPs Margot James, Mike Weatherley and Chloe Smith. But, sadly, I am not aware of any other Conservative MPs who support marriage equality.

Under the current law, not only are gay couples banned from having a civil marriage in a register office, heterosexuals are banned from having a civil partnership. Two wrongs don't make a right. In a democratic society, we should all be equal before the law. This means that both civil marriages and civil partnerships should be open to all couples, without discrimination.

Nearly two-thirds of the British people back marriage equality. In June 2009, a Populus opinion poll found that 61% of the public agree: "Gay couples should have an equal right to get married, not just to have civil partnerships." Only 33% disagreed. We can probably safely assume that a similar poll today would reveal even greater support for gay civil marriages - and for the right of heterosexuals to have a civil partnership.

To challenge the current legal discrimination, eight British couples - four gay and four heterosexual - have filed a joint legal application to the European Court of Human Rights. They are seeking to overturn the twin bans on

gay civil marriages and heterosexual civil partnerships.

The eight couples are part of the Equal Love campaign which seeks to open up both civil marriages and civil partnerships to all couples, without discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Prohibiting black people from getting married would provoke uproar and accusations of racism. The prohibition on gay civil marriages should provoke similar outrage, as should the equally reprehensible exclusion of heterosexual couples from civil partnerships.

The bans on same-sex civil marriages and opposite-sex civil partnerships create a system of legal segregation, with one law for gay couples and another law for heterosexual partners. Segregation is incompatible with caring, compassionate Conservatism.

The legal advisor to the eight couples and author of their legal application is Professor Robert Wintemute of the School of Law at Kings College London. Outlining the legal basis of the Equal Love challenge, he said: "Banning same-sex marriage and different-sex civil partnerships violates Articles 8, 12 and 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights. It's discriminatory and obnoxious, like having separate drinking

fountains or beaches for different racial groups. The only function of the twin bans is to mark lesbian and gay people as socially and legally inferior to heterosexual people."

Since there is no substantive difference in the rights and responsibilities involved in gay civil marriages and heterosexual civil partnerships, there is no justification for having two mutually exclusive and discriminatory systems.

"David Cameron should do the right thing by opening up civil marriages and civil partnerships to everyone"

One of the same-sex plaintiffs, Matthew Toresen, explained: "Scott and I have been together for over 18 years. Our love for each other is as valid as anybody else's. It seems nonsensical to me that my two brothers are married to the women they love but that Scott and I are denied this social legitimacy and celebration". His partner Scott Maloney added: "As a gay man, I am expected to pay taxes, obey the laws and, if necessary, defend this country like everybody else. In return, I expect the state to treat me equally".


One of the opposite-sex plaintiffs, Stephanie Munro said: "The institution of marriage has never appealed to me.

We're equal partners and we want to make an official, lifetime commitment to each other. But we don't want to participate in a marriage system that has patriarchal foundations and rejects same-sex couples. We'd prefer a civil partnership".

The Greens and Liberal Democrats support reform, as does Labour leader Ed Miliband. The SNP and Plaid Cymru are expected to soon embrace equality. With this emerging cross-party consensus, and the backing of nearly two-thirds of the public, legislating equality would prompt little resistance and generate much goodwill for the Conservatives.

David Cameron should do the right thing by opening up civil marriages and civil partnerships to everyone, without discrimination.

It's a win-win no brainer for the Conservative Party. It would cost almost nothing, promote marriage, win the respect of gay and liberal heterosexual voters, and burnish the government's progressive credentials at a time when it faces widespread criticism over public spending cuts. Over to you, David.

For more information about the Equal Love campaign and to sign the petition, please visit the following: www.equallove.org.uk 

It's right to ring-fence the aid budget

Brendan Cox insists that the contribution of British taxpayers to international aid transforms lives

Protecting aid in a domestic economic downturn is a political challenge. As an organisation working to tackle child poverty in the UK, Save the Children can see the effects of spending cuts first hand. But our experience in developing countries also tells us that the Government's decision to stick to its promise to give 0.7% of gross national income as overseas aid is absolutely the right thing to do.

"Official aid does things that private aid usually cannot do"

British aid has enabled dramatic progress in poor countries and is lifesaving. On Sierra Leone, UKAid has enabled the government to provide free health care for pregnant and breastfeeding mothers and children under five. As a result of this change, 230,000 women and 950,000 children will receive vital, often life-saving assistance.

The UK's financial contribution to the Global Alliance on Vaccines and Immunizations (GAVI) will vaccinate one child every two seconds for the next five years, immunising 80 million children in all and saving 1.4 million lives. Forthcoming increases in the UK aid budget offer exceptional value for

money. With less than 1% of government spending, the UK will secure schooling for a further 11 million children and save the lives of 50,000 women in pregnancy and childbirth.

Meanwhile reneging on the UK's aid commitments would cost thousands of children's lives and threaten the opportunities of millions more. It would jeopardise the last decade's dramatic but fragile gains.

According to Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, any reduction in aid "would slow private-sector growth, stall poverty reduction, and undermine peace and stability in countries that are struggling to become part of the global economy."

In recent months some have highlighted the charitable generosity of the British public, arguing that the UK government doesn't need to give aid too. But Save the Children have learnt the importance of working in partnership with the UK Government, because we know that official aid does things that private aid usually cannot do.


The UK government is able to work directly with other governments at the highest level to build capacity and develop policy. This 'development

diplomacy' often plays an important role in putting poverty higher on the agenda of developing countries' governments than would otherwise be the case.

In addition official aid is on a scale, and delivered at a level where it can effectively support the developing countries' government to take on responsibility for delivering essential services, providing security and managing the economy and public finances effectively.

Private aid, from foundations and charities, can and should complement official aid by achieving major impact at the community level, and generating demand for good governance and public accountability. Save the Children is working across a number of countries, within communities, to support an increase in trained health workers.

One billion people will never see a health worker in their lives. But to change this situation, in the long term, donor governments need to support poor countries to fund recurrent expenditures like health worker training.

By providing this kind of support, UKAid will have the most cost effective and lasting impact upon the lives of poor people. 

SAVE THE CHILDREN'S 2011 CONSERVATIVE PARTY CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Monday 3 October, 5.30-7pm
Manchester Central, Room 3

**IN THE NATION'S INTEREST: WHAT IS
BRITAIN'S ROLE IN SHAPING THE 21ST
CENTURY FOR THE GREATER GOOD?**

Chair: David Rennie,
Political Editor, The Economist

Rt Hon David Lidington MP, Foreign Office minister

Shane Greer, Executive Editor, Total Politics

Justin Forsyth, Chief Executive, Save the Children

Andrew Dunnett, Director, Vodafone Foundation

Dr Alex Vines, Director of Regional and Security
Studies, Chatham House

Tuesday 4 October, 12.30-2pm
Midland Hotel, Lancaster Suite

**STRENGTHENING FAMILIES, BOOSTING
CHILDREN'S CHANCES**

Chair: Fergus Drake,
Director of UK Programmes, Save the Children

Maria Miller MP,
DWP minister responsible for child poverty

Professor Geoff Lindsay,
Warwick University

Martyn Jones,
Group Corporate Services Director, Morrisons
Parent from Families and Schools Together
programme

Refreshments will be served at all events. All venues are wheelchair accessible.

SAVE THE CHILDREN AND CONSERVATIVEHOME EVENING RECEPTION

Tuesday 4 October, 9.30-11pm Midland Hotel, Alexandra A suite

Special guests to include:

Rt Hon George Osborne MP,
Chancellor of the Exchequer

Tim Montgomerie,
Editor, ConservativeHome

Samantha Cameron,
Save the Children Ambassador

Justin Forsyth,
Chief Executive, Save the Children
Martyn Jones,
Group Corporate Services Director, Morrisons



Contact us on governmentrelations@savethechildren.org.uk
www.savethechildren.org.uk/conference2011

In partnership with



Save the Children

See how the experts fall

Western societies are witnessing growing mistrust of authority, prompting radical cultural change.

By Henneke Sharif

One of the most striking aspects of recent scandalous events - from phone hacking to MPs expenses - has been witnessing a series of institutions in meltdown. This meltdown is a sign of our culture in crisis.

Such events raise wider questions than rogue personnel. They make us question institutions that are meant to fulfill a particular role in society, acting as our guides. And our institutions matter. Part of a post-Enlightenment settlement, august bodies staffed by experts in their field are meant to be the places in which society reaches informed consensus, in which we decide who we are and how we live.

We live in a time when it is unclear where to look for answers. The result is that institutions that have been central to our culture are now in some jeopardy. Catherine Fieschi, Director of the cultural risk consultancy Counterpoint, suggests across the west we could be seeing a growing and toxic separation between traditional expert elites and the people. She argues: "The breakdown of authority based on expertise and professionalism, combined with the spectacle of apparent ineptitude flashed across the world, has led to the shunning and ridiculing of experts and resulted in a vacuum of authority."

The problem is wider than the recent scandals. In 2009, when hacked emails from the influential Climate Research Unit at the University of East Anglia seemed to show widespread massaging of climate data, public trust in the independence of scientists took a knock. A decade earlier, the MMR controversy provided an example of the confusion among experts, and of the public taking matters into their own hands.

The scientific community, in fact, has been quicker to recognise the gap opening up between the experts and the public than many of the other professions. The Public Understanding of Science programme was created in part to close the gap between elite decision making and the wider public, to take the mystery out of the process.

When Ipsos-MORI publishes its regular nationwide poll on Trust in the Professions, it's not just a source of prurient interest on who's going to the dogs the quickest in the public's mind (politicians, since you ask, followed closely by journalists and bankers); it's an early warning system, a canary giving us important clues about the health of our culture. The poll shows that, over recent years, with a few notable exceptions, trust in our professional classes is steadily declining.

Western culture is at the biggest turning point in its history since the Enlightenment. Then, the Enlightenment brought the importance of rationality and scientific inquiry. It introduced a new politics and a new public realm based on disinterested inquiry, and ushered in a whole new class of people, the new middle class. It is this class that has, in the prevailing 200 odd years, morphed into the professional class that staffs our institutions.

"We live in a time when we are unclear where to look for answers"

The concepts forged in the Enlightenment underpin our culture today, they guide the way we live our lives. As the twin tenets of modern western culture - expertise and rationality, and their guardians - the professions and institutions - fall away, we need to ask what will replace them?

Twitter has become the go to source for breaking news, insights about the scandals and the main players.

When MP Tom Watson momentarily glanced down at his lap during the News International evidence session, the twitterati exclaimed as one: 'he was

going to tweet live updates from the heart of the committee.' Watson was in fact merely looking at his lap, but the excitement generated at that moment is telling for the extent to which social media is being seen as a battering ram breaking down the citadel.

Social media may be part of the change, but its own brand of populism is not without problems. Personally, I'd look to the power of diasporas, with their network of social and political bonds that reach right across national boundaries. When a major international

incident hit UK headlines, with the kidnapping of British couple the Chandlers by Somali pirates, it was a quietly spoken Somali cab driver in Leytonstone who was instrumental in securing their release.

"As the twin tenets of modern western culture - expertise and rationality, and their guardians - the professions and institutions - fall away, we need to ask what will replace them?"

Of course anyone would be a fool to try and second-guess the cultural forces that will shape the west's future. What we do know is that what we've got won't do any longer. Fieschi sounds a warning that the very Enlightenment forces that have shaped us may now be our undoing: "Societies such as ours wedded to hierarchical institutions, control and closure, no matter how high their growth potential, will struggle to adapt to the new age they find themselves in." The big question for the West now is how can we get the mix right again? 

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... to be the best parent I can be

... to keep in touch with my kids despite my marriage breakup

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... to win my battle with alcohol

... to end this abusive relationship

... to keep my family together

... to keep my troubled teenager on the straight and narrow

Visit the 4Children exhibition stand at the Conservative Party Conference for more information

bright blue @ Conservative Party Conference 2011

Conference Drink Tank 2011

With Nick Boles MP



Drink Tank is a chance to meet, network, chat, have a beer and share ideas with Bright Blue. At the Conservative Party Conference this year Bright Blue is proud to welcome Nick Boles MP as our guest speaker.

At the Conference Drink Tank, we will launch the third edition of our magazine, The Progressive Conservative, with articles from Will Hutton, Ian Birrell, Sir Malcom Rifkind MP and Peter Tatchell.

Nick Boles was elected MP for Grantham and Stamford in 2010. He is PPS to the Schools Minister Nick Gibb and sits on the Select Committee for Political and Constitutional Affairs. He set up Policy Exchange, the influential centre-right think tank and in September 2010 he published his first book "Which Way's Up? The future for coalition Britain and how to get there". He is also a current member of the Bright Blue Advisory Board.

Date:

Monday 3rd October 2011, 21.30-23.00

Venue:

Chester Suite, Midland Hotel, Manchester

Refreshments will be available

RSVP:

Please RSVP to brightblueinvites@googlemail.com

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PEARSON

An ageing society: fairness and security

for all With Penny Mordaunt MP



The debate will examine how services for older people such as pensions and social care can and should be funded in the future, the response to the Dilnot report and the net effect on social and economic growth from higher numbers of older people.

In particular, the event seeks to investigate how older people's views are best represented in government and how we can best sustain and strengthen the services older people rely on, particularly for the most vulnerable.

Speakers:

- Penny Mordaunt MP, Chair of the APPG on Ageing and Older People
- Hannah Fearn, The Guardian
- Mervyn Kohler, Age UK
- Jane Ashcroft, Chief Executive of Anchor
- Alexandra Jezeph, Bright Blue (Chair)

Date:

Tuesday 4th October 2011, 17:30-18:30

Venue:

Exchange 7 of Manchester Central

Refreshments will be available

RSVP:

Please RSVP to brightblueinvites@googlemail.com

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Religious revival

Western societies are being dramatically reshaped by the strong birth rate of religious people.

By Professor Eric Kaufmann

We all know what western values are, or at least we think we do. Secularism, liberalism, egalitarianism and scientific reason, for instance. But will the phrase 'western values' have the same meaning in the future as it does today? I argue that momentous population shifts and a crisis of mainstream religion are coming together to produce a return of religion - especially fundamentalist religion - to the West.

"Demography is not destiny,
but it is the most predictable
of the social sciences"

In the past, people had children for material reasons - many died young and fresh hands were needed to work the land and provide for parents in their old age. Today we live in cities and benefit from pensions while children are expensive. Contraception has severed the link between sex and procreation, placing fertility under our control as never before. Family size, which was once a matter of survival, is now a value choice. Seculars can choose to delay having children or opt for fewer while the religious - especially fundamentalists - have them earlier and more often.

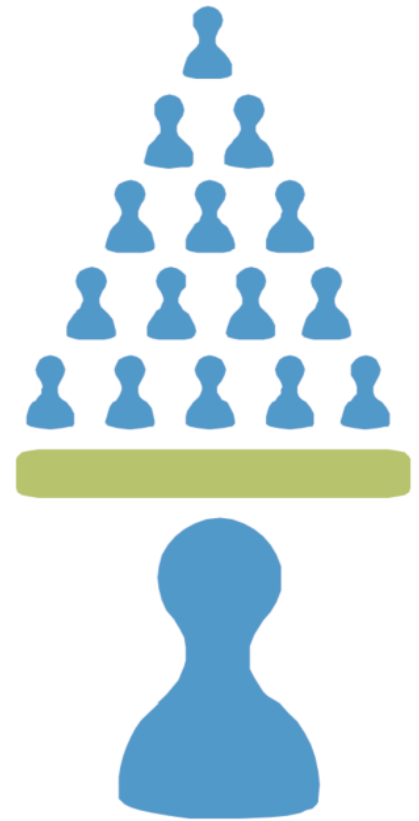
This is known as the 'second demographic transition' and is of signal

importance because ours is an epoch of religious polarisation. First came the challenge of secularism and modernism. Then came a fundamentalist backlash across most major world religions.

Secular-fundamentalist polarisation produced the 'culture wars' in America after the 1960s, in which conservative Catholics, Jews and Protestants moved closer to each other than to their lapsed coreligionists. Religious Latinos and African-Americans generally vote Democrat, but opt for conservative positions on social issues like abortion.

When acting in concert with white religious conservatives, as with Proposition 8 in California, they become a political force. And all have a considerable fertility edge over their pro-choice counterparts. This explains why the pro-life majority in the US population may approach three-quarters of the total by the end of the century even as Republican numbers fail to budge.

The combination of religious polarisation and demographic upheaval is especially stark among Jews. They began to secularise in large numbers in the nineteenth century, and Orthodoxy emerged to combat this. The temperature of Jewish fundamentalism



increased sharply after the horrors of World War II, and an ultra-Orthodox, or Haredi, community emerged, segregating itself from other Jews. Israel's first prime minister David Ben-Gurion and the largely secular Zionist leadership assumed that the black-hatted, sidelocked Haredim were a relic of history. They gave the ultra-Orthodox an exemption from the draft, subsidies to study at yeshiva and other religious privileges to make sure their anti-Zionism didn't dissuade the Great Powers from establishing a home for the Jews in Palestine. In 1948, there were 400 military exemptions, many of which

weren't used. By 2007, that number had soared to 55,000.

Meanwhile, the fringe of ultra-Orthodox pupils in Israel's Jewish primary schools in 1960 has ballooned: they will comprise a third of the Jewish first grade class of 2012. Jerusalem has grown noticeably more religious, with restrictions on Saturday driving in many areas. Outside Israel, work by Joshua Comenetz and Yaacov Wise reveals that the ultra-Orthodox may form a majority of observant American and British Jews by 2050.

"97 percent of the world's population growth takes place in the religious tropics while populations in secular East Asia and the West are aging and would already be declining were it not for immigration"

The Jewish example shows that population change can reverse secularism and shift the centre of gravity of an entire society in a conservative religious direction.

Notice that change has come about because values have polarised and increasingly determine family size. They also reduce the defection of children

from the fold. Thus the ultra-Orthodox use segregation to limit membership loss to the mainstream society while growing their own. In a more modest way, the same is true elsewhere. In the Muslim world, women most in favour of sharia law have twice the birthrates of Muslim women who are most opposed.

Europeans and Americans who report 'no religion' are leading the shift to below-replacement fertility. In most of Europe, the nonreligious average around one child per woman. In the United States, they manage 1.5, considerably lower than the national 2.1. This disadvantage is not enough to prevent religious decline in much of Europe and America today, but secularism must run to stand still.

Fertility differences will be more important in changing values in the long run, but the most noticeable short-term shifts are occurring due to immigration as ethnic change brings desecularisation.

97 percent of the world's population growth takes place in the religious tropics while populations in secular East Asia and the West are aging and would already be declining were it not for immigration. Birth rates are coming down in the developing world, but the peak population pressure between the global North and South lies ahead, in 2050.

By that time, the UN projects that there will be four largely religious Africans for every largely one secular European, compared to the situation in 1950 when there were two and a half Europeans per African.

Generally these poor people are not fundamentalists like the ultra-Orthodox Jews or neo-Calvinist Protestants, but they remain traditionally religious.



The future has already arrived in major immigration gateway cities in 'secular' Europe. Consider London. In the past twenty years, according to religious censuses, Christian attendance has nosedived 40 percent in England but has remained steady in the capital.

This is not because the swingers of Soho have sobered up. Peer inside a typical



London church and you'll find that more than 60 percent are non-white and many others are East European immigrants. At the same time, Muslim, Sikh, Hindu and other religious groups are growing.

The net effect is a more religious London than a quarter century ago. In Paris and other European *entrepôts*, the same has occurred.

England in 2050 is expected to look like London, so it's easy to imagine a more religious England, and Europe, at the end of our century.

The same is true in America. If the United States remained 70 percent white, the population would reach European levels of secularisation in two generations and Catholics would rapidly lose market share to Protestants.

Instead, swift Hispanic-Catholic and religious Asian population growth is projected to stabilise the share of non-religious Americans at roughly today's levels.

Catholics, far from declining, may outnumber Protestants among the nation's youth as early as the 2040s.

As secular regions age and depopulate, they will replenish their workforce with religious immigrants, injecting religion back into society and politics. From this

perspective, high profile incidents like the murder of Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh or the banning of the burqa in France may prove to be the opening stanzas of a new epic in which religion re-enters public life.

"The pro-life majority in the US population may approach three-quarters of the total by the end of the century even as Republican numbers fail to budge"

These developments should give us pause. Many of us believe the ethos of the West in a century will more closely resemble the dreams of Christopher Hitchens than those of Jerry Falwell. Yet we forget that most people get their religion the old-fashioned way, through birth.

Demography is not destiny, but it is the most predictable of the social sciences. As the population of the world peaks and begins to decline later in this century, the strongly religious will stand against the tide.

In so doing, they will remake societies and wash away many of our certainties about secularisation, Enlightenment and the End of History. ①



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