

**BARONESS AMOS:  
SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT**

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I am pleased to be back in South Africa and particularly here in Pretoria. I spent a lot of time here in the 3 years (1995 – 1998) when I was working with the then new government of South Africa on reform of the public service, human rights, and equality. Whenever I am in South Africa I am reminded of the close relationship between the UK and South Africa – a relationship which has become stronger and deeper in the last decade.

We are your single largest foreign investor. 750,000 UK citizens are resident here. 450,000 people from the UK visited here last year, far more than from any other country. The Labour Party looks upon the ANC as a natural partner. The struggle against apartheid was for many years a rallying call for the labour movement in Britain. Now that we are in power, we are both progressive governments, committed to human rights, democracy, and supporting open markets in order to build prosperity for the many, not just the few. We both care about and spend time and effort on making the wider world a better place.

It is this depth which allows us to be candid with each other, and I want to be frank today. In particular it is important that I set out clearly how Britain sees its role in relation to the multilateral institutions, in particular the UN. Let me make this absolutely clear. My country and the British government firmly back the UN. It is our strong view that the UN should be the “ focus both of diplomacy and of action.” There is no other institution in the world which brings together so many nations with such differing views with such a broad agenda. Not just international peace and security but development, human rights, humanitarian policy, the environment, women, democracy and governance. In short a global agenda for a global and fast changing world. We all recognise that our world is becoming increasingly interdependent.

As my Prime Minister, Tony Blair said in his statement to Parliament on 18 March when he opened a debate on Iraq;

“ Stock markets and economies rise and fall together. Confidence is the key to prosperity. Insecurity spreads like contagion”.

This is the world in which we live. And in these ever more insecure times it is important that we find ways of working together. Fora where differences can be discussed and resolved. But we also have to be resolute. To be effective, to be credible the UN must not just talk and discuss. It must take action. This brings me to Iraq.

I cannot stand here and not talk about the conflict in Iraq. My country is taking military action, a course which your country has opposed. People in the UK are divided about this conflict and the majority of people here are opposed. And, in the swirl of public opinion and media comment around that, there are misperceptions of the UK and how it sees its role.

There are those here who say that Iraq shows that, unlike South Africa, we do not care about the United Nations and the multilateral system. There are those who see the action against Saddam as imperialist aggression by the US for material ends, supported by the UK because of our "colonial instincts". There are those who fear that the cost of the war, and the post-war reconstruction, will cause us to abandon our development assistance to Africa. And there are those (though less in South Africa than elsewhere), who are inclined to see such assistance in itself as paternalist, neo-colonialist, an attempt to impose our values and dictate our priorities.

The UK did everything we could to resolve this conflict without military action. Saddam Hussein defied for twelve years UN resolutions demanding that he give up his weapons of mass destruction. In addition he has a track record of supporting terrorists. After 9/11 the US, with global support, decided that terrorism must be confronted and defeated. The greatest risk was that terrorists might get hold of, and use, weapons of mass destruction. And the greatest risk of their obtaining such weapons was via Saddam Hussein, the only man to use them for political ends against his own people.

That is why we could not just wait, just rely on containment. Saddam had to disarm, or be disarmed.

But what we wanted was to force him to disarm through the instrument of the United Nations. That demanded unanimity of purpose. The unanimity of UNSCR 1441 which found Saddam still in

material breach of his obligations. But as the pressure mounted on him, Saddam saw that unanimity begin to break. And he resolved on continued defiance.

It is a matter of the deepest regret to Prime Minister Tony Blair and all of us in his government that we could not find a formula in New York to keep the UN, the world community, united in requiring Saddam's disarmament within a short timeframe. We tried. We could not have tried harder. The condition of our support to the US was that we should go the extra mile at the United Nations. And we led that search for a formula. Had we achieved it, faced with the opprobrium of the world, Saddam might have backed down, and war might have been avoided.

Resolution 1441 is very clear. It gave Saddam Hussein a final opportunity to disarm. It said that compliance had to be full, unconditional and immediate. What the world saw after the passing of that resolution was harassment and intimidation of the inspectors, small concessions when force was threatened. A pattern of behaviour which had gone on for 12 years.

We live in a world where there is a revulsion against war. Where people think that it must be possible to achieve our ends in a different way. But we also have to recognise, and again I quote my Prime Minister Tony Blair, that the world has to learn the lesson that "weakness in the face of a threat from a tyrant is the surest way not to peace but to war." The authority of the UN must be upheld. That is why we are taking action in Iraq. We believe that we are taking action under the authority of previous UN Resolutions dating from 1991. The members of the UN Security Council all share an analysis of what has happened in Iraq with respect to WMD. But we differ in our assessment of the action we need to take. Our view is that the greater danger to the UN is inaction. To pass resolution 1441 and then refuse to enforce it would do considerable damage to the UN's future strength. There is ongoing political discussion in the UN and at the heart of that discussion is the concept of a world in which there are rival poles of power. The US and its allies in one corner, France, Germany, Russia and its allies in another. Post the Cold War this is not our vision of the world. We don't want rivalry but partnership. And that partnership must include the United States.

We are now in the midst of conflict. We deeply regret the loss of life, including civilian life, that military operations inevitably bring. We are doing everything we can to keep civilian casualties to a minimum. We long just as much as you for a world without the need for force. But such a world is not possible until we have rid it of unaccountable tyrants like Saddam Hussein, who define decency as weakness.

The world is full of intractable problems. Not all are capable of being resolved in the way that this crisis is being resolved. Diplomatic pressure, so long as it has ultimate credibility, is infinitely preferable to war as a means of preserving international order. And multilateral agreements are essential to help prevent traffic in children, environmental degradation, the proliferation of small arms and the dismantling of barriers to trade, to take just four examples where the UK is working with South Africa to build a better world.

Turning now to the accusation that the action against Iraq is really imperialist or colonialist. Had the US and the UK simply wanted to get their hands on cheap oil, without any concern about Saddam and his weapons, we could have cut a deal with him without putting any of our soldiers in harm's way. President Bush, as well as Tony Blair, has made it very clear that after the removal of Saddam and his weapons, Iraq and its oil will be returned to the Iraqi people. And the reconstruction of Iraq should rightly be under the supervision of the United Nations, whose resolutions are the legal basis for the action which the US and the UK have taken.

Will that reconstruction be expensive? Yes. Will it affect the UK's commitment to Africa? No. As the Prime Minister's personal representative to the G8 on Africa, I can underline to you that the Prime Minister's determination to help Africa to help itself is as strong now as it has ever been. Our commitment to NEPAD, in which South Africa is such a key driver, is a major plank of the foreign policy of Tony Blair's government. We said at the time of the G8 Kananaskis Summit last year, which saw the G8 publish its Africa Action Plan, that we would be increasing our development assistance to Africa to £1 billion that is 12.5bn Rand a year by 2006. We shall do so.

To those who say that our real agenda in Africa remains colonialist, the imposition of our values or influence for long term material gain, the response is that the NEPAD process remains African designed and African driven. As President Mbeki has said, the values of good governance and democracy are African values. They are not imports from the West. And good political, economic and corporate governance are also the key to business confidence, a thriving private sector, and economic growth the only way to reduce poverty over the long term.

I should like to pay tribute to South Africa's achievements on NEPAD to date. The credit is not, of course, South Africa's alone. But the vision of President Mbeki, and the energies and determination of Professor Nkuhlu and his team have done much to make this new deal between Africa and her donor partners an emerging reality. The African Peer Review Mechanism, whose operating

principles were approved by participants at the recent Luanda conference, is a remarkable undertaking. No existing peer review instruments, in the EU or the OECD are so thorough or so comprehensive. It is a courageous step but one that should be seen as wholly positive. The honesty that allows independent assessors in and then says - yes, we are not where we want to be in this or that area and we seek assistance to improve - is in itself a powerful incentive to investors. Any leadership that accepts that process is telling the world: we are not just here to exploit our country, we are here to abide by the law and help our people.

And South Africa has led in the crucial area of conflict resolution, without which NEPAD cannot hope to succeed. The conflicts in the DRC and Burundi are long-running, complicated and have at times seemed intractable. But there is a real hope of progress now. The December Cease Fire Agreement in Burundi and the ground breaking agreements which will culminate in the signing of the DRC peace accord in Sun City on Wednesday, do great credit to President Mbeki, Deputy President Zuma and their negotiating teams. Inevitably, we have seen some faltering and setbacks. But South Africa is persevering. In this area above all, where the UK has the lead in G8 input, we will be there to support with peacekeeping training, with funds for deployment, and with diplomatic activity dovetailed with that of South Africa.

The days when the UK's aid was supply driven are over. We no longer say - Britain will give you this because we think you need it, or, British industry supplies this so we will give it to you cheap. Our philosophy of development assistance is that it should be demand driven - how can we support the strategy of the developing country beneficiary. All UK development assistance is untied. Those poor countries we are supporting can source goods and services at the best price free from any requirement to buy British. That is a philosophy fully in tune with NEPAD, the African owned and African driven programme for the continent's development. But it is hardly the philosophy of colonialists.

A successful, prosperous Africa is much more useful for the British national interest than a poor, dependent one.

Since the Labour government came to power in 1997 we have sought to work with countries in Africa in a very different way. We want to work in partnership. And the test of this for us have been the long term development partnerships agreed with countries like Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and most recently Ethiopia. Countries where we are putting money direct into their budget to support

their poverty reduction programme. But that work and indeed our work in support of NEPAD has been overshadowed by an out dated belief that Britain's motives are colonialist because of the criticism which we have levelled at Zimbabwe.

Post independence we all hoped that Zimbabwe would become an engine for the growth and development in Southern Africa. Apartheid in South Africa, civil war in Mozambique and Angola hampered growth and development in the region. But with a commitment to greater wealth distribution to tackle inequality Zimbabwe could set itself on a very different course.

That optimism has slowly dwindled away. There are now, according to the latest SADC assessments, over 7 million people requiring food aid. The economy is the fastest contracting in the world. Zimbabwe is the worst performing economy in Africa, over 75% of the population are unemployed, inflation is over 200% and the currency has suffered massively in the last 2 years.

Robert Mugabe and his government will tell you three things. First that unfair land distribution was the sole cause of the country's problems. Second that the United Kingdom opposed land reform in Zimbabwe because it wanted to protect the large share of the land owned by the white minority as a legacy of colonialism. Third that the UK reneged on commitments made under the Lancaster House Agreement to fund the land reform programme. They combine these points by saying that all their country's many problems are caused by a "bilateral dispute" with the UK. None of this is true.

Inequitable land distribution was not the sole cause of Zimbabwe's problems. Zimbabwe has been destabilised and impoverished by bad government policies. The government's actions run contrary to the Commonwealth's Harare Declaration of 1991, to SADC Principles, and to many articles of the Cotonou Agreement which govern the EU's relationship with countries in Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific regimes. The country is significantly poorer now than it was at independence. There has been widespread state-sponsored political violence, intimidation and harassment, including over the past few weeks.

The independent media has been systematically targeted. Opposition supporters have been murdered, tortured, raped and beaten. In the first eight months of 2002 alone, there were 58 politically motivated murders and 1053 recorded cases of torture. In a recent case, the Zimbabwean authorities admitted that they had tortured a human rights lawyer, Gabriel Shumba. Government doctors have confirmed the torture of Job Sikhala – a Member of Parliament. A

Member of Parliament was tortured by the state. Henry Olonga, has fled to this country in fear for his life because he wore a black armband to protest at the lack of democracy in his country. Amnesty International has reported a crackdown on opposition supporters following the stay away protest a few days ago.

But my government has never denied that land reform in Zimbabwe was important. The British government supported at Lancaster House - the need for land reform in Zimbabwe. It is obvious to everyone that land reform was necessary. At Independence, the best agricultural land was owned by about 4000, largely white commercial farmers. Poor families were crowded into less productive areas. This was an unjust relic of colonial policy and change was clearly needed.

The Lancaster House Agreement was far from a perfect document. It did not mention any specific sums of money for land reform, or make any reference to paying compensation to farmers. Indeed there was a clear recognition that the task was so enormous that no one donor could help. That is why the UK helped to organise the 1981 donors conference at which 636 million Pounds Sterling (8 billion rands) was pledged by the international community for Zimbabwe. And Britain has played its part. We have provided, since independence, 500 million pounds sterling (6.5 billion rand) in bilateral support for development work in Zimbabwe, and 47 million pounds sterling (587 million rand) specifically for land reform. 3 million of that 47 million pounds (ie 37.5 million rand) was returned because of a lack of specific proposals on land reform. We have not reneged on Lancaster House commitments.

At the 1998 Land Conference in Harare chaired by Stand Mudenge, and supported by the UK government, all participants - including Zimbabwe - agreed that land reform should be transparent, respect the rule of law, reduce poverty, be affordable and be consistent with Zimbabwe's wider economic interests. And at the Commonwealth meeting in Abuja in September 2001 all participants - again including Zimbabwe - agreed that "land reform must be implemented in a fair, just and sustainable manner, in the interest of all the people of Zimbabwe". The UK was an active participant at these meetings, willing to enter into a constructive partnership for the people of Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe's "fast track" programme is inconsistent with both the Harare and Abuja agreements. Again, this isn't just the UK's view - the UNDP's report on the land reform programme bears this out. Indeed they called it unsustainable. It has been implemented using violence and intimidation. It is

not benefiting the poor. It has not been accompanied by the means to enable new smallholders to make best use of the land. It has increased poverty for around 300,000 farm workers and their families, who have lost their livelihoods. It is a failure. The facts on the ground speak for themselves.

So how should we deal with this? We have supported the efforts of South Africa, Nigeria and others in SADC to find a political solution. The British Government believes that ZANU(PF) should allow the resumption of inter-party dialogue; work towards genuine national reconciliation and stop intimidation and violence. Zimbabwe's people must be allowed a free and fair election, in the presence of impartial international observers, and with an electoral roll that is open to the scrutiny of all. And land reform must be looked at again, with full respect for the rule of law - and in the interests of all the people of Zimbabwe. Throughout Africa, Britain's development assistance focuses on poor people, not the privileged. Zimbabwe is no exception.

If these changes happen, and let me be clear about this, the UK stands ready to resume its cooperation both on land reform and development with a Zimbabwe Government accountable to its people and committed to reducing poverty. Meanwhile we spend the money that we would like to use for such assistance on feeding Zimbabweans. We spent £38 million (475 million rand) on humanitarian aid to Zimbabwe last year. That is more than any other country except the United States. Britain alone is feeding 1.5 million Zimbabwean children every day. We paid for the transport of the maize that South Africa donated to Zimbabwe. And we are continuing our programmes for tackling HIV/AIDS in Zimbabwe, where an infection rate of almost 34% is taking a terrible toll on the country. No matter how much abuse we get from Mr Mugabe, we will not turn our backs on ordinary Zimbabweans. One unfortunate consequence of the Zimbabwe situation, as I said, is that it makes it more difficult to promote NEPAD. I spend a great deal of time tacking business about Africa. Foreign investors fear that NEPAD won't work. They question whether an African Peer Review Mechanism can really work if African pressure is so low key and so little heeded, as appears to be the case with Zimbabwe. And the issue of Zimbabwe bedevils developed country dialogue with Africa and the Commonwealth, SADC and the European Union. The danger is that EU and G8 leaders could lose enthusiasm for the collective approach which is at the heart of NEPAD.

I hope I have made it clear, that the UK government will not allow Zimbabwe to deflect it from support for NEPAD or Africa. Or from wholehearted partnership with South Africa to bring it to



fruition. That partnership in fact illustrates very well what today's Britain is really about in Africa, and the world. Our approach is based on the principle of partnership. We recognise that the countries and peoples of the world today depend on each other as never before. Scientific and technological advances offer prospects for global prosperity. Whether global interdependence works for good or ill depends on the values that govern it. And we look to build partnerships with countries that share our values because in them is our own protection.

President Mbeki and his Government do share those values. His readiness to take a lead on the global agenda was illustrated by South Africa's highly successful hosting of the largest Summit in the history of the world in Johannesburg last August. We worked closely with South Africa on that, because we both know that environmental protection and sustainable development must be tackled together.

South Africa's drive to help build a better world is also clear in its readiness to share its model of conflict resolution within and beyond Africa. South Africans have helped in Northern Ireland and in East Timor, as well as the Great Lakes. And the U.K. and South Africa share a common focus on the Israel/Palestinian problem. In his series of close consultations with President Bush in recent weeks, Tony Blair has pressed for early publication of the road map which might finally lead to resolution of that age-old conflict on the only basis that will last: both Israelis and Palestinians living in peace within secure borders. We recognise that real peace in the Middle East does not just depend on defeating Saddam Hussein.

At the heart of our foreign policy, therefore, is co-operation, not colonialism. We do not seek to re-colonise Africa, or Iraq. Colonialism is about the imposition of values by force, the exploitation of resources by force, the domination of one race by another. Those days are gone. The fact that it is me standing here as a British Minister – a descendant of those colonised – is surely demonstration of this.

Britain is now a multicultural, multi-religious society. The diversity which comes from our history is now a source of strength and creativity. Our class system is slowly but surely falling away. The operative dynamic nowadays is "sharing", not "dominating" or "imposing". We are a high tech, open, trading and innovative people. We believe that a more equitable, better governed safer world is in our national interest.

In three days time I shall be opening the second UKUZA conference, which brings together a sample of high achievers from both our countries. We shall be celebrating what we have in common, and what we can learn from each other. So I hope that in these days of anxiety about Iraq, we can still look ahead to a future in which South Africa and Britain will work closely together as equal partners.