

PUBLIC LECTURE

delivered by ***Rt. Hon. Baroness Margaret Thatcher LG OM FRS*** on the occasion of the award of *doctoris honoris causa* degree to her at the University of Zagreb (Croatia), Wednesday, 16 September 1998

Freedom With Justice and Security : The Challenge of the Twenty-First Century

It is a great pleasure to speak to you here in the ancient capital of your beautiful country. And after the ceremony I have just attended with your city council, I can with pride affirm: 'Ja sam Zagrepèanka!' It is extraordinary to recall how much has changed in the last ten years. Who could have imagined in 1988 that today Croatia would at last have achieved its centuries- long dream of freedom? But then who could have imagined it would be at such a cost? One of Thatcher's laws based on personal experience, is that in politics, as in life, the 'unexpected happens'. But in the case of Croatia it was you - the Croatian people - who made it happen.

President Tudman rightly understood that there could be no future for Croatia within a Yugoslavia that had become a prison with brutal Serb jailers. The democrats from other parties then cast aside their differences and rallied round their country's defence. Above all, the Croatian people, young and old, showed a heroism at which I could only marvel. You faced the armed might of the fourth largest army in Europe. You were repeatedly deceived and betrayed. You were deprived of the means to protect your dear ones, your houses, your churches, your land. You were even slandered accused, as in Vukovar, of the atrocities your enemies themselves committed. But you persevered. You grew steadily stronger. And you triumphed.

I grieve, as you do, for those who lost their lives, often in the most terrible circumstances. But I share your joy that Croatia at last is whole and free.

The Real Purpose of Politics

The prospect of becoming an honorary citizen of Zagreb caused me to reflect on what may at first seem an odd question for a former British - and indeed *very* British - Prime Minister: what if I were a citizen of Zagreb and Croatia by birth? What if I had grown up here? Would I have believed the same things? In what sense would I have been the same person?

It is, of course, a hugely hypothetical question. I cannot know how I would have reacted to the storms that buffeted this part of the world: I do not know whether I or my family would even have survived them - so many, after all, did not. But I can well understand how any Croat in those years - living under different ideologies, even in different states - would easily have felt scarred, crushed and powerless. One kind of persecution followed another, though oddly enough the persecutors looked very much the same. Would I later have stayed in Croatia or, like so many, sought a better life overseas? As a woman would I have been able to? And at this point, I fear, my imagination fails me, as it must.

But the exercise is by no means fruitless. For in spite of the enormously different circumstances of the Margaret Thatcher I am and the Margaret Thatcher - or some equivalent - that I might have been, it is possible to see that both I and my Croatian *alter ego* would have needed the same things.

As children, we *all* need the love of a family, and parents need the basics of food and clothing to look after us. As adults, we need security, confidence that our lives and homes will be safe. We must be able to exchange what we grow, or make, in order to gain an income - enough for us in our old age, and for our own children as they in turn grow up. Our minds and souls and imaginations need feeding too. So on top of all these material things we need a faith to live by, and a country to belong to.

Set out like this, everything seems so simple, so easily attainable. But, of course, in this century, that's not now it turned out. For what a century this has been!

The Twentieth Century

The American weekly magazine, *Time*, early this year ran an issue in which it variously described the twentieth century as the century of freedom, the century of capitalism, the electronic century, the global century, the massmarket century, the genocidal century and the American century. In their different ways, each of these descriptions contains an important aspect of the truth. Moreover, the century is not yet finished. It may still have a few more, surprises in store!

But looking at it from a somewhat different angle, we can also see the twentieth century as a kind of vast global experiment in which two opposing systems were set

against each other. On the one side were the ideologies whether calling themselves left-wing or right-wing - which exploited the power of the state in order to impose their own plan on humanity. On the other side were those - liberal in their views of economics and institutions, though not necessary calling themselves 'liberals' in politics - who believed that the power of government should be strictly limited and who placed their faith in individuals.

In this great experiment all the various options were at one time or another put to the test. And now at the end of the century we know exactly which model works.

The system based on maximising the power of the state and minimising that of individuals has utterly failed. Some of these failures were truly catastrophic. National socialism brought about a terrible war, was responsible for the first acts of what we now know as genocide, and when it collapsed yielded half of Europe into the grip of Communism. It is sometimes forgotten that initially Nazism and Communism were delighted to collaborate in dividing up the spoils in Poland and the Baltic states. In fact, to talk about these two evil creeds as opposites is wrong. They had far more in common than their proponents admitted. Both, after all, were opposed to the rights of man and the law of God. And one butcher is much like another.

But the attempts to impose less brutal kinds' of state control over people's lives failed too. People reacted to heavy-handed government intervention and high taxation either by acquiring the habit of dependency and not working; or by channelling their efforts into the black market; or by leaving the socialist countries to go and live in capitalist ones. And the attempt to impose social equality didn't lead to fair shares for all, just small shares for all.

In any case, by the late 1980s the great experiment had effectively come to an end. The more completely the socialist model was followed, the more extensive the economic breakdown, and the greater the discontent. And the more ardently the alternative model based on liberty and free markets was pursued, the greater the benefits turned out to be. In the contrast between a rich, successful America and a crumbling, poverty-stricken Soviet Union whose legacy is still poisoning Russia - the question of which system works was definitively answered. And it is *still* the case that the most prosperous countries are those where government spending and taxes are low, where industrial regulation is light - and where economic growth and people's incomes are accordingly higher.

But let me insist on an important point. The difference between the collectivist, state-planned system and the liberal, free enterprise one is not just a matter of economics. It's also a matter of power. The free market disperses power throughout society - it's a kind of 'economic democracy' whereas socialism in all its forms concentrates power at the centre.

Nor is free enterprise capitalism a free-for-all. This is not always fully understood in countries which are trying to make the difficult transition from socialism to

capitalism. A properly functioning market economy must always be governed by clear rules of competition and there must be effective safeguards for investors. Capitalism cannot, in fact, operate without a strong administration to police the laws that provide its framework. And it cannot succeed without honesty. Racketeers, blackmarketeers and smugglers are not entrepreneurs - they are just plain criminals. Corruption and gangsterism are scourges which afflict many newly developing economies and states. They should be ruthlessly and fearlessly expunged. Otherwise not just the free market but freedom itself is in peril.

These observations also highlight the fact that the system of freedom and free enterprise is, above all, based on the rule of law - law which must be fair, clear, and honestly administered, and to which government, and all those associated with it, are also subject like everyone else.

Such is the political and economic system for which we should aim. Wherever it is tried it is successful. And if it had been achieved in earlier decades the world would be more peaceful and prosperous today.

So why has it not been? Partly, of course, because it is only after experiencing the consequence of errors that societies finally resolve not to repeat them. And partly because it is only in the post-war years that economists like Milton Friedman and philosophers like Friedrich Hayek were found to explain with crystal clarity to a world-wide audience the fundamental case for freedom.

But the most important reason why even at the end of the twentieth century so much of the world is suffering injustice, deprivation and bloodshed, why there are still tyrants on the loose, and why there are continuing threats to our security, is that old lessons have still not been fully learned.

I am one of those who believe that in international affairs, just as in more exact scientific disciplines, there are certain principles - rough and ready rules, rather than infallible laws - which can and should guide our actions. And in the rest of this lecture I want to explain three of these and show how they can be applied, both in this part of the world and more generally.

Democracy and Human Rights

My first principle has on initial inspection a very modern look to it - it is that the extension of democracy and of respect for human rights is vital to peace, order and prosperity. Such assertions are, of course, nowadays two a penny, and often just inserted into communiqués to make them seem high-minded. But what we today call 'democracy and human rights' is really just a modern expression of something far older. There has *always* been a distinction between states in which governments treated the population with respect, and those which treated them as mere chattels.

And history clearly shows that it is the lawless regimes led by ruthless dictators which wage war on their neighbours, while the democracies do not.

It follows from this that human rights policy is an integral part of security policy. That was the insight that Ronald Reagan and I brought to bear in our policy towards the Soviet Union and its subject peoples. And the link remains necessary now.

Not that everything done in the name of human rights is sensible. Indeed, human rights have become something of an industry whose employees, one feels, are unlikely to let themselves become redundant. It is easy to see why countries like Croatia sometimes feel that they are placed under a microscope in which only the imperfections appear - particularly when 'larger blots elsewhere are discreetly over-looked. But the fact remains that Croatia has a strong interest in ensuring effective protection for individual rights throughout the region. After all had there been a genuinely free media in Serbia in 1991 and 1992, official anti-Croat and anti-Muslim propaganda would almost certainly have been less effective in provoking violence. How many lives might thus have been saved?

The two most important aspects of human rights policy in the countries of former Yugoslavia are still concerned with the results of war. The first is the return of refugees.

Ethnic cleansing was, of course, coolly calculated: it was part of the policy of genocide, devised in Belgrade, and put into effect by its agents wherever they gained control. Unfortunately, it also found some imitators among Croats and Muslims. And I condemn without reservation ethnic cleansing and brutality by Croats and Muslims against each other, and by either against Serbs.

But it has to be repeated again and again, that judged by the scale, and sheer wickedness of motivation the Serbs were - and are - far away the worst culprits. To allow this fact to be forgotten merely because it seems undiplomatic to mention it, is a cardinal error. We owe it to the victims and to the future - to tell the truth and to keep on telling it.

It is also a disgrace that hardly any non-Serbs have been allowed to return to the Republika Srpska. The mosques there are still razed to the ground and the Catholic churches still ruined. And all this is in spite of the lavish praise heaped on the alleged moderate Serb leadership in Banja Luka. Good will should be judged by deeds, not promises.

It should be remembered that the return of refugees was one of the key requirements of the 1995 Dayton Agreement. Without that, Dayton would have effectively meant a partition of Bosnia, thus rewarding the Serb aggression. No matter what pressure the international community exerts on the Croats and Muslims to let refugees return, unless the Bosnian *Serbs* first permit the secure return of those Muslims and Croats *they* expelled, none of the other refugee problems of the former Yugoslavia can be solved.

As for the specific question of the return of Croatian Serbs to the so-called Krajina and the position of Serbs in Eastern Slavonia, I am glad that progress has been made in resolving these issues. Clearly, as long as there is judged to be no threat to the country's security, Croatia does have the duty to accept back its Serb citizens in a controlled and well-managed fashion. I am ° sure that obligation will be honoured. But I do think that your international critics should try to imagine the feelings of those who lost their homes and families because of crimes in which many of the returnees participated and more were accomplices. Reconciliation is necessary. But one condition for it must be repentance. Some sincere expressions of regret for past misdeeds they committed might make reintegration of Serb refugees a good deal easier.

The other aspect of human rights policy I want to mention is the apprehension and punishment of war criminals. Only rarely is it right to set up bodies like the International Court in the Hague for War-crimes in the Former Yugoslavia. But when such solemn steps are taken it is vital that the procedure be effective and above reproach.

I welcome the fact that Croatia and Bosnia have both fully complied with what was asked of them by the Court. But it makes a mockery of the process when obvious culprits, like Slobodan Milošević and the Serb paramilitary leaders, are not indicted merely, it seems, because of their political positions. It is an outrage that the indicted former Bosnian Serb leaders, Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić, are at large while the mothers of Srebrenica mourn the loss of their sons. Who is tracking down the indicted Milan Martić who boasted that he ordered the firing of rockets on Zagreb? And why has there been no serious pressure on Serbia to yield up the three Serbs named in the indictment for the horrific murder of over two hundred patients at Vukovar hospital? The International War Crimes Court is right to demand action by the Security Council against Serbia to have these people handed over. Human rights policy must start with bringing these criminals to justice. And I hope that any representatives of the international community present here will have heard and understood that message.

The Importance of Strong Defence

The experience of war in the former Yugoslavia also helps illustrate the second principle I adduce today as a guide to future conduct: that is the need for strong defence. I very much doubt whether any Croatian government will ever forget that. Recent experience is too vivid. And present dangers remain too great.

But alas, it is far more likely that Western powers may let down their guard, lulled into complacency by their own excessive faith in international diplomacy.

When I was Prime Minister of my country I often found myself reminding other heads of government that it is not the size of global arsenals that threatens peace, the real danger comes when weapons of mass destruction are in the wrong hands. The irony is that democratic nations have always to be prepared for war, if peace and justice are to be secure. And democracies must also be ready for the next war, not the last. That means investing continually in the latest defence technology.

Today, the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, and of ballistic missile technology, poses a serious threat to all our countries. Rogue states with unstable or fanatical regimes are acquiring these weapons, and there is very little that even energetic diplomacy can do to stop them. The recent chaotic developments in Russia, which still has a mighty military arsenal, could mean a still wider availability of arms of mass destruction. Only one power has the resources, reach and reputation to counter these challenges - that is the United States, the only remaining super- power. Not that America can bear the whole burden of being a world policeman: it is vital that America's allies also make a fair contribution. But the construction of a global system of ballistic missile defence, to provide some kind of shield and so also a deterrent against missile attack, is now an urgent priority. Only America has the ability to under-take it.

The European Union countries, particularly France and Germany, however, believe that the EU could itself become a super-power, with its own, defences. I doubt it, and I would earnestly advise Croatia, Bosnia and other potentially vulnerable states to doubt it too.

It would, I suppose, be too undiplomatic to recall the shameful dithering of Europe when Yugoslavia collapsed. So let's recall instead America's role which was altogether different and decisive. Only when *American* diplomacy became active in 1993 was the Washington Agreement achieved, which ended the destructive folly of the Muslim-Croat war. It was when the *Americans* grasped that only the Croatian army could shift the balance against the Serbs that Operation Storm became possible in 1995. It was when the *Americans* subsequently sent ground troops to Bosnia that people took the Dayton Agreement seriously. The United States currently has its internal problems, but don't overlook that in international affairs it is ultimately America, not Europe, that counts.

Nationhood - The Soundest Base for International Stability

This assertion neatly leads me on to my third and last principle, which is that nationhood and the nation state are the soundest base for international stability.

For, of course, the crucial and determining difference between America and Europe is that the former is a nation state and the latter is not. Americans have a

common language, culture, history and public opinion: Europeans just don't. Whereas a nation state can reach a common decision, assert a common will and accept common sacrifice, an artificially constructed organisation of disparate peoples runs the constant risk of dissolution. Arid even while it stays together, it does so at the cost of either bullying by one participant or endless compromises between all.

Perhaps this sounds familiar? It is remarkably like life in the former Yugoslavia. Hardly an encouraging precedent for Europe's federalist enterprise.

This is not to say that Europe has nothing to offer Croatia and the other new democracies. The European Union has, indeed, an important role for your country as a means of promoting prosperity and stability.

I am well aware that Europe means a lot to Croats and I think I understand why. Croatia is, after all, historically a European nation - a participant both in Central and in Mediterranean Europe: It was the formation of Yugoslavia which dragged Croatia into involvement with the Balkan world, and it has not been a happy experience. Similarly, the threat to Croatia in modern times came from those who rejected European culture - rejected the formality, the order, the renaissance, the baroque, middle class values, the discreet self-confidence of cultivated urban life. In breaking free of the Balkans, Croatia welcomed Europe, and so is doubly hurt when Europe itself proves far from welcoming.

I believe the European Union has been shortsighted in cold-shouldering Croatia. A little imagination, even a little carrot, goes a lot further than a big stick, especially when wielding it heavily could prove fatal. There is no point in threatening Croatia with loss of trading opportunities if it does not comply with every set of demands. Refugees will certainly not find jobs to go back to - and so they will not go back at all - if the Croatian economy is further weakened. The international community should be doing all it can to provide the conditions and the help in Eastern Slavonia to rebuild Vukovar and re-create its economy. Moreover, Europe should be opening up its markets to Croatian goods and services. Croatia needs to be economically integrated into Europe if it is to become a stronger democracy, able to assist and encourage its neighbours. An important step towards this goal would be the signing of an EU Association Agreement on generous terms.

But let me return to the subject of nationhood. I realise that in claiming so much for nation states I will be running up against more than the standard European Federalist objections. The critics will ask: Is it not nationhood, nationalism, national conflict that has been the source of so much suffering in this South East European region? Is not therefore the only route to peace the erosion of historic identities in order to remove the grounds for future strife? I understand the argument. But it is wrong.

The general reason for attaching importance to nationhood is quite simple, both at a psychological and a political level. If you cut away a man's national roots you

usually cut away a lot else - his family ties, his traditional religion, his sense of belonging. In fact, you scar his mind just as surely as physical attack would scar his body. As the English writer G.K. Chesterton; speaking of religion, profoundly observes: if a man loses his faith he doesn't so much finish up believing in nothing, as believing in anything. His longing to find some certainty - somewhere - leads him to seek it in absurd superstitions or cranky cults. Something similar applies with national identity. Sweep away the old convictions (prejudiced though they may seem) and likely enough some extreme ideology - like revolutionary marxism will take their place. People need balance and ballast. Depriving them of their shared past destroys both.

Loyalty to a national unit brings therefore a degree of order and stability. People are prepared to make sacrifices for the common good - and that includes the ultimate sacrifice of fighting and dying for one's country. Consequently, you will find that it is nation states - like America, Britain and France - that defeat aggressors and that are called upon to put into effect international decisions, as in the 1990 Gulf War. Without nation states and their armies, international justice and order would be a dead letter.

Nation states depend on patriotism, and because one man's patriotism is another man's nationalism, they depend on that too. So as a general rule and contrary to much fashionable opinion in the Chancelleries of Europe nationalism also is a force which contributes to international order and stability.

But there are, of course, important qualifications. Some nationalist ideologies are deeply tinged with hatred of other identities. For example, anyone reading Norman Cigar's brilliant study *Genocide in Bosnia* can follow in appalling detail the way in which Serb genocide against Muslims reflected a loathing and contempt systematically indulged and developed over many years. And even healthy nationalist impulses can sometimes take unacceptable forms. But in nearly every case - including that of World War II Croatia - national pride has only ever become distorted into national persecution when democratic institutions fail.

There is, moreover, a further qualification that has to be made to the kind of nationhood that deserves encouragement. A nation state is not a state in which only one nation lives. It is, rather, a state in which the common ties of blood and history of the great majority of the population provide a special unity and cohesion. But that does not mean that minorities are deprived of rights they enjoy by virtue of being citizens. The state is not, after all, merely a tribe. It is a legal entity. Concern for human rights - the first of the principles I set out today - thus complements the sense of nationhood so as to ensure a nation state that is both strong and democratic.

All this, of course, is directly relevant to Bosnia-Herzegovina. Unlike Croatia, Bosnia is not and is unlikely to become in the ordinary sense of the term a nation state because Croats, Serbs and Muslims are different peoples.

Traditionally, they lived in intermingled - sometimes entirely mixed communities - and this, as well as shared historical experience over the centuries, bestowed on Bosnia a kind of organic unity. Serb aggression and brutality broke that: subsequent ethnic cleansing has done further damage. It is to be hoped that in time the return of refugees and the restoration of security will reverse some of the alienation.

But let me emphasise that none of these things mean that the state of Bosnia is any less sovereign or that its integrity should be any less respected. Otherwise, we would have accepted the principle that democratically established sovereign states can be dismantled by force. That is the route to renewed violence and ultimately to anarchy.

Croatia is in the fortunate position of being a nation state, whereas Bosnia is a state comprised of national minorities. But surely that is why Croatia should sustain Bosnia wherever it can. The Muslim-Croat Bosnian Federation is essential to the maintenance of Bosnia, just as the preservation of Bosnia is essential to Croatia's security.

Antemurale Libertatis

Croatia is the most strategically important country when it comes to trying to ensure the region's stability. It is culturally European and instinctively pro Western; it is now a stable democratic nation state; it has an excellent modern army; it has a well-educated workforce; it has talented entrepreneurs; it has diverse natural resources; and its varied beauty, above all its coastline, gives it enormous tourist potential.

This is not, of course, the first time that wider European interests have depended upon Croatia's success. In the sixteenth century, as every Croat knows, Croatia was termed the Rampart of Christendom - *antemurale christianitatis*. And with Europe threatened by the islamic super-power of the day - the Ottoman Empire - that expression was no more than accurate: But Ramparts are not just places to retire behind. They are fortifications to advance from. And Croatia did again advance, restoring its territory and reshaping the frontier of Europe.

In a sense, I see Croatia again as a Rampart. Not a Rampart against the Turks your friends, let alone the Bosnians your allies. But against the terror and oppression which still flow, not now into Croatia or even Bosnia, but to Kosovo, where again the ethnic cleansers are at work. And who knows where and when the madness will end.

Croatia's mission, I believe, is now to be a Rampart of Liberty - *antemurale libertatis*. And from behind that Rampart, not by force of arms, Pray God, but by example, through positive assistance, and by every avenue of influence, Croatia should advance the reign of freedom and democracy across the region. It is a worthy challenge for a proud people.