EXTERIORISING TERROR:

INSIDE/OUTSIDE THE FAILING STATE ON

7 JULY 2005

**Dan Bulley**

**CSGR Working Paper No. 226/07**

**May 2007**

Exteriorising Terror: Inside/Outside the Failing State on 7 July 2005
Dan Bulley
CSGR Working Paper 226/07
May 2007

**Abstract:**

Despite continuing to emphasise how globalisation reduces the relevance of separate 'foreign' and 'domestic' spheres, the British government's response to the London bombings sought to exteriorise the event as foreign, even though it appeared largely domestic. This helped construct it as unusual, contingent, part of the uncontrollable 'otherness' of the 'foreign'. However, it also drew the response into the arena of British foreign policy, where the 'failing states' has been the dominant conceptualisation of insecurity and terrorism, especially since September 11. When the bombings are examined through the 'failing state' disturbing and important problems are uncovered. Primarily, the 'failing state' discourse deconstructs under the influence of the terrorism in London, revealing that Britain itself is a 'failing state' by its own description and producing a generalisation of state 'failure'. It thereby reveals several possible sites for responding to and resisting the government's representation.

**Contact Details:**

Dr. Dan Bulley

School of Politics, International Studies and Philosophy

21 University Square

Queen's University Belfast

Belfast

BT7 1NN

**Introduction**

The facts of the bombings which took place in London on 7 July are well known: four bombs; 56 people killed; around 700 injured; an attempted repetition two weeks later. It is difficult to know how to respond to such facts, especially in an academic setting. But facts take on meaning when they are placed in discourse, when they are interpreted, mediated and constructed; when they are, like theory, used *by* someone and *for* some purpose (Cox, 1981). This paper looks to examine one way in which the events were discursively constructed: the way the terrorism was made 'foreign'. Despite the attacks being an almost entirely British affair, carried out by Britons, in Britain and primarily on Britons, two months after the event, Prime Minister Tony Blair stressed that '[t]he terrorist attacks in Britain on 7 July have their origins in an ideology born thousands of miles from our shores' (Blair, 2005a).

Inspired by the work of Jacques Derrida, and especially his responses to the terrorist attacks of September 2001 (see Derrida 2003 and 2005), this paper asks how the terrorism which took place in London was exteriorised, to what end, and it explores the unintended consequences of such a construction. For many, this exteriorisation may be surprising. There has been a marked tendency in academic discourse to move from discussion of the 'international' towards that of the 'global', due to apparent processes of globalisation conceived broadly as a rise in supraterritorial social relations (Scholte, 2005). This movement has been mirrored in the language of British Foreign Office ministers, one going so far as to suggest the "end of foreign policy", and the need for a new department of global affairs (Hain, 2001). Yet when disaster strikes, as it did on 7 July 2005, such conceptions are easily abandoned and refuge is sought in old dichotomies of inside and outside, national and international, foreign and domestic.

In many ways, the British public's response has been encouraging, especially when compared to the way the US government managed to silence and de-legitimize any response to the their own insecurity other than the violent assertion of securitised nationalism (Butler, 2004). As Jonathan Freedland has observed, '[i]n this sense, the politics of 7/7 has played strangely. It has not led to a new hawkishness in the British public.' While the American public were apparently 'ready to forgive any excesses in the name of combating terror', the same has not been the case in Britain (Freedland, 2006). Yet such response should not be taken for granted, and it remains important to question the British government's attempt to make terror 'foreign'.

The aim of this analysis is to show that, although the government's interpretation may have looked to de-politicize and control the response to the London bombings, the opposite, a politicization of response, can be the unintended outcome. Rather than close debate and

3

avenues for response, the making foreign of this terror provides numerous sites for resistance: domestically, in terms of the clamp down on human rights; internationally, in terms of Britain's foreign policy; and conceptually, in terms of breaking down the inside/outside spatial imaginary of the domestic and foreign.

In the first section, this paper argues that the exteriorising of threat and insecurity fulfils a need to construct terrorism as unusual, contingent, part of the uncontrollable 'otherness' of the 'foreign'. However, this draws the governmental description of the bombings into the arena of its foreign policy, where the concept of 'failing states' has been the dominant conceptualisation of insecurity and terrorism, especially since the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon in 2001. The significance of the 'failing state' in British foreign policy is outlined in section two. When the London bombings are examined alongside, and through, the conceptual framework of the 'failing state', some disturbing and important problems are uncovered. Primarily, the 'failing state' discourse deconstructs under the influence of the terrorism in London, revealing that Britain itself is a 'failing state' according to its own description, but also producing a generalisation of state 'failure'.

**Exteriorising Terror**

Ostensibly the London bombings were a domestic matter. Of the four bombers, Mohammed Sidique Khan (who liked to be known as 'Sid'), Shehzad Tanweer and Hasib Hussain were all born in Britain as second generation British citizens, raised and educated locally in West Yorkshire (2006, 13). Germaine Lindsay, while born in Jamaica, moved to Britain when he was five months old, and was also raised and educated in West Yorkshire (Campbell and Laville, 2005). Similarly, the three men (Waheed Ali, Sadeer Saleem and Mohammed Shakil) arrested and later charged with conspiring with the London bombers in March 2007 were all from the same area (Laville, 2007). The radicalisation of these young men is largely unaccounted for, but appears to have taken place almost entirely in Britain. Certainly, as the official *Report* into the bombings observed, '[t]heir indoctrination appears to have taken place away from places with known links to extremism' (2006, 26). It is unlikely that the bombers spent extensive time, for example, in Middle Eastern madrassas. Indeed, with the exception of Lindsay, they were all apparently well integrated into British society (2006, 26). The BBC's website profiles of the bombers interestingly specify that in video statements recorded before the attacks, Tanweer and Khan both spoke with unmistakeably Yorkshire accents (BBC, 2006).

The evidence that is raised time and again for a foreign influence is the two and a half month trip to Pakistan taken by Khan and Tanweer between November 2004 and February 2005. Far from exceptional, this was a small example of the 400,000 visits by UK residents to Pakistan in 2004 (2006, 20). During this time, they *may* have met key figures in Al Quaida, travelled to training camps in Afghanistan, or made contact with international terrorist groups – Lakshar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad (Harding and Cowan, 2005). However, most of these claims (particularly those of making contact with terrorist groups) have since been debunked or falsified (Townsend, 2006). The so-called Al Quaida 'Supergrass', Mohammed Junaid Babar, told a US court in 2007 that Khan gained weapons training in a Pakistani camp (Vasagar, 2007), though significant doubts remain over such testimony . Indeed, according to the official *Report* there is no evidence of support from Al Quaida or any other 'foreign' group (2006, 21). There is evidence of email contact with someone in Pakistan prior to the attacks (2006, 26), but, as Mark Townsend reports, nothing was found to support the theory that this was an Al Quaida 'fixer… instrumental in planning the attacks' as had been presumed (Townsend, 2006).

In fact, almost everything about the attacks appears 'domestic' rather than 'foreign.' The attacks were financed by a £10, 000 bank loan procured by Khan (2006, 23), rather than the international drugs or arms trade. The know-how to produce the bombs appears to have been gleaned from the internet (BBC, 2006b) rather than years spent training in Afghan camps. The controversial MI5 surveillance of Khan and Tanweer during a different investigation, 18 months before 7 July, was all conducted in Britain (Cobain et al., 2007). The bombings themselves took place on the British mainland and at no point during the bombers journey from their homes to central London did they set foot outside the territorial borders of the UK. By the time of the official *Report*'s publication on 11 May 2006 there had been an immense police investigation with over 12, 500 statements taken; over 26, 000 exhibits seized, of which 5,000 required forensic testing; 142 computers were being examined with thousands of hardware and software exhibits; and more than 6,000 hours of CCTV footage to be pored over (2006, 26). The vast majority of all this evidence was taken from the UK.

Yet despite this incident being mainly 'domestic', Blair insisted upon the 'foreignness' of the bombing's ideological origins two months after they happened. In fact, the process of exteriorising this terrorism began earlier. On the day of the attacks Jack Straw, the *Foreign* Secretary, was called upon to conduct a range of media interviews (Straw, 2005a). This was peculiar in itself; a bombing on the British mainland, indeed in the nation's capital, would usually be the terrain of the *Home* Secretary. The prominence given to the Foreign Secretary was further emphasised when Straw was the only member of the government (alongside Blair) to be included with opposition

party leaders in a meeting with Muslim community heads after the bombings. Again, the Foreign Secretary was heavily involved in a matter which seems anything but foreign.

Later, Blair was to make this exteriorisation explicit. By 2006 he was emphasising the distinction between the bomber's nationality and the nationality of their ideology. Focusing on Khan (the 'ringleader' of the London bombers), Blair asserts that '[h]e may have been born here. But his ideology wasn't' (Blair, 2006a). Approaching the anniversary of the bombings, Blair used his third keynote foreign policy speech of 2006 to widen the context. Rather than the ideology alone being 'foreign', the bombings are tied in with a range of other international issues: regional unrest, environmental issues and mass migration. All these require pre-emptive action, and 'often… intervention far beyond our boundaries' (Blair, 2006b). British based terrorism is no exception.

> The terrorism we are fighting in Britain, wasn't born in Britain, though on 7th July last year it was British born terrorists that committed murder. The roots are in schools and training camps and indoctrination thousands of miles away, as well as in the towns and cities of modern Britain. The migration we experience is from Eastern Europe, and the poverty-stricken states of Africa and the solution to it lies there at its source not in the nation feeling its consequence. What this means is that we have to act, not react;  we have to do so on the basis of prediction not certainty; and such action will often, usually indeed, be outside of our own territory. (Blair, 2006b).

The coupling of migration and terrorism is itself troubling. However, it is also significant that Blair argues beyond the 'foreignness' of the ideology, towards the 'foreignness' of the solution. Just as with migration, the solution to terrorism lies 'at its source not in the nation feeling the consequence' (Blair, 2006b). And where is the source of this terrorism? He clarifies when speaking of Iraq: 'The terrorism that afflicts them [Iraqis] is the same that afflicts us. Its roots are out there in the Middle East, in the brutal combination of secular dictatorship and religious extremism' (Blair, 2006b).

Blair has therefore moved away from a semi-exterirosation, which involved noting that  the terrorists were born in Britain, but their ideology was not, that roots of this terrorism exist in the towns and cities of modern Britain, as well as thousands of miles away. By the Iraq section of the speech, the roots of all terrorism are foreign, they are in the Middle East, in a form of government and a form of religion which is also deeply foreign to British sensibilities. The way this shift is made begs the question: why? Why is the issue so vehemently constructed as foreign? Why the discursive violence in the movement to exteriorise terrorism? What is threatened by the possibility of 'domestic' terrorism?

This article suggests that a primary motivation was to emphasise the contingency of the bombings, their extraordinary nature, their uncontrollability and 'otherness.' The discourse is repeating the move made throughout international relations (IR) theory, of differentiating an 'inside' from an 'outside' (Walker, 1993). Richard Ashley designates this a realist 'double move' (Ashley 1987, 413). Firstly, he says, a spatial relation of *difference* is invoked: domestically the state's internal autonomy is maintained and thus we have the potential for community, progress, justice and ethics; outside the state, the 'foreign' is considered different however, discernible by different forces, (dis)orders and anarchy. This spatial move of *difference* then justifies the second move: a temporal relation of *deferring* the domestic community's 'essential project for a universal and timeless national unity' (Ashley 1987, 412-413).

Thus the community possible 'inside' the state always has its *historical* margins despite its universal aspirations; beyond these its project must be deferred. Without the authority possible within, the 'international' and 'foreign' are always different, uncontrollable, and dangerous. As Walker sees it, in a more genealogical study of the development of IR theory, the lack of community *outside* the state was 'taken to imply the impossibility of history as a progressive teleology' in the international (Walker 1993, 63). This Labour government has certainly continued to trumpet the possibility of morality, justice, progress and community in international relations (see key speeches such as Cook, 1997a; Blair, 2003a and 2004). However, when disaster struck, refuge was sought in the discursive separation of 'inside' from 'outside, 'domestic' from 'foreign', and the realist double move which such separation institutes.

This move is made more understandable through an exploration of how the 'foreign' is conceived in the Labour government's schema: the vagueness of the 'international community' not entirely mitigating the de-securitising impact of 'failed' and 'failing' states. This move to presenting the terrorism in London as a 'foreign' issue takes us directly into the government's foreign policy. A fundamental aspect of this foreign policy has been the concept of the 'failing state', a state marked by instability which subsequently 'exports' its problems. As illustrated in the next two sections, this designation of the terrorism on 7 July as a matter of 'foreign' policy is both fundamental and detrimental to the success of the Labour government's response.

**The 'Failing State' and British Foreign Policy**

The concept of the 'failing state' has played a key structuring role in British foreign policy, especially since September 11. However, it is important to consider the context in which this idea

rose to prominence, how British foreign policy developed, and how the 'failing state' fitted into this general discourse. Such is the focus of this section. Especially significant, in this respect, is the apparent 'Doctrine' of international community (Blair, 1999b), and its structuring requirement of rights and responsibilities. It is only by outlining this logic that it will become clear how it undermines itself, as well as the exteriorisation of the terror in London. This subversion is the subject of the next section.

*The Doctrine of International Community – Rights and Responsibilities*

Blair fleshed out the British idea of international community in 1999. 'Our task is to build a new doctrine of international community, defined by common rights and shared responsibilities' (Blair, 1999a). This emphasis upon states having rights and responsibilities becomes a refrain. Thus in 2000, Blair stresses that community, whether national or international is 'based on the equal worth of all, on the foundation of mutual rights and mutual responsibilities' (Blair, 2000). By March 2004 he was still making the same point (Blair, 2004b).

Jack Straw adds steel to this discourse after becoming Foreign Secretary, observing that '[t]he rights of members of the global community depend *exclusively* on their readiness to meet their global responsibilities' (Straw, 2002a – my emphasis). The rights that come with this membership are never brought together in one speech or policy document. However, they appear to include, the right to receive development aid and relief from debt, to experience an unpolluted environment and to trade in free markets (Blair, 1999a). Members have the right to enter into international treaties and organisations, such as NATO, the WTO, and even the EU (Blair, 1999c).

The *central* right, however, is 'the right to live free from the threat of force' (Blair, 1999a). As a member of the international community, one's sovereignty and territorial integrity is respected. If you are not part of the international community, this right is relinquished. Initially this is played down: the 'principle of non-interference' remains valid, but it 'must be qualified in certain respects' (Blair, 1999b). Mark Wickham-Jones suggests that the most interesting aspect of this early period in Labour's foreign policy was the 'quiet burial of the doctrine of non-intervention' (Wickham-Jones 2000, 17). Later, however, this burial is emphasised. The new doctrine is represented as breaking from the 'traditional' philosophy of international relations which has 'held sway since the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648' (Blair, 2004b). It is no longer the case that 'a country's internal affairs are for it and you don't intervene unless it threatens you, or breaches a treaty, or triggers an obligation of alliance' (Blair, 2004b). Denis MacShane, then a Junior Foreign Office Minister,

thus declared that '[t]he Westphalian era of inter-state relations is over. The days when what happened inside a state was of no interest to other nations is over' (2002b).

As stated, these rights are dependent upon the fulfilment of a state's responsibilities, of which there is also no definitive list. However, central from 1997 was that respect for human rights formed the 'rules of membership' of the international community (Cook, 1997b). Bill Rammell, a Junior Minister at the Foreign Office under Straw, observes that '[t]he core role of any state is to guarantee basic human rights: life, security, the rule of law. But some fail in this responsibility' (Rammell, 2003). Another general responsibility is that a state must not threaten international peace and security, either by committing acts of genocide and producing refugees (Blair, 1999b), or by threatening its neighbours (Blair, 1999a). Subsequent to the terrorist attacks of September 11, two other responsibilities grew in importance: a responsibility not to support terrorism (Blair, 2004a); and a responsibility neither to develop weapons of mass destruction (WMD), nor to proliferate them to other countries (Blair, 2003b). A range of other responsibilities link directly to some of the rights above, but these are generally only applied to African states (see Blair, 1999a).

If others fail to meet these responsibilities, the international community itself has a responsibility to act (Blair, 2003b). Thus, in 2004, the principle of non-interference was dug up and re-buried by Straw.

> States have the right to non-interference in their internal affairs; but they also have responsibilities, towards their own people, and towards the international community and their international engagements. Where those responsibilities are manifestly ignored, neglected or abused, the international community may need to intervene: the cost of failing to do so in Rwanda or in Bosnia still haunts us today. (Straw, 2004).

There is, of course, a name for these states who manifestly ignore, neglect or abuse the responsibilities they owe: after September 11 they are increasingly called *failing states*.

*Failing States, Foreign Terror*

The primary, though unspoken, responsibility of any member of the international community is the responsibility to be *successful*. This is the nodal point, the master signifier which all other responsibilities refer back to, even if silently. In 1999, then Junior Foreign Office Minister, Peter Hain, argued that Britain's policy in Africa was 'clear, transparent and unequivocal. We will back success' (Hain, 1999). The successful, he claimed, are 'those who stand up for democracy and

human rights', who 'want to reform their economies' and who commit to 'freeing their people from poverty'. But, 'the reverse is true as well. We will not support corrupt governments… economic mismanagements… repression or bankroll dictatorship' because such 'evils have failed Africa. And we will not back failure' (Hain, 1999). International politics is thus dichotomised into successful and failing states. Successful means democratic, protecting human rights, reformed, poverty-free economies; failure means corruption, mismanagement, repression, dictatorship and evil.

Despite this early importance state failure only became central to British foreign policy after Straw was made Foreign Secretary in 2001. In 2002, Straw's definition of 'success' is heavily premised on the value of human rights. '[T]he key measure of a state's success is the extent to which it guarantees the human rights of its population'. He also highlights three other characteristics of state success – 'democracy, good governance and the rule of law' – without which 'human rights cannot be enjoyed' (Straw, 2002b). A more precise answer is given in a speech a few months later.

> How do we define a failed state? In general terms, a state fails when it is unable: to control its territory and guarantee the security of its citizens; to maintain the rule of law, promote human rights and provide effective governance; and to deliver goods to its population (such as economic growth, education and healthcare). (Straw, 2002c).

Examples given of failed and failing states include Somalia, Liberia and the DRC, which even resemble Hobbes' state of nature. However, there is also another type of state failure, which fits the above definition but does not match the Hobbesian 'chaos' of some African states. The best example of this type of failing state is pre-intervention Iraq.

> …in Iraq it is an all too powerful state – a totalitarian regime – which has terrorised its population in order to establish control. From one perspective, totalitarian regimes and failed or failing states are at opposite ends of the spectrum. But there are similarities: one is unable to avoid subverting international law; the other is only too willing to flout it. And in failing to secure widespread popular support, both have within them the seeds of their own destruction. (Straw, 2002c).

The metaphor – seeds of destruction – is important and shall be called upon later. The point Straw is making is clear: failing states do not live up to the responsibilities required of them in the international community; for some this is because they cannot (e.g. Somalia); for others this is because they refuse to (e.g. Iraq).

Perhaps it is still not clear why successful states, fully capable members of the international community, should be concerned about failing states. This is where the crucial discursive link between failing states and the 'foreignness' of terrorism is made. On one level, Straw argues, '[a]s members of an international community' we must be worried for 'the human rights and freedoms' of those caught in this chaos (Straw, 2002c). 'Yet', Straw claims, September 11 revealed 'a more particular and direct reason for concern', as a state's (i.e. Afghanistan's) failure and 'disintegration' impacted the lives of people 'at the heart of the most powerful democracy in the world' (Straw, 2002c).

Here we have the key to the exteriorisation of terror. Already, in 2002, four years before the London bombings, Straw has made the attacks of 11 September 'foreign' – the result of another state's failure and disintegration. Purely and simply, the terrorism of that day was a 'foreign' problem, produced by 'chaos' in Afghanistan. This is why the international community must act, pre-emptively if necessary, to prevent states from failing. The terror is foreign, so it demands a pro-active foreign policy. Straw sums this up superbly, linking the three themes: failed/failing states – terrorism – foreignness: 'the dreadful events of 11 September have given us a vision of one possible future. A future in which *unspeakably evil acts* are committed against us, coordinated from *failed states* in *distant parts of the world*' (Straw, 2002c – emphasis added).

It is this link which is underlined by the description of failing states *exporting* their problems. Shortly after September 11, Blair argued that the terrorist attacks on New York had shattered the myth that the West can simply ignore the rest of the world. 'Once chaos and strife have got a grip on a region or a country trouble will soon be exported' (Blair, 2001). As MacShane more starkly put it, '[t]he Westphalian era came to an end when states behaving badly exported their tensions and hates to our shores' (MacShane, 2002b). Describing the situation in even more offensive terms, he observes that, '[i]f we fail to help Africans on to help themselves on their own continent they will come and help themselves on ours' (MacShane, 2002a).

Now perhaps we can more fully understand how it was possible for the British government to exteriorise and 'make foreign' the terror of London. When Blair places this terror in the same bracket as mass migration, he is talking about the exportation of problems. These attacks were not domestic, they were a matter of Britain importing, shipping in, a 'foreign' ideology from the Middle East. To combine MacShane and Blair, the London bombings were a product of importing foreign 'tensions and hates to our shores', from failing states and their, 'brutal combination of secular dictatorship and religious extremism' (Blair, 2006b).

This section has argued that to understand how it was possible for the British government to construct the London bombings as a foreign issue, we must understand the discourse, the chain of references, from which it arose. An examination of British foreign policy, especially post-1999, illustrates how the exteriorisation of terror makes more sense when examined alongside concepts of 'international community' and failing/failed states. Failed states, who are unable to control their territory, guarantee security, human rights and the rule of law or provide effective governance, export their 'foreign' problems to states like the US (on 11 September 2001) and the UK (on 7 July 2005). Of course, this discourse rests on two crucial points which, if were demonstrated to be unstable, would destabilise its entire structure. These are that, firstly, Britain is not a failing state (if it were its primary responsibility would be to its own citizens, not those of other states), and secondly, failure is the exception and not the general rule. If either of these are problematic, so is the government's response to terrorism in the US and UK, domestically and internationally.

## Autoimmunity: Deconstructing the Failing State

It would certainly seem as if there is a fairly simple response to the British government's discourse of 'foreign' terror. This would be merely to re-state the facts of the suicide bombers, their and their crime's 'Britishness', and then assert that this insecurity was not imported: the London bombings were a matter of 'domestic' terror. However, there are several advantages to employing a Derridean analysis. Firstly, the bald statement of 'domestic' terror does not place the government discourse in its wider context. Instead of helping *explicate* the government's response, it is merely rejected. In contrast, Derrida's focus upon 'autoimmunity' reveals that the government's understanding of 7 July breaks down under its *own* logic; it does not require a separate version of events. Secondly, an assertion of 'domestic' terror would merely invert the hierarchical binary opposition (domestic/foreign) within which the government is already working. In other words, it would change which element of the opposition is given primacy, but it would not displace the opposition, the fundamental difference between the domestic and foreign itself.

A deconstructive critique works back from the government's representation of terrorism and enacts a form of resistance, not only to this representation, but to the dominant system of thought in which its conceptualisation is captured. As well as criticising the description of the London bombings as 'foreign', a product of 'failing states', deconstruction also undermines the possibility of a 'domestic' explanation. This is not to say that a 'domestic' terror argument is not important, and it will be stated below, but such an inversion of the binary opposition is only one gesture in the double-move of deconstruction (Derrida 1988, 21). To intervene in, and to respond to, the mediated descriptions of 7 July, it is important to overturn the inside/outside logic upon which they

are built. As we have seen above, the 'domestic/foreign' opposition is founded upon an opposition in the government's foreign policy discourse, between 'successful/failed' states.

*The Diseased/Autoimmune State*

In a 2002 speech on failing states, Straw included a section entitled 'Diagnosing State Failure' (Straw, 2002c). 'Diagnosis' implies that state failure is a disease or medical condition to be *treated*. After September 11, Straw says, he asked officials at the Foreign Office to 'look more closely at the underlying causes of state failure and identify a broad "at risk" category'. Those at risk could easily slide towards failure 'causing significant problems for the international community'. Such risk assessments are made by corporations before investing in a certain market and governments 'now need to put similar calculations at the heart of their foreign policy'. Thus, the medical analogy is extended:

> In medicine, doctors look at a wide range of indicators to spot patients who are at high risk of certain medical conditions – high cholesterol, bad diet, heavy smoking for example. This does not mean they ignore everyone else nor that some of those exhibiting such characteristics are not able to enjoy long and healthy lives, against our expectations. But this approach does enable the medical profession to narrow down the field and focus their efforts accordingly. We should do the same with countries. (Straw, 2002c).

Straw recommends that, with sharpened criteria and weighting, we can and should be able to *intervene before states fail.* 'Returning to my medical analogy, prevention is better than cure. It is easier, cheaper and less painful for all concerned.'

The fundamental test of the onset of such disease and failure is the health of human rights. As we saw earlier, the 'key measure of a state's success is the extent to which it guarantees the human rights of its population (Straw, 2002b). Thus, human rights and the rule of law should be used as an 'early warning system' of future crises and state failure. To extend Straw's medical analogy, we could say that human rights are the immune system of the international community. They reveal signs of disease and can be used to fight against this disease both by those within the state and, if need be, by the international community. As was demonstrated earlier, to establish failure, the British discourse advocates asking if there are areas of a state's territory the government cannot control, significant ethnic or religious tension or terrorist activity (Straw, 2002c). Fundamentally, a state's success depends on whether it is strong enough to control such tension and activity and maintain the safety, security and human rights of its citizens.

Jacques Derrida used a similar medical analogy, that of 'autoimmunity', to explain the contradictory, even suicidal, nature of democracy. Democratic states, he argued, essentially work against their own 'success'. 'Autoimmunity' is a 'strange illogical logic by which a living being can destroy, in an autonomous fashion, the very thing that is supposed to protect it against the other' (Derrida 2005, 123). It describes a biological process in which an organism's immune system turns on itself, on its own cells, thus destroying its own immunity. Hence it is 'quasi-*suicidal*' as it 'works to destroy its own protection, to immunize itself *against* its "own" immunity' (Derrida 2003, 94).

Democracy, for Derrida, is not just a system of government confined to the state. Following Plato's portrait of the democrat in the *Republic,* Derrida associates democracy with freedom/liberty (*eleutheria*) and license (*exousia*), which is also whim, free will, ease, freedom of choice, the right to do as one pleases. Thus, from Ancient Greece onwards, 'democracy' is conceived on the basis of this freedom (Derrida 2005, 22). This freedom and license associates itself with the concept of human rights, the rights which protect one's democratic freedoms. However, the point of 'autoimmunity' is to show that these democratic freedoms attack their own defences from within.

This can happen in at least two ways. Firstly, the very openness of such democracy, the free speech it allows, the right to stand for election to public office, and so on, can allow a party intent on ending democracy to triumph legitimately by election. An example is Algeria in 1992, where an extremist Islamic party was expected by many to triumph, to 'lead democratically to the end of democracy'. In this situation, the Algerian government decided 'to suspend, at least provisionally, democracy *for its own good*, so as to take care of it, so as to immunize it against a much worse and very likely assault' (Derrida 2005, 33). Democracy always has this quasi-suicidal possibility within itself – it may commit suicide (impose authoritarian rule and end democracy) to prevent its murder (the democratic end to democracy).

The second autoimmune reaction is far more applicable to our current deconstruction. The true terror of autoimmunity comes in the form of terrorism (see Derrida 2003, 187-188). The passenger plane attacks of September 2001, the March 2004 train bombings in Madrid, and the London bombings of July 2005 all attest to how the openness and freedom of a successful, democratic, state can literally be seen as 'contain[ing] the seeds of its own destruction' (as Straw says of failing states – 2002c). Those who flew planes into the World Trade Center were armed and trained to fly in the US (Bennett, 2004); similarly, the Madrid train bombings were perpetrated by a group of North Africans gathered in Spain (Tremlett, 2004). In Britain, as stated, the bombers

were British nationals, educated in extremist views, armed and trained almost entirely in Britain. They were allowed to travel to, and through, a capital city carrying deadly bombs without let or hindrance.

The apparently successful, democratic state is here caught in a double bind. On the one hand, the very openness of Britain's democratic culture of freedom and rights, which signify precisely its success as a state, are *the very source of its own failure.* Britain can no longer claim to protect the human rights, freedoms and security of their own citizens (the definition of a successful state/subject), and specifically *because of the human rights it seeks to protect*. On the other hand, however, what is represented as the necessary solution to this suicidal openness is a strengthening of the invasive powers of the state and a basic suspension of human rights and democratic freedoms. This itself will produce a self-imposed state failure, similar to, though less severe than, the imposition of authoritarian rule in Algeria.

This was revealed in the starkest terms on 22 July 2005 after the Metropolitan Police implemented *Operation Kratos,* which involved a 'shoot-to-kill' policy towards suspected suicide bombers. The Brazilian electrician Jean Charles de Menezes was shot seven times in the head and once in the shoulder as he boarded a train at Stockwell underground station (see Walker, 2006). Britain, as a state, was not only incapable of protecting human rights on 7 July; two weeks later it was *actively attacking* them, attacking its own immune system. The immune system continued to be attacked with proposals and measures instituted by the Labour government, presented precisely as a *necessary* curb on human rights. Primary amongst these was the attempt to increase to 90 days the period of possible detention without trial of terrorist suspects. Those who opposed and eventually defeated this measure were branded 'irresponsible' for their defence of human rights by Blair (Blair, 2005b). In June 2006 a further high-profile instance saw the police raid two houses in Forest Gate, London, arrest two men, shooting one of them. The lawyer for one family involved highlighted the state's failure, declaring that they were 'assaulted and unlawfully detained', that this action 'was as lawless as the wild west.' (Gareth Pierce, in Gillan and Muir, 2006).

The autoimmunity of the state means that its success can only ever also be *failure.* Democratic rights are suspended in order to preserve them. The double bind of the successful, *healthy,* state is that it necessarily attacks *its self*, its 'early warning system', making itself *diseased* – whether by terrorists attacking it due to its very openness, or by its own closure through suspension of democratic rights. Successful states, those which are capable of taking responsibility for their own and others' citizens security, rights and freedoms, cannot help but always be inhabited and defined by *failure.*

To some extent, the necessity of this structural failure is acknowledged within the government's response. In an interview, Straw was asked what reassurances could be given that bombings would not happen again. He replies that the only reassurance is to 'level with people… *We cannot provide a reassurance* that nothing like this will happen in the future*… We have been successful in many ways, but *you can never provide 100 per cent security*' (Straw, 2005a – emphasis added). If we recall, Rammell's definition of a state's core role is to 'guarantee basic human rights: life, security, the rule of law' (Rammell, 2003). Straw's own definition of state failure is when it is unable to 'control its territory and guarantee the security of its citizens' (Straw, 2002c). If no assurance can be given and *in*security is inherent, then not only is Britain a failing state, *there can be no successful state*.

However, as Derrida makes plain, there is something yet more disturbing for the possibility of the self-sameness of the state. The most unsettling element of autoimmunity is that it is always a matter of the *self* revealing the impossibility *of the self*.

> … what I call the autoimmune consists not only in harming or ruining oneself, commiting suicide or threatening to do so, but, more seriously still, and through this, in threatening the I [*moi*] or the self [*soi*], the *ego* or the *autos*, ipseity itself, compromising the immunity of the *autos* itself: it consists not only in compromising oneself but in compromising the self, the *autos* – and thus ipseity. It consists not only in committing suicide but in compromising *sui-* or *self-*referentiality, the *self* or *sui-* of suicide itself. Autoimmunity is more or less suicidal, but, more seriously still, it threatens always to rob suicide itself of its meaning and supposed integrity. (Derrida 2005, 45).

The very fact that this endangering of the state is done *by the self* and *to the self* is the most terrifying thing about terrorism; it reveals that there is no *self-same* self in the first place. The self is fragmented, constituted by *difference* as well as sameness, a difference that *attacks* the coherent self-sameness of the subject. As outlined, the terrorists were British nationals operating domestically. No matter how much we try to *exteriorise* terrorism, it is always more or less *interior*, it 'has something "domestic," if not national, about it' (Derrida 2003, 188).

The bombings have thus disturbed the simple inside/outside, self/other, domestic/foreign boundary upon which Britain's foreign policy and exteriorisation of terror is built (as a successful state, which has the capacity to responsibly protect 'its' citizens both within 'its' territorially drawn state, *and* in others' territorially drawn states). The exteriorisation of terrorism and insecurity is an attempt to make 'Britain' appear less autoimmune (as the attack came from the *other* not the

*self*), less unstable, less incapable, less fragmented, less *failing*. Yet, as Derrida observes, this is the most effective type of terrorism, that which 'seems external and "international," is the one that installs or recalls an interior threat, *at home*… and recalls that the enemy is *also always* lodged inside the system it violates and terrorizes' (Derrida 2003, 188). Attempts at exteriorisation will always fail because it recalls the fact that Sadiq Khan *was* British, that his 'ideology' *was* taught to him in Britain, that the attack was *fundamentally a 'British' attack on 'Britain'*.

The logic of domestic terrorism, the threat of domestic chaos and insecurity, is what the British government tries to evade by exteriorising the terror of 7 July. However, inscribing that terror within the foreign policy discourse of failing states means that the government's foreign *and* domestic policy is fatally undermined. Not only do they fail to convince that the terror was 'foreign', they also undermine the basis of British foreign policy, by revealing that Britain is a 'failing' state and that 'failure' is the norm rather than the exception.

## Conclusion: Responding/Resisting

In order to understand the government's response to the London bombings, and in order to negotiate other responses, or responses that are other, it is crucial to place it within the wider policy discourse from which it emerged. This paper has sought to enact such an approach, explicating where the represenation of 'foreign' terror came from, how it became the dominant understanding in government policy, and what links this produced with other discursive formations. Such an analysis took this paper into an excavation of the government's foreign policy and its reliance upon 'failed/failing' states. Widening the context has meant that responding to the London bombings is also about responding to the British government's foreign policy; not necessarily in terms of the links between the invasions of Afghanistan/Iraq and domestic terrorism, but in a more conceptual and fundamental manner. It demands a response to the framework which allowed the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq to be thought as *possible*, let alone natural and obligatory.

In conclusion, it is suggested that there are at least three responses produced both *by*, and *to*, the exteriorisation of the terrorism on 7 July. All three can be seen to also enact a form of resistance, a politicisation and unsettling of the government's conceptual framework. Firstly, the most obvious response/resistance is towards the domestic security policy pursued by the government since the London bombings. Events such as the shooting of Jean Charles de Menezes, attempts to increase periods of detention without charge, and the Forest Gate raid become even more deeply problematic when viewed from an 'autoimmune' perspective. It

undercuts the basis of the government's argument: 'shoot to kill' and 90 day detentions are simply 'necessary' because while civil liberties are essential, 'one basic civil liberty which is the right to life of our citizens and freedom from terrorism' is the most important of all (Blair, 2005b). Instead, a far more nuanced response, and indeed an increasingly nuanced resistance.

This must be a response which eschews simplicity in favour of a recognition that democratic rights and freedoms are necessarily suicidal; no discursive representation of terrorism as 'foreign' can alleviate this. Rejecting simplicity also means rejecting the simplistic abandonment of democracy on the grounds of its constitutive failure. Rather, deconstructive autoimmunity makes a double gesture: on the one hand, it embraces and affirms democracy in its paradoxical perfectibility; on the other hand engages in a ceaseless critique and negotiation of the imperfect contemporary institutions of democracy.

Secondly, a response is required to a conceptual schema of foreign policy based on failed and failing states. If failure is generalised, and the opposition between success and failure is displaced, where does this leave Britain? Where does it leave Britain's understanding of others and its self? This critique can be used in order to resist the seemingly necessary pre-emptive foreign policy which emerges from state failure. In one sense, this means resisting the way this discourse claims to 'know' the other, know its problems and the necessary solutions to those problems. While at times this discourse is patronising, as in the case of Straw's medical analogy of Britain as 'doctor' curing the 'diseased' parts of Africa (Straw, 2002c), at other times it verges on outright racism, as when MacShane suggests we should help African so they don't come to Europe and 'help themselves' (MacShane, 2002a). Exposure of such ethnocentrism at the heart of the Labour government's foreign policy, and its response to the London bombings is a necessary first step to resisting it.

In another sense, however, just as with the 'domestic' resistance, this must not constitute an outright rejection to all forms of 'humanitarianism' in foreign policy. Rather, in line with Edkins' critique of famine relief and aid operations, we should acknowledge that any such decision in foreign policy is a *political* decision through and through. 'It is not a technological or managerial matter that can be resolved by better theories or techniques' (Edkins 2001, 152). Humanitarian foreign policy cannot be a scientific, technological 'diagnosis' of state failure, as Straw claims. In fact, as Mark Duffield observes, where some see state failure, it is possible to see 'innovative and long-term adaptations to globalisation' (quoted in Edkins 2001, 138), what Edkins calls 'the development of forms of political authority that are no longer based on territorial integrity or a bureaucratic system or even on consent' (Edkins 2001, 138). While these new forms of authority *may* be undesirable, they should not be immediately dismissed as *failure* simply because of a

technologised ticking of pre-determined boxes in the British Foreign Office. Rather, the recognition of a generalised state failure calls for a questioning and critique of all foreign policy decisions, a questioning which aims to keep foreign policy *political.*

Thirdly, and finally, an 'autoimmune' critique demands that a response to the London bombings must contain a politicisation and displacement of the boundary between the 'domestic' and 'foreign', the national and the international, and of course, more broadly, the self and the other. If the other is always within, if domestic and foreign can truly not be separated (as is often admitted by the Labour government – MacShane, 2002a), a suspicious resistance and questioning is required every time it is re-imposed. The implications of such a response have yet to be exhausted thirteen years after R.B.J. Walker published *Inside/Outside*. Indeed, in many ways they have yet to be thought. A response to the violence that occurred on 11 September 2001 and 7 July 2005 would be an increased urgency for questioning how the boundaries between the self and other, inside and outside, are negotiated from moment to moment.

**Bibliography**

(2006) *Report of the Official Account of the Bombings in London on 7th July 2005* (London: The Stationary Office).

Ashley, R. (1987),'The Geopolitics of Geopolitical Space: Towards a Critical Social Theory of International Politics' *Alternatives* 12 (4).

BBC (2006a), 'Profile: Mohammad Sidique Khan,' http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4762209.stm; and 'Profile: Shehzad Tanweer,' http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4762313.stm (accessed 1 February 2007).

BBC (2006b), 'BBC Special Report on 7 July bombings,' http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/uk/05/london_blasts/investigation/html/introduction.stm (accessed, 1 February, 2007).

Bennett, R. (2004), 'Inside the mind of a terrorist', *The Observer*, 22 August.

Blair, T. (1999a), 'Facing the Modern Challenge: The Third Way in Britain and South Africa', 8 January. Unless stated, all speeches, interviews and press conferences by Prime Minister Tony Blair were downloaded from the Downing Street website: http://www.10downingstreet.gov.uk (accessed 1 May 2006 – 1 February 2007).

Blair, T. (1999b), 'The Doctrine of International Community Speech', Economic Club, Chicago, 24 April.

Blair, T. (1999c), 'The New Challenges for Europe', 20 May.

Blair, T. (2000), Speech to Global Ethics Foundation, Tubingen University, Germany, 30 June.

Blair, T. (2001), Speech at the Lord Mayor's Banquet, 12 November.

Blair, T. (2003a) 'Let the United Nations mean what it says and do what it means: Speech to Labour Party Spring Conference', 15 February http://www.labour.org.uk/news/tbglasgow (accessed 3 March 2006).

Blair, T. (2003b). Doorstep press conference in Beijing, 21 July.

Blair, T. (2004a), Press Conference, 15 January.

Blair, T (2004b), 'Speech on the threat of global terrorism' Sedgefield', 13 July.

Blair, T. (2005a), Speech to the General Assembly at the 2005 UN World Summit, 15 September.

Blair, T. (2005b), Monthly Downing Street press conference, 7 November.

Blair, T. (2006a) 'Clash about Civilisations', 21 March.

Blair, T. (2006b) Third Foreign Policy Speech, Georgetown, USA, 26 May.

Butler, J. (2004), *Precarious Life: The Power of Mourning and Violence* (New York: Verso)*.*

Campbell, D. and S. Laville (2005), 'British suicide bombers carried out London attacks, say police', *The Guardian*, 13 July.

Cobain, I. et al. (2007), 'MI5 decided to stop watching two suicide bombers', *The Guaridan,* 1 May.

Cook, R. (1997a), 'Mission Statement', 12 May 1997 http://www.guardian.co.uk/indonesia/Story/0,2763,190889,00.html (accessed 11 July 2003).

Cook, R. (1997b), 'Human Rights Into a New Century', 17 July. Unless stated, all speeches, interviews and press conferences by Foreign Office Ministers were downloaded from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website: http://www.fco.gov.uk (accessed 1 May 2006 – 1 February 2007).

Cox, R. (1981), 'Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory' *Millenium*, 10 (2).

Derrida, J. (1988), *Limited Inc.* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press).

Derrida, J. (2003), 'Autoimmunity: Real and Symbolic Suicides – A Dialogue with Jacques Derrida' in Giovanna Borradori, *Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with*

*Jurgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), pp. 85-136.

Derrida, J. (2005) *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason* (Stanford: Stanford University Press).

Edkins, J. (2001), *Whose Hunger? Concepts of Famine, Practices of Aid* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press).

Freedland, J. (2006) 'How London carried on' *The Guardian,* 7 July.

Gillan, A. and H. Muir (2006), 'Lawyer condemns 'wild west' police raid', *The Guardian*, 5 June.

Hain, P. (1999), 'Africa: Backing Success', 13 September.

Hain, P. (2001), 'The End of Foreign Policy?', 22 January.

Harding, L. and R. Cowan (2005), 'Pakistan militants linked to London attacks,' *The Guardian*, 19 July.

Laville, S. (2007), 'July 7 bombs: three in court as hunt goes on', *The Guardian*, 6 April.

MacShane, D. (2002a), 'The Return of Foreign Policy', 13 February.

MacShane, D. (2002b), 'Diplo-Military Politics: The Future Strategic Context of Conflict Prevention and Conflict Resolution', 25 April.

Rammell, B. (2003), 'Why Human Rights Matter', 25 November.

Scholte, J. A. (2005), *Globalization: A Critical Introduction*, second edition (Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave Macmillan).

Straw, J. (2002a), 'Principles of a Modern Global Community', 10 April.

Straw, J. (2002b), 'Human Rights Ensure International Security and Prosperity' 18 April.

Straw, J. (2002c) 'Failed and Failing States', 6 September.

Straw, J. (2004), 'Shaping a stronger United Nations', 2 September.

Straw, J. (2005a), Media Interviews with *Guardian Unlimited,* BBC News and ITV News, Gleneagles, 7 July.

Townsend, M. (2006), 'Leak reveals official story of London bombings,' *The Observer*, 9 April.

Tremlett, G. (2004), 'Madrid school used by British on bombers' list', *The Guardian*, 2 July.

Vasagar, J. (2007), 'Supergrass told court of training at Pakistan terror camp', *The Guardian*, 1 May.

Walker, P. (2006), 'Q&A: the De Menezes investigation', *Guardian Unlimited*, 17 July, http://www.guardian.co.uk/menezes/story/0,,1822504,00.html (accessed 19 July 2006).

Walker, R.B.J. (1993), *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Wickham-Jones, M. (2000), 'Labour's trajectory in foreign affairs: the moral crusade of a pivotal power?', in R. Little and M. Wickham-Jones, eds., *New Labour's Foreign Policy: A New Moral Crusade?* (Manchester: Manchester University Press).

# CSGR Working Paper Series

202/06 April        Marcus Miller and Dania Thomas
                    Sovereign Debt Restructuring: The Judge, the Vultures and Creditor Rights

203/06 April        Fondo Sikod
                    Globalisation and Rural Development in Africa: The Case of the Chad-
                    Cameroon Oil Pipeline.

204/06 April        Gilles Quentel
                    The Translation of a Crucial Political Speech: G.W.Bush' State of the Union
                    Address 2003 in Le Monde

205/06 April        Paola Robotti
                    Arbitrage and Short Selling: A Political Economy Approach

206/06 May          T.Huw Edwards
                    Measuring Global and Regional Trade Integration in terms of Concentration of
                    Access

207/06 May          Dilip K. Das
                    Development, Developing Economies and the Doha Round of Multilateral Trade
                    Negotiations

208/06 May          Alla Glinchikova
                    A New Challenge for Civic National Integration: A Perspective from Russia.

209/06 June         Celine Tan
                    Who's 'Free Riding'? A Critique of the World Bank's Approach to Non-
                    Concessional Borrowing in Low-Income Countries

210/06 September    Richard Higgott
                    International Political Economy (IPE) and the Demand for Political Philosophy
                    in an Era of Globalisation

211/06 October      Peter Waterman
                    Union Organisations, Social Movements and the Augean Stables of Global
                    Governance

212/06 October      Peter Waterman and Kyle Pope
                    The Bamako Appeal of Samir Amin: A Post-Modern Janus?

213/06 October      Marcus Miller, Javier García-Fronti and Lei Zhang
                    Supply Shocks and Currency Crises: The Policy Dilemma Reconsidered

214/06 December     Gianluca Grimalda
                    Which Relation between Globalisation and Individual Propensity to
                    Co-Operate?  Some Preliminary Results from an Experimental Investigation

215/07 January      Kui-Wai Li, Iris A.J. Pang and Michael C.M. Ng
                    Can Performance of Indigenous Factors Influence Growth and
                    Globalisation?

216/06 December     Marcus Miller and Lei Zhang
                    Fear and Market Failure: Global Imbalances and "Self-insurance"

217/07 February        Catherine Hoskyns
Linking Gender and International Trade Policy: Is Interaction Possible?

218/07 February        Dilip K. Das
South Asian Free Trade Agreement: Prospects of Shallow Regional Integration

219/07 February        Vanesa Weyrauch
Weaving Global Networks: Handbook for Policy Influence

220/07 February        Yuji Tamura
Preferences for Immigration Restriction and Opinions about Immigrant's
Economic Impacts

221/07 March        Dania Thomas and Javier García-Fronti
Good Faith in Sovereign Debt Restructuring: The Evolution of an Open Norm in
'Localised' Contexts?

222/07 March        Michela Redoano
Fiscal Interactions Among European Countries: Does the EU Matter?

223/07 March        Jan Aart Scholte
Civil Society and the Legitimation of Global Governance

224/07 March        Dwijen Rangnekar
Context and Ambiguity: A Comment on Amending India's Patent Act

225/07 May        Marcelo I. Saguier
Global Governance and the HIV/AIDS Response: Limitations of Current
Approaches and Policies

226/07 May        Dan Bulley
Exteriorising Terror: Inside/Outside the Failing State on 7 July 2005

# Centre for the Study of Globalisation and Regionalisation
University of Warwick
Coventry CV4 7AL, UK

Tel: +44 (0)24 7657 2533
Fax: +44 (0)24 7657 2548
Email: csgr@warwick.ac.uk
Web address:  http://www.csgr.org