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SPEECH BY THE FOREIGN SECRETARY, ROBIN COOK, TO THE 54TH
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Mr. President.

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Globalisation is the common term to describe how in today's world we are interdependent with each other rather than independent of each other. We are bound together by our deepening links in trade and investment, in travel and communication. What happens in one country can have a direct impact on the prosperity, the security and even the climate of countries on the other side of the world. *qua*

And we are bound together by the consequences of conflict:

In Britain, 90 per cent of the heroin on the streets of our big cities is grown in Afghanistan under cover of the generation-long conflict in that land.

In central Africa, the upheavals of population sparked by the mass genocide in Rwanda have destabilised the region and caught up half a dozen countries in the conflicts that have ensued.

Across the countries of Europe there are now several hundred thousand citizens of the Former Yugoslavia who have fled to seek sanctuary from repeated conflicts there.

Just as few nations can stand alone in the modern world, there are few major conflicts which remain only an internal matter with no impact on the rest of the world.

If we are to respond satisfactorily when conflict breaks out, then the UN needs to develop three strengths: Authority, Consensus and Capacity.

If the UN is to have the authority to press the parties to conflict to a solution, it must be more representative of the modern world. A small increase in the size of the Security Council would be a modest price to pay for the big increase in its credibility that would come from a more representative permanent membership.

But greater credibility will be pointless without consensus on when the authority of the UN should be invoked. Intervention must always be the last resort. We can all agree that the first responsibility for reconciling internal conflict rests with the state in which conflict arises. But we also have a shared responsibility to act when confronted with genocide, mass displacement of people or major breaches of international humanitarian law. To know that such atrocities are being committed and not to act against them is to make us complicit in them. And to be passive in the face of such events is to make it more likely they will be repeated.

But credibility will also require us to demonstrate not just the consensus, but also the capacity to act. We often hear demands that the UN should do something. Let us be

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honest. The UN is nothing more than the aggregate of its member states. The UN cannot do something except when we, its member states, are prepared to provide the means.

Britain has entered into an Agreement earmarking the forces we are prepared in principle to provide for emergency peacekeeping work. It enables the UN to plan for such emergencies with greater confidence that it can rapidly put in the field the right skills with the necessary equipment. A score of other countries have signed up to similar agreements and the more of us who do so the greater will be the capacity of the UN in brokering a basis for peacekeeping deployment.

But in Kosovo, we have discovered that it was less difficult to put together an armed force to end the military violence than it was to assemble a UN police force to keep civil order. Today, therefore, I want to announce that Britain will follow up our Agreement with the UN on troops with a similar agreement increasing the number of UK police officers available for UN operations. This will include a commitment to a Rapid Response Squad, ready for deployment at short notice when it is urgently needed. We shall also be establishing with the UN a training course in Britain to train police from around the world to play their part in UN missions.

Mr President. The agenda I have set out may be an ambitious one. But it is much less ambitious than the visionary programme set out half a century ago by the founders of the UN. As our Secretary General said earlier this year, unless we can unite around the aim of confronting human rights violations and crimes against humanity then we will betray the very ideals of those founders.

In the modern world of satellite communications, we know instantly when such violations are taking place. We have the resources and the mobility to move our assets quickly to an emergency. Modern technology has made all of us each other's neighbours. We need to match that technology with an international doctrine that also reflects the modern world. And it should be founded on the principle that the only war that we agree to wage is one in which our nations are united in combating conflict.