Executive Summary

Title: 
Forenames: 
Surname: 
Employing Organisation: University of Leeds

Proposal

Department: School of Politics and International Studies

Project Title: International law, the American Exception and British centre-left foreign policies before and after the Iraq War.

Abstract: What should the UK do when the US challenges or violates international norms? This question lay behind the controversy surrounding the invasion of Iraq and it may be asked if the US attacks Iran. The realist argument that the UK's American policy is dictated by power politics is unsatisfactory. Normative arguments did influence policy on Iraq. Blair argued, as he had on Kosovo, that the moral case for war was 'obvious' from a centre-left perspective. The moral imperative to support the US was for him more important than the legal requirement to respect the outcome of multilateral deliberation. It is because the public, particularly on the centre-left, is uncomfortable with this that this research explores possible alternative approaches. It tests the view that regime change was 'obvious' by examining the link between moral and legal imperatives in centre-left discourse, and it draws on normative IR theory to rethink the 'special relationship' in ways that enable policymakers to square the UK's commitment to international law with its interest in maintaining a strong bond with the US.

Created: Tuesday, February 15, 2011 20:39 [Approved]
Primary Subjects:  Subject
International Relations
Security Studies
"Int'l Political Economy/Foreign Policy Analysis"

Secondary Subjects:  Subject
International Law (Public)

Subject Group
Politics
Politics
Politics

Classifications

Time Periods:  TimePeriod
Contemporary

Audiences:  Audience
Policymakers at national level (e.g. working with Government departments, participating in public inquiries)
Journalists, broadcasters and other media
General Public

Regional Interests:  Region
England
Scotland
Wales
Ireland
USA and Canada

Region Group
Europe
Europe
Europe
Europe
Northern America

Applicant Personal Details

Title:  
Forenames:  
Surname:  
Address:  School of Politics and International Relations
University of Leeds
Woodhouse Lane
Leeds
West Yorkshire

Town:  Leeds
Postcode:  LS28 5PP

Email Address:  
Telephone (work):  

Applicant Career Summary
Statement of Qualifications and Career:

Qualification: PhD War Studies

Date: [redacted]

Present appointment:

Present employing institution: University of Leeds

Present department: School of Politics and International Studies

PhD confirmation: Yes

Publications:


Personal Statement:

I was awarded a doctorate [redacted] I have since published 21 articles / chapters and I am presently completing my third book, Law, War and the State of the American Exception. This is contracted with OUP. The manuscript delivery date is May 2011. This book develops my work on international society and American exceptionalism by focusing on how the War on Terror either violated or challenged international law on the use of force, detention, prosecution and interrogation policy. It illustrates how the Schmittian inspired critique of liberal war is only half right in its characterisation of the War on Terror; and because it is only half right on this it is wrong to claim that the exception is a permanent feature of American power. I have begun to explore the implications of this for British foreign policy in two 2011 publications. These assess Blair's approach to reconciling the tension between international law and the 'special relationship' and they begin to consider the possibility of alternative approaches. This fellowship will enable me to advance this new research agenda.

Next period of research leave: I am eligible to apply for one semester of research leave to be taken in academic year 2012-13.

Dates of research leave in last five years: Departmental sabbatical. September 2007 to January 2008

ESRC funded research buyout February 2010 to August 2010

Sabbatical arrangements: I am eligible to apply for sabbatical leave every 6 semesters (under review) but have been forced to delay this due to teaching and administrative commitments.
Current commitments (teaching):

5 PhD students.

Undergraduate: currently teaching US Foreign Policy (60 students); future commitments may include International Organisations (135 students)
25 personal tutees.

Postgraduate: International Law and Ethics in the War on Terror (25 students); 5 personal tutees; MA dissertation supervision (2 students).

Current commitments (administrative):

Current commitments (publishing):

I am committed to completing a single authored manuscript - Law, War and the State of the American Exception - for Oxford University Press by May 2011.

Current commitments (from which cannot be released):

PhD student supervision

Where did you hear of this scheme?:

British Academy Website

Curriculum Vitae:

Proposal

Subject: Politics / International Relations

Title of proposed research: International law, the American Exception and British centre-left foreign policies before and after the Iraq War.

Abstract:

What should the UK do when the US challenges or violates international norms? This question lies behind the controversy surrounding the invasion of Iraq and it may be asked if the US attacks Iran. The realist argument that the UK’s American policy is dictated by power politics is unsatisfactory. Normative arguments did influence policy on Iraq. Blair argued, as he had on Kosovo, that the moral case for war was ‘obvious’ from a centre-left perspective. The moral imperative to support the US was for him more important than the legal requirement to respect the outcome of multilateral deliberation. It is because the public, particularly on the centre-left, is uncomfortable with this that this research explores possible alternative approaches. It tests the view that regime change was ‘obvious’ by examining the link between moral and legal imperatives in centre-left discourse, and it draws on normative IR theory to rethink the ‘special relationship’ in ways that enable policymakers to square the UK’s commitment to international law with its interest in maintaining a strong bond with the US.

Proposed programme:

In March 2002 Tony Blair wrote that the case for war to overthrow Saddam was ‘obvious’ from a left perspective. This was because the centre-left is ‘a political philosophy that does care about other nations –Kosovo, Afghanistan, Sierra Leone- and is prepared to change regimes on the merits, [it] should be gung-ho on Saddam.’ This memo, made available by the Iraq Inquiry, is remarkable. It shows support for the US before a UN mandate had been secured. Furthermore, it ignores contradictory positions that can also be described as ‘obvious’ from a left view. These include a suspicion of US power and an insistence that military action be consistent with the law and international opinion. These views informed opposition to the war and the split persists today, as seen in David Miliband’s rejection of his brother’s admission that the war was wrong. Ed Miliband’s insistence in The Observer (27/02/11) that our values should define our alliances (not vice-versa) also suggests a rethinking of the ‘special relationship’; and with the pro-UN Liberal Democrats joining the traditionally ‘Atlanticist’ Conservatives in government, it is clear that centre-left foreign policy thinking is in a period of reflection. To inform this debate, this research asks two questions: what exactly is
the 'obvious' centre-left position on the use of force? What should the UK do when
the US engages in conduct that either challenges or violates international norms?

The research consists of two projects. The first examines how this policy split
echoes nuances within the liberal internationalist tradition and how it has evolved
since the Cold War. Humanitarian crises clearly influenced Blair and others. The
question to answer is how the moral imperative to act related to the legal
imperative to respect the outcome of international public deliberation or
multilateralism. This is important because it tests Blair’s assumption that the case
for war was ‘obvious’ from a leftist perspective. Using an interpretivist qualitative
method, the applicant will analyse discourse within the Labour and Liberal
Democrat parties, think-tanks such as the Fabian Society and the Foreign Policy
Centre, and the centre-left press, such as New Statesman, Guardian, and
Independent. The data to be analysed will be limited to case studies involving the
possibility of joint military action with the US, including operations against Iraq
since the first Gulf War, as well as interventions in Africa and the Balkans. Leftist
positions on how the UK should balance political, moral and legal imperatives will
be identified. A judgment will be made on their political significance. That
judgment will be based on the frequency of expression and the author’s position in
society and the policymaking community. Finally, these views will be mapped on
to elite opinion within the legal community. This is important because it helps
explain how divisions within centre-left politics found expression in what is still
seen as an arcane debate on the Iraq War’s legality. The hypothesis is that Blair
was wrong to describe regime change by military force as an ‘obvious’ policy
preference, but that he was a ‘norm entrepreneur’ within centre-left politics.

The second project draws on the applicant’s expertise in normative IR theory to
develop a framework that can guide the UK’s American policy. It will address two
questions: firstly, should a perceived moral imperative to support military action by
the US override the UK’s need for a legal mandate when the Security Council
refuses to support such action? Blair’s insistence that he ‘did the right thing’ by
removing Saddam, and that the French threat to veto military action was
‘unreasonable’, suggests that it does. The project will explore the implications of
this for the constitution of international society and will identify substantive and
procedural criteria that can properly define when a permanent member’s veto is
unreasonable. Secondly, should the UK abandon its commitment to be bound by
the strongest international legal argument if opposing the US harms the national
interest? The concept of ‘good international citizenship’ insists that a state must
respect international law except where that policy threatens ‘vital’ national
interests. Preserving ‘the special relationship’ is often portrayed in these terms and
this can easily lead to entitle Atlanticism and an unwarranted rejection of
international law. The project asks how alternative conceptions of ‘the special
relationship’ provide the UK with greater scope to square its commitment to law
and the national interest. It does this by recalling that the republican ideas of
public deliberation and the rule of law are central to the Jeffersonian and
Wilsonian traditions (Deudney 2008). The hypothesis is that the UK defence of
international law that appeals to these values, in these uniquely American terms,
is less likely to suffer costs that are harmful to the national interest.
Planned research outputs: Two peer-reviewed articles in high-impact, foreign policy oriented journals. Target journals include International Affairs, Review of International Studies, Ethics and International Affairs, British Journal of Politics and International Relations.

A position paper setting out policy implications to be published by a centre-left think-tank. The Foreign Policy Centre has already expressed an interest in the project.

A 15-20 minute video available to view online explaining the research questions, the project's finding and its impact on society and policy. A model for this is available at 'Law, War and the State of the American Exception. How Research Inspires Teaching', available at http://lutube.leeds.ac.uk/esople/videos/4172

Plan of action: The research is divided into four phases. The first (September to December 2011) will concentrate on collecting and analysing the empirical material required to address the hypothesis set out in project one. It will involve analysis of the primary sources mentioned above, as well as further research into elite opinion within the academic and policy-making legal community. During this phase a project website and blog will be created. A model for this is available at http://www.personal.leeds.ac.uk/~lisjgr/ The second phase (January to February 2012) will involve writing up the findings and submitting the first article to one of the target journals. The third phase (March to May 2012) will involve development of the normative framework used to assess and inform centre-left policies. This will involve a consolidation and integration of the literatures on good international citizenship, republican IR theory and the Wilsonian tradition in the United States. The fourth phase (June to August 2012) will involve writing up the findings, submitting the second article to another target journal and producing the end of project video on the model of http://lutube.leeds.ac.uk/esople/videos/4172

Plans for publication / dissemination:
- the creation of a project website and blog. This builds on the applicant's experience of maintaining such sites for his ESRC-funded project 'Law, War and the State of the American Exception'. This project's blog has had 1,217 visits since November 2009. The intention here is to relaunch this site to reflect the new research focus on British foreign policy, as well as to create better links to non-academic, policy-led organisations such as the Foreign Policy Centre. The blog enables a rolling commentary on the research as it unfolds. This helps to engage audiences before the final outputs emerge. All blog entries will be open to internet users for comment.

- a University of Leeds seminar / lecture series of 8 speakers spread across the two academic semesters of the fellowship. This series will focus on all aspects of British foreign policy but will prioritise the themes of the project, namely the lessons of the Iraq War and the Iraq Inquiry and a normative analysis of UK policy. The applicant has made informal inquiries to the Iraq Inquiry with a view to inviting panel members (especially Leeds alumni) and to speak at the University. The seminar series will be open to the public and advertised widely using appropriate mailing lists and social networking sites. These presentations will be podcast, subject to the consent of the speakers, giving an opportunity for those that cannot attend to engage with the project. Audio and / or video recordings will be hosted by the project website, LUTube and latest events will feed into updates on the Leeds Social Science Institute. These feeds are followed by a large external audience through various social networking media.

- a project Wiki. A search for the project's keywords will lead to a Wikipedia page because that source is so widely consulted. This will draw traffic to the project's main site.

- a one-day workshop organised by the applicant through the British International Studies Association (BISA) Working Group on British Foreign Policy. This will take place in February 2012, either in Leeds or, as in the past, at the Foreign Office in Whitehall.

- a seminar co-organised with the Foreign Policy Centre. This will build on similar seminars arranged for the first part of 2011 and will take place in July 2012 in Westminster.

- conference papers at the BISA and International Studies Association (ISA) annual conferences 2012.

- the dissemination of outputs, which include two articles in academic journals, a policy position paper for publication by the Foreign Policy Centre, and opinion pieces linking the research to current events building on this example

- an end of project video made available on LSSI and LUTube websites, which the University of Leeds has plans to promote on ITunes.

Start Date: 01/09/2011
End Date: 31/08/2012
Duration (months): 12
Overseas travel - country:
Overseas travel - country 2: N/A
Overseas travel - country 3: N/A
Overseas travel - institution: N/A
Support of BA School or Institute Required/Granted: N/A
Language competence (if applicable): N/A
Endangered or Emerging Subject Area: The research programme contributes to academic and public understanding of Britain's role in addressing global security challenges. More specifically, it addresses the question of what the UK should consider and do when the US government decides to address those security challenges using military force in a way that either violates or challenges international law. The Iraq War demonstrated an intense public interest in this question, which in turn posed a difficult dilemma for UK policymakers. The sense of public dissatisfaction with how those policymakers tried to resolve that dilemma contributed to the creation of the Iraq Inquiry, which will of course report its findings shortly before the proposed fellowship begins. This programme of research offers an opportunity to comment on the Inquiry's findings in the broader context of British foreign policy studies and normative International Relations theory. It will, moreover, inform policy and public debate on what the UK should consider and do in the future when it is faced with similar security challenges. An implication of Tony Blair's testimony to the Iraq Inquiry, for instance, is that the policy dilemmas he faced in 2002-3 will be repeated if Iran continues in its efforts to acquire a nuclear weapon. The question of whether to support the use of American force in counter-proliferation operations and what conditions the UK should insist on is, in other words, a future challenge that this research can help address.

Ethical approval obtained: There are no special ethical issues arising from the proposal. Research conducted in the University of Leeds is conducted according to the principles of academic excellence, community, integrity, inclusiveness and professionalism. The University expects high ethical standards of all its researchers and research projects. All research applications which involve human participants or have an impact on the environment will be subject to the University's ethical review processes. As such, if this funding application is successful then it will be subject to the University of Leeds processes for ethical review. This entails ethical approval by a Faculty level Research Ethics Committee, or delegated authority according to guidance and principles set out by the University Ethical Review Committee. Research which comes within other legislative frameworks, such as the EU Clinical Trials Directive, or the NHS Research Governance Framework, will be reviewed by the appropriate Competent Authority.

Ethical approval (more information): N/A
## Financial Details

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<th>Justification</th>
<th>Amount Requested</th>
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### Total grant requested:

- [Redacted]

### Start Date:

- 01/09/2011

### Duration (Years):

- 1

### Justification:

The Directly Incurred salary cost is [Redacted]. This is calculated as follows:

- Salary plus [Redacted] employer’s pension contribution plus [Redacted] employer's National Insurance contribution. The Travel costs of £1,800 are calculated as follows: 10 x travel bursary of £100 for attendees at the February workshop being held in Leeds, or at the FCO, plus 8 x £100 for the Leeds seminar series speakers.
- The accommodation cost of £2,700 is to cover 8 seminar series speakers and 10 workshop attendees @ £150 each.
- Other Costs of £3,350 is calculated as follows: Seminar at the Foreign Policy Centre £2,000, plus Workshop in Leeds £500 to cover catering and room hire, plus Video production costs of £850.
- The Directly Allocated costs (Estates) and Indirect Costs are based on the current institutional rates and are calculated based on the Fellow’s time commitment of 100% during the project's duration.

### Applications to other funding bodies:

- No.