

## Preparing America's Foreign Policy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century



# Facing a Fragile & Dangerous World

BY ROBERT FERRIER

PHOTOS BY ROBERT TAYLOR

Former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher took the University of Oklahoma by storm February 25 as the headliner at the second annual Foreign Policy Conference. However, she was not alone in capturing the attention of several thousand enthusiastic conference attendees.

“Preparing America’s Foreign Policy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” showcased an impressive array of diplomats, scholars, and intelligence, counterterrorist and national security experts. In sessions throughout the day, they interacted with faculty, students and University guests before packed venues in the Oklahoma Memorial Union and Lloyd Noble Center.

OU President David Boren and International Programs Center Director Edward J. Perkins assembled marquee names for the conference: former U.S. Senate majority leader and chairman of peace negotiations in Northern Ireland, George Mitchell; assistant secretary of state for intelligence and research, Phyllis Oakley; deputy chief of the CIA Counterterrorist Center, Paul Pillar; former national security advisor, Lieutenant General Brent Scowcroft, USAF (Ret.); former Secretary of State Lawrence S. Eagleburger and Yale University professor and International Security Studies director, Paul Kennedy.

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Former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher delivers the keynote Foreign Policy Conference address at an academic convocation in Lloyd Noble Center.







## The Conference Keynoter

Trumpeters and the Highland bagpipers escorted the former British prime minister in a processional before 6,000 people at a regalia-drenched afternoon academic convocation in Lloyd Noble Center. Thatcher, the ceremony's honoree, was preceded by members of the Kiowa Black Leggings Society, who presented the colors.

Boren praised Thatcher as "one of the most important and influential leaders of the last 50 years, building strength and unity of the free world that helped end the Cold War." He called her a woman of uncompromising principles and great moral courage.

Governor Frank Keating introduced Britain's longest-serving prime minister in modern times, noting that Oklahomans had been "Thatcherized" during her visit.

OU Board of Regents Chairman Melvin Hall and Vice Chairman Don Halverstadt bestowed Thatcher with an honorary doctorate in humane letters. Assisting was retired Admiral William J. Crowe, chair of OU's International Programs Center Board of Visitors, who also served as U.S. ambassador to Great Britain and as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Great Britain's Margaret Thatcher answers questions from a capacity crowd at the Foreign Policy Conference banquet in the Oklahoma Memorial Union Ballroom.

In her remarks Thatcher praised America for shaping the world's response to tyranny in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. "America stands as the only country in the world founded on liberty and born in liberty. The British join as 'junior partners' in the Anglo-American fight against tyrants, but we take pride in that role. Freedom always fought back."

Thatcher predicted that historians will view the past century in different ways. "Some will view it as a 'Century of Tyranny.' Others will label it as a 'Century of Science' because of the advancements that changed our industries and daily lives. Still others will note that 100 more countries gained independence and joined the United Nations." The British dignitary said she will view this century as a period when the United States and her allies fought to protect freedom, while turning former enemies into friends.

She characterized America as a country where people can worship God freely, where "biblical ethics belong to each person," where the rule of law prevails, where citizens give generously to philanthropic causes and where human sanctity is protected.

"You've kept liberty and justice alive during times of great difficulty," Thatcher said.

She joked about Britain's ties to U.S. law and history. "You can see that I've studied your Constitution. I've always loved the language in which it is phrased."

While praising the Declaration of Independence, Thatcher sounded a warning. "American school children don't learn enough about their country's heritage. They have the greatest inheritance in the world. Future generations must know and appreciate it."

Thatcher cautioned that the United

States and Britain must guard against aggression by maintaining a strong, well-equipped military.

"May the United States and the United Kingdom always march in the ranks of honor. That would be a great service to the world. We owe a debt to the pre-Christian eras," she said. "We must learn from the collapse of Athens—the birthplace of democracy—when people eventually sought to avoid responsibility rather than to embrace it."

Russia emerged from tyranny with no freedoms, Thatcher said. "Gorbachev started the first steps toward liberty by letting the people watch government meetings. Yet today the Russian people remain ignorant of how to build the structures of liberty."

She deplored the corruption that undermines Russia's effort toward democracy. "The International Monetary Fund sent \$22 billion to assist the Russian people, yet it disappeared before reaching them. Such corruption demonstrates there can be no freedom without rule of law. The American settlers understood that and brought it with them from England."

Thatcher mentioned today's societal problems—especially crime and violence—fearing that more people lack respect for the rights, freedoms and prosperity of others. Americans must reinforce family structure and values, because "America sets an example to the rest of the world."

She commended America for its social conscience, noting that "conscience remains the only guide to man."

That evening Thatcher sat beside Boren and answered questions from a capacity crowd of dinner guests in the Oklahoma Memorial Union Ballroom. Topics included the qualities of a good leader, the European Union, continued unrest in the Balkans, the possibilities for peace in the Middle East and British relations with China.

Thatcher cited previous experience as one of the most important qualities of a leader. "People entering politics should have another job first," she said amidst laughter from the audience. "The worst thing for a student of



political science would be to enter politics immediately."

Thatcher reasserted Britain's position of not joining the European Monetary Union, noting that the euro became the Union's common currency at the beginning of the year. "We must never lose our national identity," she insisted. "When a nation forfeits its currency, it forfeits control of the future. Britain *must* retain its sovereignty. For that matter, we are far closer to America than to Europe!"

On the crisis in Kosovo, Thatcher contended that America and Britain cannot police the world. Outlining the history of the area's problems, she said, "If you send in foreign peacekeepers, then know how and when to get them out."

In the Middle East, Thatcher noted that as Yasser Arafat ages, "now is a good time to negotiate with him. The peace process must move on. Despite much bad feeling, I believe a settlement is possible."

When asked about Britain's relationship with China, Thatcher pointed out that six million residents of Hong Kong showed China and the rest of the world how to run a country in prosperity.

"The average family in Hong Kong earned \$12,000 to \$15,000 a year," she explained. "The average family in China—with no rule of law, no freedom—earned \$800 a year. That presents one of the most interesting comparisons in history of the same people. China, with natural resources and talent, failed to prosper because it lacked the most priceless resource of all—liberty."

As responsive as the dinner crowd was to the dialogue, Thatcher drew the largest applause earlier in the day after receiving her honorary degree.

"With this degree I associate myself with the University of Oklahoma forever," she said. "I hope to visit you in a few years and see if you're still 'Thatcherites.'"

As prime minister from 1979 to 1990, Thatcher led the Conservative Party to three consecutive general election victories. After leaving the post, she continued to serve as a member of



Former U.S. Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell, left, kicks off the second annual Foreign Policy Conference with a joke at the expense of his host and former Senate colleague, OU President David Boren.

Parliament until the 1992 election. She established the Margaret Thatcher Foundation in 1991 to foster her economic, legal and political principles. Thatcher holds the post of chancellor at both Buckingham University in England and William and Mary College in Williamsburg, Virginia.

### The Struggle for Peace in Northern Ireland

The conference breakfast speaker, former U.S. Senator George Mitchell, attracted an early-morning audience to hear "Negotiating the Settlements to Internal Wars and Terrorism." The former chairman of peace negotiations in Northern Ireland gave a hopeful message concerning the 25-year-old conflict in that country as well as others worldwide. He contended that peace among international factions remains possible even after centuries of violence.

"After two years, we reached agreement on Good Friday, 1998," Mitchell told a packed Memorial Union Ball-

room gathering. "The agreement does not guarantee peace. But a single act of violence does not signal the end."

A Maine Democrat, Mitchell called the peace process the longest, most difficult task of his public life. He recalled his service as the Senate majority leader for six years while former senator and presidential candidate Bob Dole served as minority leader.

"Senator Dole and I work together as partners in a law firm in Washington, and I told him after my return from Ireland that I always thought of him as tough to deal with," Mitchell said. "But now I rank him as a patsy compared to those negotiators in Northern Ireland."

Mitchell explained that the conflict centers specifically on whether Northern Ireland will remain part of England. The Protestant majority group, called Unionists, say yes. The Catholic minority say no and want to be unified with the Republic of Ireland.

Mitchell offered four guiding principles to resolving conflicts:

*First, any conflict can be resolved.* "These situations are created by humans, and they can be resolved by humans." *continued*



*Second, never yield to violence.* In Northern Ireland, those on both sides tried to wreck the peace; they wanted everything their way. They were willing to bomb, murder and assassinate to obtain total capitulation.

*Third, both sides must be willing to listen to another point of view.* "Easily said, but difficult to achieve. Political leaders don't want to take risks for peace, especially risks that endanger their lives."

*Fourth, unemployment leads to violence.* "When hope and opportunity fade, conflict follows."

Mitchell said the last principle can be applied throughout the world. "Instability lurks everywhere. This violence could just as easily have been in Chicago, Detroit, Calcutta, Johannesburg or any big city in the world. All people need to feel they

have a chance to do something meaningful with their lives."

A former federal district court judge, Mitchell recalled enjoying performing naturalization ceremonies. "I would chat with the new American citizens in my office. Once I asked a young Asian, who could barely speak English, why he came to America. His answer: 'Because here, everyone has a chance.'"

### Counterterrorism Strategies as Casualties Increase

Counterterrorism has been woven into the fabric of foreign policy, top U.S. State Department official Phyllis Oakley said at a mid-morning panel discussion in Meacham Auditorium.

Oakley, assistant secretary of state for intelligence and research, shared the panel with Paul Pillar, deputy chief of the CIA Counterterrorist Center.

"As terrorism impacts more people,

counterterrorism strategy seems more like a football game," Oakley said. "We need a good defense and a good offense."

Oakley traced the roots of terrorism, beginning with the hijacking of an El Al airliner by a Palestinian liberation group in 1967. She outlined the evolution of later terrorist attacks, including airport, Marine base and Olympic games massacres.

"The 1979 seizure of the American Embassy in Tehran signaled state-sponsorship of terrorism," she noted.

As worldwide peacemaking efforts succeeded, the face of terrorism changed again, Oakley said. New chemical and biological weapons, methods, targets and motivations have led to a more sinister pattern of destruction, such as the World Trade Center bombing and a Tokyo subway poison gas attack.

"We learned a lot about the explosive power of fertilizer from the Oklahoma City bombing," she said.



ABOVE: U.S. State Department's Phyllis Oakley paired with the CIA's Paul Pillar to discuss the challenges of international terrorism during the morning panel discussion.



RIGHT: Margaret Thatcher, accompanied by President Boren, left, and Governor Frank Keating, waves to the academic convocation crowd.





CIA Counterterrorist Center's Paul Pillar

"Today's terrorists use computers, cell telephones and encryption software."

Even though sophisticated electronics make it easier to track terrorists, Oakley warned that the Internet provides instructions for making bombs.

Oakley sees global initiatives in diplomacy as crucial to curbing terrorism. "Diplomatic exchange of intelligence information starts a 'multiplier effect.' The more we share, the more we receive."

Pillar, who joined the CIA in 1977, explained that today's international terrorists concentrate more on causing death and destruction and show less concern for themselves. "Religious fanatics view their acts as a shortcut to paradise."

In addition to diplomacy, Pillar continued, initiatives now being used to counter terrorist activity include freezing assets of terrorist groups; military force, such as in Libya in 1986 and Iraq in 1993; strengthening international law enforcement; and intelligence.

By supporting other countries' enforcement of international tax and criminal laws, the United States keeps terrorists off balance, he said.

However, he cautioned, "It's difficult to identify the enemy—now or in the future."

**"We learned a lot about the explosive power of fertilizer from the Oklahoma City bombing. Today's terrorists use computers, cell telephones and encryption software."**

### **Policing the World Alone No Longer Feasible**

As winds of change swept away the Cold War, the United States knew it must reshape its role in world affairs. America no longer could police the world. This theme recurred throughout remarks by former Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger and former National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft as they discussed U.S. foreign policy during a joint luncheon address titled, "The Bush Administration and Transition from the Cold War."

Eagleburger was secretary of state under President George Bush. Scowcroft, a retired Air Force lieutenant general, served in national security positions under presidents Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford and Bush.

The two men exchanged ideas informally before a capacity audience in the Oklahoma Memorial Union Ballroom.

"At the end of the Cold War in 1989 the world looked murky," Scowcroft said. "We knew Gorbachev was 'different,' but we didn't know if that difference would lead him in our direction."

Gorbachev was "saying the right things, but the structures of the Cold War remained," he continued. "The Iron Curtain stretched across Europe; vast arsenals pointed at each other."

The United States faced a decision, Scowcroft recounted. "We decided to refocus our relations with the Soviet Union. Previous dialogues had centered on strategic arms control. We decided to concentrate instead on removing the Soviet army from Eastern



Former National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft, above, joined former Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger in a free-wheeling exchange of U.S. foreign policy views before the Union Ballroom luncheon audience.



## **“Go to Belgrade or Kosovo. Unrest in Armenia, Georgia and other former Soviet republics present a preview of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.”**

Europe by encouraging the spirit of solidarity in Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia. Our goal was to foster change, but at a rate that would not bring reprisals. This time history was on our side.”

Eagleburger maintained that if the Kremlin had been under different leadership, no progress would have been made. “Gorbachev did not get too aggressive on foreign policy. Ironically, he deserves a certain degree of homage for the way he destroyed his own position. He let East Germany go, and the entire Soviet system collapsed.”

Eagleburger characterized Cold War questions as clear-cut. World issues balanced on the fulcrum of U.S.-Soviet relations.

Paradoxically, without the Cold War, instability pervades the globe, he said. For proof, “Go to Belgrade or Kosovo. Unrest in Armenia, Georgia and other former Soviet republics

present a preview of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.”

Answers to the next century’s problems may be found in history, Eagleburger suggested. World issues today resemble those following the collapse of Napoleon, when Europe struggled to find its way. “The great power figure had departed. Like then, we face the same kind of questions, but in a more complicated world.”

International communities must counter the terrorist threat of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, he said.

Yet unless the United States agrees to police the world forever, “Any conceivable answer must diminish U.S. sovereignty. Still, we must end the proliferation of these weapons of mass destruction or endure the same threat we faced during the Cold War.” However, terrorists will act less rationally than the United States and Russia did in the 1980s, he warned.

Scowcroft agreed, but noted that

the United States finds itself in the same position as 70 years ago, when it was not a world leader. “We’re feeling our way again. A president today struggles to play a strong role in foreign policy. Grassroots America faces the danger of withdrawing again from world affairs, an attitude that handicaps our leaders.”

Still, “Only the United States can lead,” he insisted. “If we don’t, it won’t get done.”

During his introduction of the two foreign policy leaders, Boren said, “The quality of life in the world affects each and every one of us.” He enumerated key issues in U.S. foreign policy as providing for stability and economic growth, stopping the spread of weapons of mass destruction, curbing terrorism and dealing with the American people’s lack of knowledge and concern about world affairs.

### **A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Test of America’s Will to Lead**

Paul Kennedy, Dilworth Professor of History and Director of International Security Studies at Yale University, outlined four “Factors that Will Influence the Foreign Policy Environment in the Next Century.”

Speaking in a crowded Meacham Auditorium, Kennedy cited rapidly advancing technology for limiting the scope of his remarks to the next 25 years.

Kennedy targeted population changes as the first of four complex factors impacting world societies. “The world’s six billion people increase by 80 to 90 million a year,” he said. “Third World countries experience the largest growth. India will add 17 million a year, roughly the population of Australia. Conversely, fertility rates shrink in Italy, Japan, southern Europe, France, Spain and Russia. Their populations age rapidly, like America’s and Great Britain’s.”

Kennedy warned of social consequences wrought by such changes. Underdeveloped countries, such as those in south and central Asia and



Former Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger





Paul Kennedy, Yale University professor and International Security Studies director, outlined factors that will influence future international relations decisions during the afternoon session at the Foreign Policy Conference.

in central Africa, may experience unrest, particularly when economic resources fail to match needs.

"In such countries the local environment suffers," he said. "Human rights abuses increase. Societies with high numbers of frustrated young men and women, lacking education and opportunity, may implode politically or export their frustrations across borders. Look at the world's flash points—such as Rwanda, Kosovo, the West Bank, Haiti—and observe demographics fueling other volatile issues. Over the next 25 years, 60 or 70 poor societies will absorb—or fail to absorb—a massive 'youth bulge,' reducing their chances for survival. Richer societies may be less inclined to help, as they age. If future families in America, Italy or other wealthy countries produce on average one child, will they want to risk sending their youth to quell unrest overseas?"

The second factor—pressure from

advances in technology and communication—will create unintended consequences, Kennedy said. Biotechnology advances in the Western world might raise the life span to 90 or 100 years. Combined with a lower birth rate, such societies age even more and may become more conservative toward foreign policy. As society relies increasingly on personal and global computer networks, their very nature makes them more vulnerable to terrorism.

"Furthermore, technology pressures poorer countries to 'liberalize' and 'globalize,'" Kennedy explained, "thus creating a paradox. Our leaders caution about commitments overseas, even as we push those societies to be 'more like us.' Yet evidence from Russia, Indonesia, Brazil, much of Africa and south China suggests that many societies cannot handle these liberalizing forces."

The third factor—global military

advances—creates yet another paradox, Kennedy said. Although the U.S. defense budget exceeds the next 10 nations' combined, anxiety and unease cloud the future.

"Many analysts believe China represents a potential threat. Eight nations in Asia possess or seek nuclear capability. Even if those nations do not develop a naval fleet, their missiles pose a 200- to 400-mile 'denial capacity,' forcing U.S. warships farther away from Asian coasts in future crises. Other experts worry that we have not found a way to deal with rogue states such as Iraq, North Korea and Libya. No one doubts that the U.S., Israel and Great Britain will bear the brunt of future terrorism."

The fourth factor—America's preparation for the future—finds a strong social fabric at the grass roots level, Kennedy said. Yet Washington's political core reveals a different picture.

"Disunity abounds between the president and Congress making it difficult to achieve a coherent national action on controversial foreign policy issues. America exhibits an inward self-centeredness, its media trivializing world events in 'sound bites,' which crowd out thoughtful analysis by viewers in favor of the latest football scores."

This insular view manifests itself in elected officials, Kennedy said, with predictable results. "Many members of Congress don't even own a passport."

Kennedy suggested that the current social climate may not produce elected leaders equipped to guide the country through foreign policy trials ahead.

"When President David Boren passed through the portals of Yale in the 1950s, a career in politics seemed natural and noble," Kennedy said. "How many of today's college students regard political leadership in the same way? Future crises will test our leaders' mettle under dangerous circumstances. Will they cope? If not, the 21<sup>st</sup> century will prove less kind to America."