

BLOG



[Guest Blog: Integral Blair? \(by Jose Vergara\)](#)

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An Integral assessment of Tony Blair:

INTEGRAL BLAIR?

by Jose Vergara

After 10 years as Britain's prime minister, Tony Blair is no longer in power. We know that he has read Ken Wilber and is a pretty bright guy. But the question is: Does he qualify as an Integral Leader? That's what we want to find out.

What would an integral political leader do? Well, he would practice Integral Politics —a political theory that, as Wilber says, takes into account, includes and integrates all those important dimensions of a human being: all quadrants, all levels, all lines, all states and all types. A political theory that integrates all the partial viewpoints and perspectives that have been causing suffering and inhibiting evolution.

Since this creation of an Integral Politics is an ongoing process in its very early stages, it would be unfair to ask for perfection in its application. Just having something close to an integral political perspective (without fully managing to put it into practice) should earn the leader in question some points. Specially if we take into account the intensely non-integral orientation of most of our current political leaders. Therefore, we intend to be lenient in the granting of our coveted Integral Leader Award. Just a good approximation of what an integral leader could be like, should be enough to clinch it.

And since a comprehensive analysis of Blair's legacy is completely beyond the knowledge and capacity of my semi-integral mind, the granting (or not) of the award will be based on just a few illustrative key points.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL

The first obvious integration facing an Integral Political Leader is the Right vs Left dichotomy. The terms Left and Right have been used in so many ways as to be almost completely meaningless, and though it could be said that they are a little bit like pornography (identifiable without an exact definition), the fact that they are so vague makes their integration an impossible task. Wilber, in *Up From Eden*, came up with a clear distinction. The Right puts the emphasis on internal factors (family values, work ethic, self-responsibility), the Left on external ones (material improvement, economic redistribution, health care). Therefore, people that tend to the Right are internalists and people that tend to the Left are externalists. Rightists believe our problems are internal (i.e. lack of proper values) and Leftists believe that our problems are external, (i.e. lack of economic development). An integral leader would obviously try to take into account and integrate both perspectives.

Now, has Blair done this?

Well, he is definitely aware of the problem. In an article in *Foreign Affairs*, Blair emphasized the importance of integrating precisely these two perspectives.

"We will not win the battle against global extremism unless we win it at the level of values as much as that of force. We can win only by showing that our values are stronger, better, and more just than the alternative. That also means showing the world that we are evenhanded and fair in our application of those values. We will never get real support for the tough actions that may well be essential to safeguarding our way of life unless we also attack global poverty, environmental degradation, and injustice with equal vigor".

Here, Blair is pointing out the need for both internal action (teach values) and external action (fight poverty).

Blair has also stressed many times the necessity of combining hard and soft power. Hard power is the external use of force. Soft power, on the other hand, has to do with persuasion, with winning the hearts and minds, with internal factors. This combination also involves another integration of internal and external factors:

"And this is not just about security or military tactics -- it is about hearts and minds. It's about inspiring people, persuading them, showing them what our values at their best stand for". Article in *Foreign Affairs*

"We will not succeed simply by military or security means. It is a political challenge. Terrorism recruits adherents on the basis of an appeal to human emotion. It can be countered only by a better, more profound, well-articulated counter-appeal". Article "What I've learned" written for *The Economist*.

Contrary to many Left-wing politicians, Blair acknowledges the internal factors behind terrorism (values, religion) and not just the external ones (oppression, lack of economic development):

"It is almost incredible to me that so much of Western opinion appears to buy the idea that the emergence of this global terrorism is somehow our fault. For a start, it is indeed global. No-one who ever half bothers to look at the spread and range of activity related to this terrorism can fail to see its presence in virtually every major nation in the world. It is directed at the United States and its allies, of course. But it is also directed at nations who could not conceivably be said to be allies of the West. It is also rubbish to suggest that it is the product of poverty. It is true it will use the cause of poverty. But its fanatics are hardly the champions of economic development. It is based on religious extremism. That is the fact. And not any religious extremism, but a specifically Muslim version". (Speech on the Middle East to the Los Angeles World Affairs Council)

However, Blair is also willing to concede the contribution of external factors:

"The roots of the current wave of global terrorism and extremism are deep. They reach down through decades of alienation, victimhood, and political oppression in the Arab and Muslim world". Article in *Foreign Affairs*

"I do not in any of this, ignore the social and economic dimension to extremism. Deprivation is a bad thing in itself and it can create the conditions in which extreme ideologies of all kinds can flourish. But it cannot be permitted as an excuse". Speech on Multiculturalism and integration.

This importance of internal factors has not been limited to foreign policy. It is also acknowledged in domestic policy. According to Blair, the integration of immigrants into British society involves much more than external factors (employment, housing, health services):

"When it comes to our essential values, the belief in democracy, the rule of law, tolerance, equal treatment for all, respect for this country and its shared heritage — then that is where we come together, it is what gives us what we hold in common; it is what gives us the right to call ourselves British. [...] Integration is not about culture or lifestyle, It is about values. It is about integrating at the point of shared, common unifying British values. It isn't about what defines us as people, but as

citizens, the rights and duties that go with being a member of our society". (Speech on Multiculturalism and integration).

Not surprisingly, this "internalist" position has been very criticized. A spokesman for the Muslim Association of Britain called it "concerning and alarming". He added: "Mr Blair should be investing in our society to help the deprived".

Wilber has pointed out that the political Left has left all values talk in the hands of the conservatives. Evidently, that is not the case of Blair. Few politicians have talked so much and so persuasively about values and individual responsibility. In fact, the following paragraph could have been written by Wilber himself:

"Law and order matters in a way that is more profound than most commentary suggests. It used to be that progressives were people who wanted an end to prejudice and discrimination and took the view that, in crime, social causes were paramount. Conservatives thought crime was a matter of individual responsibility and that campaigns against discrimination were so much political correctness. (Article "What I've learned" written for The Economist.

Of course, all this "taking into account" internal values has not been purely talk but has led to specific policies.

His anti crime bills and anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs) reflect a tough stance on crime. This stance (usually a trademark of the political right) is based on the idea that the criminal is responsible and not only a victim of oppression.

His Terrorism Act intended to fight not only the terrorists themselves but the ideas and values that encourage terrorism. His deportation measures against clerics that preached hate were also part of this fight.

His funding for Islamic studies at British universities tried to promote moderate views of Islam.

OK, I think the emphasis on internal factors is clear. But what about external factors? We don't want the emphasis on internal factors to come at the expense of neglecting external ones.

This is what The Economist (not a leftist magazine) had to say:

"On most measures, Mr Blair has left Britain a better place than it was in 1997. Uninterrupted economic growth has made the average Briton substantially better off, even if the tax burden has risen. There are fewer tatty schools and run-down hospitals. Although many exams lack rigour, more children are getting respectable grades and going on to universities. Thanks to the minimum wage and tax credits for poor working families, the forces relentlessly pushing up income inequality under Margaret Thatcher have been blunted.

"Under Mr Blair, fusty old Britain has become an international exemplar of openness. Large-scale immigration, especially from the former communist countries of eastern Europe, has boosted the economy without triggering a serious backlash of resentment. Embracing globalisation, London has become one of the most dynamic cities in the world. Mr Blair has changed the debate in Europe (Nicolas Sarkozy is another right-winger in his debt) and he has also done more than any other Western leader to force people to pay attention to climate change and poverty in Africa".

In fact, Anthony Giddens thinks that a great part of Blair success as prime minister has been the priority given to the economy.

"A fundamental part of Blair's approach has been to emphasise the importance of the economy, and it has paid off handsomely. His governments have been the first to be trusted on the economy ahead of the Conservatives, who used to hold this as their trump card. About 75 per cent of the UK labour force is in work, compared to an EU average of 63 per cent. This figure has been achieved with a substantial minimum wage. Britain remains a highly unequal society, but it is the only one in the EU where poverty has markedly decreased over the past nine years".

During the Blair years, GNP per capita in the U.K has overtaken France, and Germany. The economy has grown at an annual per capita rate of 2.4% a year. This is rather better than the average for the last half century, which is 2.1%. Meanwhile, inflation has been almost bang on its target and employment has hit record levels.

It doesn't look like the external factors have been neglected... In fact, the economy is considered by many to be the most successful legacy of the Blair years (we want an integrally informed leader that is also effective). It is true that Blair has been criticized for not managing to reduce economic inequality and that this has led to more calls from the Left for more aggressive redistribution. But in a world where economic and especially financial globalization have run ahead of political globalization, there is only so much that the nation-state can do to tax the wealthy in order to reduce inequality. More punitive levels of taxation might only drive out capital, or, as Prof. John Van Reenen has pointed out, "only undermine entrepreneurship and create employment only for creative tax accountants". Also, as Anthony Giddens has argued, "To reduce poverty, we should concentrate upon a redistribution of life-chances". Which is why the Blair government focused in reducing child poverty, with very good results.

In view of all this, I think we have a pretty successful integration of internal and external factors and a fairly good performance in both areas. Blair's approach has been truly Third Way, integrating Left and Right. Therefore, he deserves a passing grade on the external/internal front.

(I have to say that times are changing and the distinction between the Left —externalists— and the Right —internalists— is getting increasingly blurred. In addition to Labour's emphasis on values and personal responsibility, the socialist government in Spain is trying to implement the teaching of civic values in the schools, and the Right is against it —they want their other values to be taught. (Maybe the Left is becoming more integral...).

INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE

This is another axis that needs to be integrated. Individualists emphasize individual rights and collectivists emphasize collective rights.

An individualist believes that individual rights should predominate over the rights of the collectivity. A collectivist believes exactly the opposite. An extreme individualist believes that the collectivity has no rights at all, the collectivity is just an aggregation of individuals. This position is illustrated by Margaret Thatcher's famous statement "society does not exist". An extreme collectivist, on the other hand, believes the individual has no rights at all, he is just a strand in the collective web, which has all the rights. This position is typically illustrated by communist regimes.

Very related to this axis is the role of the state. In general (Wilber has pointed out some exceptions), collectivists tend to favour a maximal role for the state (as the representative of the collectivity) and individualists a minimal role. In the old days (especially in Europe), to belong to the Left meant that you were in favour of nationalizing mostly everything (the nationalization of the means of production would supposedly end exploitation by the few and bring about a fairer distribution of wealth). This meant that you were in favour of a maximal role for the state in the economy. Not surprisingly, a clause in the Labour party's constitution said that it aspired to nationalize all economic activity. The Right, on the other hand (especially with Reagan and Thatcher) has advocated a minimal role for the state in the economy ("The government is not solution, the government is the problem").

It would be convenient to conclude that right-wingers are individualists who favour a minimal role for the state and that left-wingers are collectivists and statists. A new Left-Right integration would just require to find a balance between these two positions. Unfortunately, things are a bit more complicated than that.

The Reagan administration, for example, spent trillions in its military budget and launched a huge campaign against drugs and pornography. The minimal role for the state, therefore, only applied to some areas (the economy), and the same thing happened with the predominance of individual rights. My individual rights to watch pornography or smoke marijuana (or do both things at the

same time) could be restricted for the sake of collective moral values. The Reagan administration could thus be said to be individualist with regards to economic freedoms and collectivist with regards to moral values and social issues. On the other side of the political spectrum, it would be easy to imagine the exact opposite case: a Left-wing government that would completely control individual initiative in the economy (via high taxes, regulations and nationalizations) and legalize marijuana.

I think legalizing marijuana may make a lot of sense, but none of the two previous positions is integral. The integration of individual and collective rights does not consist in having individual rights dominate in some areas and collective ones in some others. Likewise, you do not find the right degree of government intervention by doing everything in some areas and nothing in others. The integral position tries to balance individual and collective rights in every area, and find the ideal degree of government intervention.

Chickering and Sprecher (as mentioned in Wilber's A Theory of Everything) have introduced the terms "order" and "free" to indicate whether the emphasis is placed on collective or individual rights. A balance of individual and collective rights would therefore imply a balance between "order" and "freedom".

Let us now see whether Blair has achieved this balance.

Let us take the economy. On the "freedom" side of the equation, Blair started by ditching the nationalization clause in Labour's constitution and clearly aligned his party with free trade and markets. According to Prof. John Van Reenen, Blair's government "has kept the economy open by not blocking a wave of foreign takeovers, supporting free trade and, bravely, encouraging a huge wave of immigration. Overall, the legacy of competitive product markets and labour market flexibility has been maintained". However, Blair did not absolutize the "freedom" side by seeking a minimal role for the state and letting private initiative dominate. His aim was to combine "economic efficiency together with social justice". And if free markets are essential for economic efficiency, the government has a very important role to play with respect to social justice, that is, in the "order" or "collective" side of the equation. (Stiglitz has pointed out that the government also has a role in creating the institutional infrastructure in which markets can operate).

In his effort to promote social justice and equality, Blair's government instituted a series of redistributive policies such as the National Minimum Wage and tax credits for the low paid. According to The Guardian, "More money was redistributed through the tax system than under any previous Labour government: 600,000 fewer children are now poor and those still below the line are much better off". Blair's government also invested heavily in public services, and, to quote The Economist again, "There are fewer tatty schools and run-down hospitals ... [and] more children are getting respectable grades and going on to universities". And this comes after many years of chronic underinvestment through the Callaghan, Thatcher and Major years.

I think we have a pretty good balance of order and freedom, of individual and collective rights in the economy. This would constitute a good integration of the two typically partial positions on this front: that of the economic libertarian and that of economic interventionist.

This is what the overused term "Third Way" was all about. The First Way was based, according to Giddens, "upon the notion that the state should replace the market in major areas of economic life". The Second Way "was Thatcherism, or market fundamentalism - the belief that the realm of the market should be extended as far as possible, since markets are the most rational and efficient means of allocating resources". The Third Way is an attempt to transcend and include those two partial approaches.

This balance of individual and collective rights can also be seen in the approach taken to solve the problems created by radical Islam.

Of course, there is freedom of religion and freedom of expression in Britain. However, these individuals freedoms are not absolute. I can't go to the mosque and preach that it is every Muslim's duty to kill as many infidels as possible, even if I can show that what I preach is congruent with the Koran. My freedom of religion will have to conform to certain collective shared values:

"If you come here lawfully, we welcome you. If you are permitted to stay here permanently, you become an equal member of our community and become one of us. Then you, and all of us, who want to, can worship God in our own way, take pride in our different cultures after our own fashion, respect our distinctive histories according to our own traditions; but do so within a shared space of shared values in which we take no less pride and show no less respect. The right to be different. The duty to integrate. That is what being British means. And neither racists nor extremists should be allowed to destroy it".

"If outsiders wishing to settle in Britain were not prepared to conform to the virtues of tolerance then they should stay away. Conform to it; or don't come here. We don't want the hate-mongers, whatever their race, religion or creed". Blair's Speech on Multiculturalism and integration.

Therefore, if I don't conform to those collective values and I insist on practicing my individual freedom of religion by preaching a radical version of Islam, I'll be deported.

Some people may complain that this is an assault on individual freedoms and some that it does not go far enough to fight fanaticism and preserve some minimal collective values, but it is definitely an effort to integrate and balance order and freedom, individual and collective rights. The right balance is not of course easy to achieve, and Blair has been accused of undermining civil liberties in his fight against terrorism. However, in a world of global terrorism, collective security cannot be overlooked (neither overemphasized).

Blair has also been criticized for replacing student grants with a loan to be repaid once the student was earning over a certain threshold. This can also be viewed as a reasonable attempt to combine individual rights with social responsibilities. The student has an individual right to a higher education but then, if that higher education allows him to earn a lot of money, it seems fair for him to give something back to the collectivity that allowed him to have that education.

If we combined the emphasis given to either internal or external factors with the "free" (individualist) or "order" (collectivist) positions, we get 4 different political orientations (as pointed out by Chickering and Sprecher): Free Externalist (e.g. economic libertarian), Free Internalist (e.g. civic libertarian), Order Externalist (e.g. economic interventionist), and Order Internalist (e.g. civic interventionist). Each one of these typically partial positions has to be taken into account and balanced in an Integral approach. And I think the examples given show that this is what Blair has done.

The "universal donor" character of an integral orientation is reflected in the fact that there is something for everyone: The reduction in poverty and the improvement of public services should satisfy the economic interventionists, the fact that GNP per capita has grown at a higher rate than the average for the last half century and that the rich have gotten richer should satisfy the economic libertarians, the increased rights for gays should satisfy the civic libertarians and the firm stance against radical Islamic preachers should satisfy the civic interventionists.

In short, I think Blair deserves another passing grade on the individual/collective front.

LEVELS

As far as I am concerned, the best way to solve our political problems would be to have Ken Wilber as all-powerful-dictator-tyrant of the whole world. Unfortunately, that doesn't seem very likely. Therefore, the next best thing we can hope for is to have as many turquoise leaders as possible in the major countries of the world.

As Wilber says: "Let each stage of development be itself, yet govern from the highest—which at this point in history is turquoise".

Consequently, what we want to do here is try to detect a turquoise orientation behind some of Blair's policies. We are going to focus on two areas: foreign policy and multiculturalism

According to Timothy Garton Ash (and to Blair himself) the essence of Blairism in foreign policy is liberal interventionism. This doctrine implies that a nation's right to sovereignty could be

overthrown —by military force if necessary— in the interests of human rights and human decency (for example, to prevent genocide or massively inhuman behaviour).

Kosovo is a case in point. "There", says Garton Ash, "Blair led the way in forging an international action to reverse a genocide being perpetrated by Slobodan Milosevic against the mainly Muslim Kosovar Albanians".

Garton Ash has also pointed out the typical green-meme criticisms to Liberal Interventionism:

"Liberal interventionism, you could say, is a lousy idea. What business is it of ours to stop foreigners killing each other if they want to? Our superior, pacific European soft power is demonstrated by not intervening anywhere. We keep our hands clean by not lifting a finger".

Exactly. You do your thing, I do mine. In the Balkans they have strange customs that we have to respect. So, if the Serbs are killing the Albanokosovars, that is their business.

In fact, Blair's approach has been labeled by the pluralistic green meme as a new imperialism. It involved, as one critic put it, a "readiness to kill": "The precondition for crusading military interventions is a readiness to kill, in support of your own values". Which probably means you should try to stop people like Slobodan Milosevic without firing a single shot. Well, good luck with that.

One can also imagine a narrow orange altitude perspective: "If the conflict does not affect our national interests, then it is not our business. Besides, there isn't any oil in the Balkans".

Liberal interventionism transcends both green (that is their business) and orange (that is not my business), and could be said to carry the seeds of a turquoise orientation. However, it is very important that the overriding of state sovereignty in the case of humanitarian interventions is complemented by the creation of an international framework to legitimize this type of actions. It is essential that the intervention be seen as the intervention of the whole international community. We want to go beyond state sovereignty but we have to very careful not to go beneath it: liberal interventionism could be used as an excuse to attack a country one wants to invade for geopolitical reasons.

Moving on to our second topic, multiculturalism has been the subject of very intense debates in Britain, specially since the 7/7 terrorists attacks. The typical green-meme approach has been to emphasize the importance of diversity and plurality and ignore the importance of unity and integration. The idea is that the more cultures a society includes, the richer it is. However, as The Telegraph said, "The bombings had thrown the whole concept of a multicultural Britain 'into sharp relief' and highlighted the divisions in society". Diversity was starting to be a problem.

Even Blair admitted that his previous approach to multiculturalism might have increased those divisions:

"In a sense, very good intentions got the better of us. We wanted to be hospitable to new groups. We wanted, rightly, to extend a welcome and did so by offering public money to entrench their cultural presence. Money was too often freely awarded to groups that were tightly bonded around religious, racial or ethnic identities".

However, in his Speech on Multiculturalism and Integration (the title says it all), Blair moved to a turquoise orientation that sought the right balance between integration and diversity.

He started by defending diversity and anti-discrimination (important contributions of green):

"When we won the Olympic Bid to host the 2012 Games, we presented a compelling, modern vision of Britain: a country at ease with different races, religions and cultures. This was not the stuffy old Britain that used to be sent up in the comedy sketches of the 1970s but a nation proud, willing and able to go out and compete on its merits.

"The ethos of this country is completely different from thirty years ago. The courts recognise racial offences in a way that was inconceivable then. We have the most comprehensive panoply of anti-

discrimination legislation in the world. We have tough laws outlawing discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, religion, race, gender and disability. The Human Rights Act provides basic protection to ethnic minorities and lays down some minimum standards. It is a matter of some pride to me that it has only been Labour governments that have introduced anti-discrimination legislation".

Then he showed the limitations of promoting only diversity:

"We like our diversity. But how do we react when that "difference" leads to separation and alienation from the values that define what we hold in common? For the first time in a generation there is an unease, an anxiety, even at points a resentment that our very openness, our willingness to welcome difference, our pride in being home to many cultures, is being used against us; abused, indeed, in order to harm us".

And finally he points out the need for integration (and not only economic integration):

"When I decided to make this speech about multiculturalism and integration, some people entirely reasonably said that integration or lack of it was not the problem. The 7/7 bombers were integrated at one level in terms of lifestyle and work. Others in many communities live lives very much separate and set in their own community and own culture, but are no threat to anyone.

"But this is, in truth, not what I mean when I talk of integration. Integration, in this context, is not about culture or lifestyle. It is about values. It is about integrating at the point of shared, common unifying British values. It isn't about what defines us as people, but as citizens, the rights and duties that go with being a member of our society.

"But when it comes to our essential values - belief in democracy, the rule of law, tolerance, equal treatment for all, respect for this country and its shared heritage - then that is where we come together, it is what we hold in common; it is what gives us the right to call ourselves British. At that point no distinctive culture or religion supercedes our duty to be part of an integrated United Kingdom".

Yes, that was a great speech. The importance of values is also a point of differentiation with a typical green approach. A green perspective would accept the importance of economic integration by the members of a cultural minority. But not the integration "at the point of shared, common unifying British values", because this would imply that those British values are "better". The green perspective believes, of course, that everybody should enjoy their own cultures, but would not accept that they should do so under a single set of overarching values.

Wilber has said that the leader should govern from turquoise but be but be able to address all levels of development. I think that is definitely the case with Blair. He could use amber language with the troops, orange language with entrepreneurs and green language with environmentalists. As The Economist said, "Tony Blair is an exceptionally gifted politician, perhaps the most natural persuader to have occupied the country's highest office since universal suffrage was introduced in 1928".

Again, another passing grade for Blair on the levels front.

LINES OF DEVELOPMENT: TALK /WALK

The Blair government acquired a reputation for creative news management or "spin". This is another way of saying that your talk does not match your walk.

When Blair first came to power, he said, "We were elected as New Labour and we shall govern as New Labour". And, as Anthony Giddens has pointed out, Blair "has made a similar assertion in each of the three elections he has fought as leader".

This New Labour agenda consisted, according to Giddens, in basically four points: 1) Put the economy first. 2) Hold the political centre. 3) Pursuing social justice, concentrate upon the poor

rather than the rich. 4) Invest in public services, above all education and health care. 5) Do not cede any issues to the right, instead seek to provide left-of-centre solutions to them.

Then Giddens goes on to say that it was Blair's commitment to this agenda, that won Labour three successive terms of office. In other words, Blair did what he said he was going to do. Otherwise, he would not have been able to win three successive elections.

"Some have seen the Third Way as a sound-bite, empty PR - a political outlook devoid of significant policy content. This view is quite wrong. Labour has won three successive elections for the first time in its history and could very well win a fourth precisely because the Third Way is policy-rich".

Also, we can argue in Blair's defense that "spin" can be a legitimate case of "skillful means". As British commentator John Lloyd has indicated: "Spin is the reaction of politics to a more aggressive and opinionated news media. It is an expression of the fact that governments (and oppositions) have had to become much more active advocates of their own case."

The news media are not agenda-free neutral observers of the political scene. Media content is shaped by economic, ideological, and marketing considerations, and even by the personal beliefs of the owner of the media outlet.

Timothy Garton Ash thinks it has been precisely this "opinionated" news media that has prevented Blair from taking a more pro-european position (as he would have liked):

"Britain's European policy is drastically constrained, if not actually dictated, by its Euroskeptic media. Blair saw the problem clearly, but he never dared to face down the unelected newspaper proprietors and editors on whom New Labor has depended so heavily".

In view of all this, we cannot say there has been a huge gap between the walk and the talk, and therefore, another passing grade for Blair.

TYPES: CONSERVATIVE/PROGRESSIVE (TRANSLATION/TRANSFORMATION)

Here we want a leader that can balance transformation with conservation, the past with the future, what needs to be changed with what needs to be maintained. We could call him a "retroprogressive" leader.

Blair has been severely criticized for being insufficiently progressive, for not changing things inherited from previous Conservative governments: the free-market orientation of the economy, the tough public spending limits, and Margaret Thatcher's trade union legislation.

However the results of his "conservative" (in the sense of conserving) approach have proved him right.

The results on the "progressive" side have also been pretty impressive:

"Mr Blair has helped make Britain a more tolerant, more cosmopolitan place. There is a human-rights act now; civil partnerships for homosexuals are recognised. Self-government for Scotland, Wales and now even Northern Ireland has extended democracy: peace in Ulster must rank among Mr Blair's greatest successes". The Economist

Blair has acted as a pacer of transformation in his country. This is evident in the way he has changed a Conservative party that has had to accept and embrace many of Labour's goals and policies:

"The Conservatives have got back into the game by accepting the key importance of public services to a decent society, backing the NHS, agreeing that poverty must be reduced, and accepting that these aims are incompatible with reducing taxation", wrote Anthony Giddens.

We have positive conservations and positive transformations, so good judgment has been used on this front.

BEYOND THE NATION-STATE

The nation-state is not the ultimate unit of analysis. An integral leader has to be a good leader not only for his own country, but also for the rest of the world.

In this context we could mention Blair's efforts towards solving the problems of climate change and poverty in Africa.

"Tony Blair has probably done more than any other world leader to get climate change on the global to-do list. He recognised the scale of the challenge and called for urgent action based on the best scientific advice. He went so far as to label global warming the greatest long-term problem we face", says David Adam of The Guardian.

Blair launched the Commission for Africa in 2004. The Commission's aim was to investigate the root of Africa's problems and come up with real solutions. He has also worked hard to convince his G8 colleagues to increase aid to the region. Bob Geldof has said that Bush and Schroeder were exasperated by Tony Blair's "pain in the arse" obsession with Africa and has praised Blair for his efforts.

Of course, there are valid criticisms on both fronts:

"Yet, on Blair's watch", continues David Adam, "UK emissions of carbon dioxide, the chief greenhouse gas, have risen. Yes, Britain remains on track to meet its commitment under the Kyoto Protocol to cut emissions of a wider basket of greenhouse gases by 2012, but only because pollution from the aviation and shipping industries is not counted in those calculations. By any reasonable measure, Britain causes more climate change now than it did in 1997".

Jeffrey Sachs has denounced the G8's broken promises in the past: "So far, despite endless words about increasing aid to poor countries, the rich G-8 countries are renegeing on their part of the bargain" (a lot of talk, but little walk).

Still, try to find a political leader that has tried to do more in those two issues. As The Economist said:

"Blair has also done more than any other Western leader to force people to pay attention to climate change and poverty in Africa".

In summary, we can safely say that Blair has done a fairly good job applying Wilber's favourite word: "and". Blair has taken into account and integrated internal and external factors, and individual and collective rights, and governed from turquoise —being conservative and progressive —, and for the most part walked his talk, and tried to help other countries besides his own. Of course, his administration has suffered various scandals and there are many valid criticisms that can be made (insufficient impact upon inequality, not taking on the eurosceptic media, lack of affordable housing, etc.). However, unless we have a major last-minute objection, I think Blair deserves our Integral Leader award.

Unfortunately, we have a major last-minute objection, and the reader probably knows what it is.

THE OBJECTION

There are basically three reasons why we cannot end this already too long essay right now and give Blair the award: Iraq, Iraq and Iraq. Yes, and it is such a big deal that I could have said 10 reasons and repeat it ten times.

Of course, I'm not discovering the wheel here. It is unanimous that Iraq has been Blair's major failure. The Economist says it, Timothy Garton Ash says it, even his mentor Anthony Giddens says it. And they all admire and respect the man (The Economist backed him on the war, Timothy

Garton Ash agrees with his liberal interventionism, and Anthony Giddens is Blair's Third Way Guru).

Garton Ash puts it very clearly:

"On the debit side, there is one overwhelming red figure —Iraq. Blair keeps insisting that history will give the verdict on Iraq, but we can already say this with confidence: Iraq is a disaster. [...] It would be difficult for things to be worse than they were under Saddam Hussein, but they now are. Hundreds of thousands of people have been killed or maimed, and there is no end in sight. US intelligence agencies say Iraq has become a breeding ground for a new generation of terrorists. The hundreds of billions of dollars squandered on the war and occupation could have bettered the lives of many of the world's poor".

Yes, we said that we were going to be lenient, but we are talking about a BIG mistake, a mistake that has made the world a much more dangerous, fragmented and polarized place. A mistake that Gore and Clinton would probably not have made. And, more importantly, a mistake that an Integral Leader should not have made.

The list of negative consequences can be expanded almost indefinitely:

-Around 650.000 Iraqis killed according to the The Lancet, around 70.000 according to the Iraq Body Count. Of course, these numbers are increasing rapidly on a daily basis.

- Almost 4000 coalition soldiers killed

-Millions of refugees. The UN estimates that nearly 4 million Iraqis have been displaced by violence in their country, the vast majority of which have fled since 2003.

-State of Civil War in the country.

-Iraq turned into a great training center for terrorists and extremists from all over the Muslim world.

-Rather than undermining radical Islam, the Iraq war has legitimized it, in Iraq and beyond (the war has strengthened the religious extremists in Pakistan —a nuclear power— creating an extremely dangerous situation there).

-Severe degradation of America's moral standing (Abu Ghraib).

-The war has increased the risks of nuclear proliferation (having the Bomb is seen as insurance policy against possible preemptive attacks by the US —North Korea was not attacked).

-A cost (according to Stiglitz) ranging from slightly less than a trillion dollars to more than \$2 trillion.

-Key Al-Qaeda leaders are still free. The war diverted efforts away from capturing Bin Laden.

-Deterioration of America's overall image in the world (Pew survey).

All these are very negatives consequences, but can we fairly say that it is all Blair's fault? After all, many of these consequences were not the result of the fact of going to war per se but of the way that the war and the subsequent occupation were carried out. That is, they are mostly the responsibility of the Americans. Blair can not be blamed for Abu Ghraib, de-Ba'athification, invading with too few troops, disbanding the Iraqi army, etc. For example, it can be argued that by destroying the existing institutions in Iraq, the Americans have helped create the chaos we now see:

"...the transition recipe involved wiping the slate clean through the destruction of existing institutions —hence the dismantling of the army, the Bremer decree on de-Ba'athification which removed many qualified people from key positions, and plans for the rapid privatisation of state institutions". Mary Kaldor.

No, Blair can not be blamed for a badly executed occupation. He also can not be blamed for the fact that there were no weapons of mass destructions. Because, irrespective of the weak and

inflated evidence provided, there might have been. Yes, we now know that no WMD were found and that Iraq is a mess (Mess'opotamia, as they call it in the Daily Show), but in hindsight, everything is easy. That is why Hillary Clinton said that if she knew then what she knows now, she would not have backed the war. Blair's decision (and Hillary's) to support to war has to be judged on the basis of the information known at the time. We need to show that it was the wrong decision at that moment.

The most obvious reason not to have supported the Iraq war is very simple: there were no good reasons to go to war. This is not to say that you never go to war, because war is a terrible thing (green position). The use of force may be called for in the cases of self-defense, attacks to third countries or humanitarian interventions (liberal interventionism). But Irak had not attacked the US or Britain, it had not attacked one of its neighbours like on previous occasions (Iran, Kuwait), and there was no ongoing genocide (the Anfal 'ethnic cleansing' campaign against the Kurds took place in 1988). And what about the weapons of mass destruction and the connection with Al Qaeda? Well, the inspectors were doing their job and it was well known that Bin Laden hated Arab nationalist secular regimes like Iraq and Syria.

David Held:

"Saddam Hussein is a tyrant who has committed massive, continuous crimes against the Iraqi and Kurdish peoples, and countries close by. But Iraq was contained. It was no longer perceived as a threat to its immediate neighbours. The evidence of a link between Iraq and global terrorist networks was weak, if not highly embarrassing to both George W. Bush and Tony Blair. The UN was in, and the inspectors doing their job. Disarmament was occurring, albeit slowly and haltingly".

In an article published before the launching of the war, Brent Scowcroft, a republican that served as national security adviser under President Gerald Ford and George H.W. Bush, expressed the same opinion:

"There is scant evidence to tie Saddam to terrorist organizations, and even less to the Sept. 11 attacks. Indeed Saddam's goals have little in common with the terrorists who threaten us, and there is little incentive for him to make common cause with them. He is unlikely to risk his investment in weapons of mass destruction, much less his country, by handing such weapons to terrorists who would use them for their own purposes and leave Baghdad as the return address".

OK, the WMD and the link with Al Qaeda can be discarded as valid reasons for going to war, but what about the poor Iraqi people? Should we allow a thug like Saddam Hussein to permanently victimize them?

"The arguments about the extent to which Saddam represents a threat to the west, because of weapons of mass destruction or support for terrorism, are unconvincing as a justification for the war. But the arguments about responsibility to Iraqi citizens who have suffered so much from Saddam Hussein's regime as well as from war and sanctions, are harder to answer", writes Mary Kaldor.

Yes, this means that there might still be grounds for some kind of humanitarian intervention. There was no ongoing genocide, but the abuses of human rights were continuous. This might be still be a valid reason for military action. And this is what Wilber had in mind when he wrote that there were good second-tier reasons to go to war:

"A second-tier, integral, World Federation—in my Utopian view—would therefore prevent any first-tier memes from dominating, attacking, or exploiting any other populations. If necessary, a World Federation would do so by using force, just as all democracies today have an internal police force to curtail murder, rape, robbery, extortion, and so on".

This is also Mary Kaldor's view:

"I am in favor of humanitarian intervention if it is understood as cosmopolitan law enforcement".

And David Held's:

"After all other forms of negotiation and sanction have been exhausted, the remaining option is to link directly the use of force to the necessity of defence in the face of clear attacks on international humanitarian law (the law of war and human rights law)".

Now, as we said when we discussed liberal interventionism: It is essential that the overriding of state sovereignty in the case of humanitarian interventions is complemented by the creation of an international framework to legitimize this type of actions. It is essential that no single power or group should act as judge, jury and executioner.

Mary Kaldor:

"But humanitarian intervention, understood in this way, is quite different from war. Individual governments cannot take the law into their own hands, any more than individual citizens can unilaterally decide when the law is violated.

"There has to be an agreed set of criteria to determine when a humanitarian intervention is appropriate, and there has to be an agreed procedure for determining whether those criteria apply. Moreover, means are as important as goals. Humanitarian intervention is about preventing humanitarian catastrophe. The aim is not victory over another collectivity but the protection of ordinary people and the arrest of those criminals responsible for the catastrophe. Thus humanitarian intervention is like policing, even though it requires the use of military force. War is about taking sides, and the lives of soldiers on one side are privileged over the lives of civilians on the other side. In humanitarian intervention, the soldier, like a policeman or firefighter, risks his or her life to save the lives of civilians".

In other words, it is essential for the intervention to be a case of cosmopolitan law enforcement, as Kaldor calls it.

Let us imagine how this "ideal" war could have taken place:

First you (the US and Britain, in this case) exhaust all other options. If the objective is to overthrow Saddam, you try to see whether that can be done without going to war (supporting the Iraqi opposition, etc).

Second, as David Held has proposed, "You create an international framework to legitimize this type of operations. Because, contrary to the 1991 Gulf War, in this case Iraq had not attacked anyone. Kenneth Roth of Human Rights Watch has argued that humanitarian intervention could be justified if it meets a number of conditions: that it is an intervention of last resort; motivated by humanitarian concerns; guided by, and maximises, compliance with international humanitarian law; likely to achieve more good than bad; and legitimated via the UN Security Council".

Third, you go to war.

Yes, that could have taken quite a long of time. But, contrary to Kosovo, there was no need to hurry. It is worth mentioning that Kosovo has been used as an argument to legitimize the Iraq war, because it did not meet one of the criteria we have just mentioned (there was no Security Council Resolution).

Mary Kaldor:

"I was a member of the Independent International Commission on Kosovo, chaired by Richard Goldstone. That commission concluded that the Kosovo intervention was illegal, because there was no Security Council resolution, but legitimate because it resolved a humanitarian crisis and had widespread support within the international community and civil society. The commission went on to argue that a gap between legality and legitimacy is very dangerous and needs to be removed by specifying conditions for humanitarian intervention".

"Unfortunately, this was not done, which allowed those who favored the war in Iraq to claim a humanitarian justification along with all those other fast-changing justifications about weapons of mass destruction and terrorism".

In short, if we want to glacially evolve towards Wilber's utopian view of a World Federation, it is essential that we strengthen international institutions. Otherwise, even a "legitimate" war like Kosovo can do more harm than good. Therefore, if there is a case to be made for a military intervention in Iraq, it cannot be at the expense of existing international laws and UN institutional arrangements, however imperfect they may be. If you want to go to war, you have two options: either you create new adequate forms of global political legitimacy, or you accept existing ones. Otherwise, you do not go to war (one can imagine an exception where there is an impending or ongoing genocide —e.g. Kosovo)

But what happened with the war in Iraq? Not only was there no effort to create new forms of global governance (and 9/11 had created a perfect opportunity for it) but existing ones were trampled on: the military intervention went ahead without the sanction of the UN security council (despite all the pressure exercised by the US).

OK, let us recapitulate. We said that there were no good reasons to go to war with Iraq at the time except for the possible case of a humanitarian intervention. We also argued that this humanitarian intervention had to satisfy certain conditions, the most important of which was not to weaken international institutions. And then we concluded that if the intervention didn't meet these conditions, it should not be carried out.

But the intervention was carried out, and Blair and Hillary supported it. Yes, it was a mistake. And not based on what we know now, but based on what was known then.

Unfortunately, this is not all. It gets worse. Because so far we have been taking for granted that the war in Iraq was in effect a humanitarian intervention (a second-tier war), but who can honestly believe that? Blair's intentions might have been altruistic (I think they were), but could he be so naive as to believe that Bush and Cheney's biggest concern was the fate of the Iraqi people?

This war had been in the cards for a long time and for reasons that have nothing to do with saving the Iraqis from a cruel and oppressive regime. The neocons had been making the case for invading Iraq since 1992, with the Wolfowitz-Cheney-Libby draft defense posture paper, and the Project for the New American Century position paper in 1997.

"The rush to war against Iraq gives priority to a narrow security agenda which is at the heart of the new American security doctrine of unilateral and pre-emptive war. This agenda contradicts most of the core tenets of international agreements and international politics since 1945. It throws out of the window a respect for open political negotiations amongst states (liberal multilateralism), as it does the core doctrine of deterrence and stable relations among major powers (the balance of power)". David Held.

"I am against the war in Iraq because I oppose the unrestrained use of American power. The US administration has been hijacked by a messianic group of ideologues who believe that they can reshape the world in American interests, using military force". Mary Kaldor

And this how the war has been viewed all over the world. Almost nobody sees it as a case of humanitarian intervention. It is seen as a unilateral decision taken by the US in order to increase its geopolitical power and influence.

"A single country which enjoys military supremacy to an unprecedented extent has decided under its current president to use that supremacy to respond unilaterally to perceived threats (which may be neither actual nor imminent), and that it will brook no rival". David Held

Therefore, instead moving beyond state sovereignty, we have fallen beneath it:

"The war against Iraq is worse than reaching a dead end in geopolitical affairs; it is in danger of dragging us back to a pre-legal order and a deeply uncivil international society". David Held

"This new doctrine [of unilateral and pre-emptive war] has many serious implications. Among these are a return to the view of international relations as, in the last analysis, a "war of all against all", in which states rightly pursue their national interests unencumbered by attempts to establish internationally recognised limits (self-defence, collective security) on their ambitions. Once this

"freedom" is granted to the USA, why not also to Russia or China; India or Pakistan; North Korea or Iran? It cannot be consistently argued that all states bar one must accept limits on their self-defined goals and that this can be called law. It will not take long for such an approach to become manifestly counter-productive". David Held

By subverting liberal interventionism's principles, this war has dealt a terrible blow to future liberal interventions. Some of which may be specially necessary (Darfur):

"To describe it [Iraq] as a case of liberal interventionism is the greatest disservice anyone could do to the cause of liberal interventionism". Timothy Garton Ash.

"Blair is the last interventionist. Neither his successor, Gordon Brown, nor George W. Bush's successor, whoever he or she turns out to be, will be able to mount another intervention similar to that in Kosovo, let alone Iraq. Those pressing for military intervention in Darfur would probably say that this is a bad thing. But, as they rail against the failure of the West to take action, they should remember why such action is impossible. By putting liberal interventionism at the heart of his foreign policy, Tony Blair has made it radioactive – a political non-starter for at least a generation". David Rieff

With Iraq, Blair has damaged the worthy cause he fought so hard to defend: liberal interventionism.

There is, however, one more thing we can say in Blair's defense. Blair's choice was not whether to launch a war or not. The war was going to happen anyway. His choice was whether to let Bush go at it alone. And that is a much more difficult choice. But, as David Held as pointed out, there was only one right course of action:

"After 9/11, Blair was right to say that Britain stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Bush and the American people. But his support for the US should have been based on principle, and conditional upon the US championing international law, multilateral institutions, and a deepening commitment to the pursuit of justice in the world. This, after all, was the vision he set out in his speech to the British Labour Party conference in 2001.

"Unfortunately, his support for the US was unconditional. It needn't have been so devoid of principled exit options. US public opinion is sensitive to international opinion, and if Blair had held out against Bush, this may well have provided serious pause for thought throughout the US polity".

On the other hand, Blair completely overestimated his capacity to influence Bush.

"Iraq also exposed the weakness of another strand of Blairite foreign policy - the attempt to influence American policy by working privately through the corridors of power in Washington, while avoiding all public disagreement. This is what I call the Jeeves school of diplomacy, and it has failed. Britain alone is no longer big enough to sway the hyperpower, especially if Washington thinks British support can always be taken for granted". Timothy Garton Ash

I remember watching Blair on TV saying that the Iraq war would help solve the Israel-Palestine conflict. He probably thought that, after the war, he could influence Bush on that front. Well, he couldn't, and the situation in Palestine has worsened.

"When seeking the approval of the Commons for the war, Blair pledged that after Iraq was disarmed, he and his American friends would seek a solution to the Palestine problem. He has utterly failed to deliver on this promise". Avi Shlaim

Blair did the right thing by trying to keep Europe and America together, by initially standing shoulder-to-shoulder-with Bush and by pushing him towards the UN (and Wilber has praised him for this), but once it was clear that the American government was going to launch the war anyway, the right course of action was to oppose it and let Bush go at it alone. There is no way around it. Supporting the war was a huge mistake that will unfortunately compromise his whole legacy.

"Tony Blair has a powerful claim to being one of the most successful British politicians of any recent generation, at least in domestic economic and social policy. But history will remember him mainly for his strategic error in going to war in Iraq". Ian Davidson

Blair should have listened to Robin Cook. Cook resigned as Leader of the House of Commons in protest against the invasion of Iraq. He was no green pacifist nor a compulsive anti-American leftist. He actively supported the interventions in Kosovo and Sierra Leone (he was Foreign Secretary at the time) and was totally in favor of liberal interventionism. But he vehemently opposed the war in Iraq. "I can't accept collective responsibility for the decision to commit Britain now to military action in Iraq without international agreement or domestic support", he said when explaining his resignation.

OK, supporting the war was a mistake, but can't an integral leader make mistakes? Well, it depends on the mistake. The problem with this particular mistake is that it shows a lack of integral vision, and it makes one think that we have overestimated the integral capacities we have been giving Blair credit for. We have to assume that an integral leader is capable of holding the multiple perspectives in awareness and decide accordingly. As they say, the leader can see the "bigger picture". But Blair failed to do that.

I think his lack of integral vision is particularly evident in the following points:

1. Failure to see the importance of international institutions (already commented on).
2. Lack of an appropriate developmental perspective.

This has been pointed out by Wilber:

"In my opinion, the major item missing in the stance of Blair, not to mention the other major political leaders, is some sort of sophisticated developmental perspective [...]. One of the saddest of the non-integral effects of the present world leadership is the continuing turmoil caused by Western democracies imagining that they can drop an orange-meme democracy with green-meme sensitivity smack in the middle of a red-meme desert and somehow it will grow. This is not world policy; this is Jack and the Bean Stalk. Everybody is born at square one. Unless there is a healthy blue infrastructure—whether in inner city ghettos or Mid-East tribes—there is no place for red youth to go, and thus they end up trapped in warlord city. Forcing "democracy" on such a culture simply results, as it consistently has elsewhere, in the free election of military dictators".

As Wilber has said, "democracy only works for orange or higher". One had only to look at the desintegrating Yugoslavia (or the Soviet Union) to see how difficult it is for democracy to grow after the end of an oppressive regime. It was evident that any effort to introduce democracy (in the strict sense of elections) would divide the country along religious and ethnic lines: Shias would vote for Shias, Sunnis for sunnis and Kurds for Kurds. This would imply giving control to the Shia majority. Ironically, this control of the Shia majority was exactly what Bush Sr. tried to prevent when he allowed Saddam to crush the Shia rebellion after the 1991 Gulf War. With his second War in Iraq, Bush Jr. undid the work of his father and gave power to the Shias, increasing the influence of the theocratic dictatorship of Iran.

Comedian Bill Maher was asked by Larry King how he would solve the Iraqi mess. "Put Saddam back in power", Maher answered, "he'll solve it". Well, it's too late now.

3. Failure to see how the war would be viewed in the world at large and particularly in the Arab countries.

If Blair is such an expert on spin, how could he possibly think that the war in Iraq could be sold as something other than an attempt to grab Iraq's oil.

You say you want to free Iraq. Is it true? Can people believe you?

Well, who wants to free Iraq? Britain and the US? The countries that historically have manipulated the Gulf Region to ensure their oil security? The countries that supported the overthrow of Mossadegh, the man who nationalized the Iranian oil industry that had been under British control? Are you sure that a president so tied to the oil industry as Bush Jr. does not have the huge oil reserves in mind when he talks about freeing Iraq? You tell us about the genocide carried out by Saddam, but don't you know that Saddam was receiving financial assistance from the US while he was gassing the Kurds? How can we possibly believe you?

People will believe Jeffrey Sachs:

"There can be little doubt that the current war in Iraq is fundamentally about oil. For nearly 100 years, first the British empire and then the US manipulated Middle Eastern governments, launched coups, bought puppet regimes, and supported wars, with the main purpose of controlling the region's oil flows".

How can you expect people to believe anything else, specially in the Arab countries?

And Blair, who knows the importance of putting your message across, should have anticipated the message that the war would be sending out into the world: might is right, I want your oil and I take it; but, since I am such an hypocrite, I will tell you that I'm trying to help you.

Think of the precedent this creates. Imagine the effect this has on the War on Terror, which (according to Blair) had to be fought at the level of values as much as that of force. What values is the West promoting with this war, the values of altruistic humanitarians or the values of hypocritical oil-grabbing vultures?

Yes, the Iraq war is a public relations nightmare.

4. Bad judgment of the interiors, particularly the interior of Bush.

The war in Iraq has been sold as part of the War on Terror. Obviously, that is a fallacy. There was no Islamic terrorism in Iraq before the war. But now there is. This means that this part of the War on Terror has only managed to create more terrorism. Given its effects, maybe it should be called the War in favour of Terror. As we just mentioned, Blair has emphasized the importance of winning the Internal War on Terror (the war of values). This implies trying to win the hearts and minds of the people, specially the hearts and minds of potentially new terrorists.

Bush seems to believe that the War on Terror ends when the last terrorist dies (like in a movie). But what about all the new terrorists that can be created every day? What about the Internal War on Terror? (And war is not a good methaphor precisely because it tends to imply an external action). It is obvious that Al Qaeda is wining the internal War on Terror. How? By doing nothing. They only need to sit by and let the images of Abu Ghraib and Falluja shown by Al Jazeera from Morocco to Syria provide them with increasing numbers of young recruits.

If the objective of the Internal War on Terror was to displace the attraction of terrorism in the hearts and minds of millions of young arabs, what effect did Blair expect that a war in Iraq would have upon the minds of all these people? And not only because of the lack of credibility of the US and Britain in the region, but because of all the inevitable innocents victims that a war would produce. And this is where the problem of timing comes in. The war in Iraq came at the worst possible time. The war that needed to be waged was the war against Al Qaeda (externally and internally). By attacking Iraq, the War on Terror was jeopardized.

"Drawing away troops from Afghanistan when the job there was only half done, we have created two failures instead of one possible success". Tymothy Garton Ash

"Our pre-eminent security priority--underscored repeatedly by the president--is the war on terrorism. An attack on Iraq at this time would seriously jeopardize, if not destroy, the global counterterrorist campaign we have undertaken". Former National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft

People like Scowcroft (or Brzezinski) needed all the help they could get, and they were the people Blair should have sided with. If Blair had positioned himself against the war from the very beginning, maybe Bush would have had more difficulty getting reelected. And mixing the War on Terrorism with the War in Iraq was the best recipe for ensuring failure in both of them.

Let us move on to Bush's interior. In a way, Bush is responsible for all of Blair's troubles. If it weren't for Bush, this essay would have been over long ago, Blair would have been declared Integral Leader, and also remembered as "one of the most successful British politicians of any recent generation". Unfortunately, Bush exists, or, to put it more accurately, unfortunately Bush has

been elected president of the US —twice (one can not help but wonder how different the world would be if Gore had officially won that 2000 election). If Bush is a given, you have to learn how to deal with him. Wilber has described what kind of "given" it is:

"There is no mistaking Mr. Bush's values: they are essentially blue-to-orange. It is the deeply fundamentalistic, absolutistic values of Bush that alarm many other governments (particularly those of France, Germany, and Russia), and understandably so. The blue wave typically divides the world into good vs. evil, and has an unshakable (if ethnocentric) sense of right and wrong. Bush's "axis of evil" is classic blue. The worst that can be said of Bush's essentially blue approach is that, indeed, it is deeply ethnocentric and imperialistic".

No doubt. However, I don't think all the blue-meme characterizations capture the absolute incompetency of the Bush presidency. Just as there is mean green meme, there could be an incompetent blue meme. If a decision is to be made, you can count on Bush to make the worst possible one. I think it would be difficult to find a blue-meme republican senator or congressman that would have managed to be more disastrous. Don Beck has rightly warned us about the dangers of green in power. But I doubt that even the most pluralistic, multiculturalistic, hyper-sensitive green president (Dennis Kucinich, for example) could have done so much damage as George W. Bush. OK, this green president would not have known how to deal with Islamist extremists (let us dialogue and find peace), but neither would he have spent a trillion dollars to create a huge training camp for them in Iraq (those who say that Bush is Bin Laden's best ally have a point). Bush's management of the economy has been a disaster (ask Stiglitz or Krugman), his environmental policy has been a disaster (ask Gore), and ditto with his foreign policy (ask anyone outside the Bible Belt). As they said in the Daily Show (I know, not an Integral Show): "Bush is compelled to look forward in order not to see the trail of destruction he leaves behind".

Sorry about speaking so negatively about a foreign president. But, to an inhabitant of this planet, the US president is never really "foreign". His actions may affect you more than that the actions of your own president. For example, the terrorists attacks that killed almost 200 people in Madrid are directly linked to the Iraq war and the increasing appeal of Al Qaeda.

Anyway, what comes out of all this is that Bush is not a flexible and reasonable guy. You are not going to change his mind easily, you are not going to influence him. And Blair should have known this. Of course, we are talking about the President of the most important and powerful country in the world, and therefore somebody you have to deal with. But, as they say, you have to meet him people where they are and not think that you (because you are so smart and persuasive) are going to basically change them. And this was Blair's mistake.

Incidentally, a word about the neo-cons. I don't think the way Wilber characterizes them is quite right:

"The 'old' conservative Republicans are firmly entrenched in amber alues: traditional, mythic-membership, fundamentalist, Biblical, ethnocentric, militaristic, nationalistic, patriarchal, patriotic. The 'new' Republicans (or New Right or neo-cons) are not traditional but modern, not amber but pushing into orange—the so-called Wall-Street Republicans—in other words, modern-worldcentric conservatives with orange values—Ayn Rand Republicans".

There is no clear definition for neo-conservatism, but what comes out of the Wolfowitz-Cheney-Libby draft defense posture paper, the Project for the New American Century position paper and the writings of people like Richard Perle and Paul Wolfowitz is a very manichean, militaristic, hyper-patriotic, nationalistic, hegemonic vision of the world. A vision deeply suspicious of international organizations and multilateral institutions:

"The new security agenda of the American neo-conservatives, alongside the National Security doctrine of the current American administration, arrogates to the United States the global role of setting standards, weighing risks, assessing threats and meting out justice. It breaks with the fundamental premises of the post-1945 world order with its commitment to deterrence, stable relations among major powers and the development of multilateral institutions to address common problems". David Held.

"In contrast, my fear is that this new alliance of neo-conservatism and liberal interventionism could spell the end of any hopes for a liberal, multilateralist world order. In the current context of Iraq, it will do so by legitimising a war fought in the interests not of human rights and democracy but of an elite at the apex of US power". Mary Kaldor.

"The US administration has been hijacked by a messianic group of ideologues who believe that they can reshape the world in American interests, using military force". Mary Kaldor

In other words, the neocons are not orange worldcentric conservatives but amber ethnocentric conservatives, and deeply aggressive conservatives at that:

"Neoconservative writers were critical of the post-Cold War foreign policy of both George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton, which they criticized for reducing military expenditures and lacking a sense of idealism in the promotion of American interests. They accused these Administrations of lacking both "moral clarity" and the conviction to pursue unilaterally America's international strategic interests".Wikipedia

The orange conservatives are people like Bush Sr., James Baker, Brent Scowcroft and Robert Gates. They could be called "pragmatists republicans", and they have been at odds with neo-conservatives like Paul Wolfowitz, Donald Rumsfeld, Lewis "Scooter" Libby, John Bolton, and Dick Cheney. Scowcroft and Baker have been critical of the war. Baker described Iraq as "a helluva mess" and Scowcroft was totally against the invasion war in Iraq.

CONCLUSION

In retrospect, I think I may have been too harsh with Blair on Iraq —and maybe too indulgent in the other aspects. Things are never as clear-cut as I make them appear. The decision to let Bush go at it alone was not an easy one. Blair is definitely a turquoise thinker and an extremely talented politician. At the beginning I said that just a good approximation to what an integral leader could be like should be enough to deserve the award. Well, Blair is a good approximation (and we don't have many). However, I cannot really give him the award. Yes, because of Iraq. It is too big a mistake. And I think Blair knows it. Maybe that is why he has accepted to be Middle East peace envoy and try to do something positive for that region.

Since it is a pity to have come this far without giving our coveted award to anybody (OK, nobody has ever heard of this award, but nonetheless...), I am going to propose another candidate. I think the person who deserves it most is Robin Cook, the man who supported liberal interventionism but resigned from his important position in order to express his opposition to the Iraq war. It is a great tragedy that we have lost him when he was only 59 years old. Consequently, the winner of our Integral Leader Award is: Robin Cook.

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