



ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

I believe the entire political system by which we are governed would benefit from a fresh approach. As a society, we need to re-examine and re-think every area of society and determine what I have called the 'Role of Government'. Please let me explain.

On the radio programme Desert Island Discs, when asked how and why he "writes women so extraordinarily well", the respected novelist Sebastian Faulks replied: "we are now allowed to admit I think - those wars having been fought and won - that there are small but significant differences between most men and most women.....".

By the same token, I believe we now allowed to admit that the ideological differences between the two major parties have been fought and won.

For those who are too young to remember (and, if you are one of these, more than anyone, you really must vote – it is your future at stake here!), the old ideological wars between Labour and Conservative were much more clearly defined: in essence, Labour was a socialist party and the Conservative were a 'free market' party.

In the 1994, at a seminal party conference, Tony Blair tore up the historic Clause 4 of the Labour Constitution ('To secure for the workers... the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry or service').

In 1995, new Labour was fully ratified and Blair was given the ammunition for his spectacular General Election victory in 1997.

To achieve this, the career politicians who were now running the Labour party conveniently discarded the principles that had lured them into politics in the first place and accepted many of the reforms under 'Thatcherism' that they inherited in 1997.

For example, as a student in 1975, Gordon Brown said: "Political power will become a synthesis of - not a substitute for - community and industrial life. This requires from the Labour Movement in Scotland today a positive commitment to creating a socialist society...".

Well, he does not lead a socialist society now and he knows it.

However, that is not to say that the fruits of 'free market' Thatcherism have been golden apples. In fact, in some areas, we have seen that Britain today is rotten to the core. I am thinking particularly of the greed and self-interest that caused the banking crisis - and the financial controls over our market economy in general. And, of course, MPs expenses where the MPs we elected were above the laws of 'common people' like us.

I am also thinking of the other end of the spectrum, where the poor are poorer, the weak are weaker and the old are older, colder and hungrier.

The Conservatives have identified that we live in a 'broken society' – but they have failed to tell us how they are going to fix it. Their core message is that this will be the 'Year of Change'. The lack of intelligence and sheer banality behind this claim shows, if they do win the next General Election, how the Conservatives need to be provoked and challenged by people like me.

Also under this section called 'Role of Government', there are two further social dynamics that I will attempt to incorporate and inter-weave into each social area:

1. Our society is more divided than ever before. We need to learn to live together - to converge, not diverge - and I will reveal some ways I think this can be achieved.

2. When examining social issues with the intention of defining the Role of Government in each case, one is often led to two key factors that modern governments must provide – freedom and protection. Again, I will try and inter-weave these two dynamics into the narrative below.

Finally, in any manifesto, there are numerable issues that need to be addressed. For the sake of the people of Battersea, I will be as honest and frank as I can – as I always will be.

But, as a 'one-person-party', I cannot pretend to be an expert in all of them. Where I have a point of view, I will express it but, in every political area, I am independent, open-minded and am interested in representing the views and expertise of my neighbours in Battersea.

There are four areas in which I believe I can claim some expertise and these are: education, health, market economy and the media.

In each of these three areas, I will provide a Professional and a Personal perspective.

As this has been my career, I will also provide a fresh Insight which will, I hope, help us redefine the issue that we face in today's society and, through innovative thinking, help us move forward to a more prosperous and united future.

EDUCATION

On a national level, I am aware of the plans of the Conservative Party to act quickly if elected:

"We will immediately change the law so we can set hundreds of good schools free from political interference and enable them to help struggling schools. We will enable them to re-open as Academies this September. And we will empower them to take over failing primaries or other schools which need their leadership."

This is all very well but how can they guarantee these plans will be so effective so quickly for all schools and all children? If even one child in one school drops through the net, this policy will have failed.

As a society, we must make absolutely certain that the appalling cruelty and treatment suffered by Baby Peter and Kyrah Ishaq must never happen again. I was absolutely appalled by the sheer inhumanity of these poor young children dying the way they did. I am ashamed to live in a society where this could happen.

We must realise that poor education breeds and festers parents who treat children like this and we must make sure that we create a society where respect for others is vital and create a watertight education system where tragedies like this simply cannot happen.

It is a vicious circle that must be broken and successive governments and politicians have failed us in overcoming the appalling lack of opportunity we provide for our children.

We must develop an educational system where parents are free to choose the right school for their children but, at the same time, ensure poorer, less academic children are protected from being left out of the system.

Finally, having been to both Roman Catholic and Protestant schools myself, I do not understand how the existence of 'faith schools' can contribute positively to a 'multi-cultural society'.

I do understand that many parents want their children to be brought up with their own faith. But, if these parents are really honest with themselves (and truth is at the heart of most religions) is the real reason they want their children at a faith school because the alternative state school is so bad?

In a multi-cultural society is it really the 'Role of Government' to organise and fund schools of different faiths where children leave school to join a multi-faith big wide world outside? Surely faith schools divide children in society rather than bring them together?

We have to admit that some faiths predominate in certain parts of the world. Some of these places have developed their own unique cultures. Some of these cultures are defined by race. Would we tolerate 'race schools'? Of course not. But is this where faith schools are leading us?

God, I hope not.

Remember, I am standing for convergence rather than divergence.

I believe that every child has a talent, and that it is the responsibility of schools to help identify and nurture this talent. It is not enough to set academic targets without balancing them with teaching wider skills such as sport, music and the arts.

Over the years, the 'equalisation' of the comprehensive system and the introduction of Academic League Tables, where schools and children are judged by academic achievement alone, have been a spectacular failure.

It is easy to see why untrustworthy politicians and bureaucratic Government Departments set these targets. But they are a cop out.

Children themselves know whether or not they are more talented than the other children in their year. "OMG, Dad, X is brilliant at Maths. I'll never be as good as her". "OMG, Dad, Y is a really quick runner. He beats me by miles!". "OMG, Dad, Z is fantastic guitarist. You should hear her!".

Children themselves know they are not equal. So, let's be grown up and admit this and give our children the chance to develop their talents in the things they are good at - and not judge them by academic results alone.

On a separate note if, in the private sector, teachers are provided with accommodation on top of their salary, why cannot state schools do the same? I am not an expert on Housing, but surely it would be easier to recruit new, better teachers straight from College or University if they were not burdened by the level of local property prices, especially in expensive urban areas like Battersea?

The Conservative Party has announced a policy that teachers can only qualify if they achieve a degree above a certain level. What about Art teachers, or Music teachers, or Sports teachers? Why does an academic degree make them a better teacher?

The most talented graduates often choose careers other than teaching because they are more financially remunerative. If accommodation came with the job, then I am sure more graduates would become teachers.

If, as a society, we treated teachers better we would get better teachers.

HEALTH

In my life, especially recently, I have depended more than most on the NHS. From my own personal and professional experience, I treasure this unique privilege. With a few newsworthy exceptions, I am convinced that the standard and quality of medical treatment provided by the NHS is a match for anywhere in the world.

What lets the NHS down is management (in which I include cleaning).

I believe it is absolutely within the 'Role of Government' to fund and support the NHS, but I myself have heard NHS staff say 'the Government wants every child to have an MMR injection' and even 'the Government is investing in pain' (yes, it's true). But I don't want 'the Government' anywhere near my body. Don't you touch me with that needle, Gordon!

All the major political parties claim the NHS will be better under their management, but I don't want any Government – especially these career politicians who, as John Major said, have never touched real life, to manage the NHS at all.

I appreciate this is a hugely complex issue, and that it is difficult to provide high services on a local level within a national service. I just don't think the people charged with addressing the issue (i.e. politicians and civil servants) are the right people to do it.

As demonstrated by the Primary Care issue above, I know I could help sort this out.

MARKET ECONOMY

This is where my philosophy of 'freedom and protection' most applies.

As stated above, I think we can now admit that the historic ideological wars between socialism and free enterprise are over.

We have to accept that we live in a global, free market economy.

We also have to find a way of managing a free market economy based on trust and transparency. Too many people in business are too dishonest. Too many can 'get away with it'. And, if their employees get caught, too many companies, especially public companies, would rather buy these people off than risk any perceived damage to their corporate reputations. This includes giving false references for these known fraudsters.

It is imperative that if modern society is to be based on free market economics, there must be laws where companies found 'covering up' financial fraud by their employees, and sweeping these issues under the carpet, are heavily fined with criminal charges brought against managers, directors and owners.

My deepest concern is that 'career politicians' are the least qualified people to solve this problem. I'm not sure they even want to. It has been shown quite clearly that these politicians themselves have at best bent the rules and at worst committed criminal offences. We must not forget that these fiddles have not been perpetrated by a flipping few. It is the sheer number of offending MPs that is such a disgrace.

Can we really believe that, out of 646 MPs, not ONE of them was honest enough to 'blow the whistle'? Were the MPs who flipped their houses acting individually, purely by coincidence, knowing that they could weasle out of paying Capital Gains Tax in this way? Or was this a scam of which they were commonly aware and pretty much all of them knew what they were up to?

Let's face it, even the Party Leaders have had to repay wrongly claimed expenses. And, if they were Chief Executives of companies where systematic fraud such as this was taking place, should not they too be accountable for the behaviour of their employees? I believe they should.

In fact, I believe there is a case for them to face criminal charges themselves. For the avoidance of doubt, I am talking about Gordon Brown, David Cameron and Nick Clegg here. On their way up through their careers in politics, did it never reach the

ears of any ONE of these three that expenses scams were being perpetrated by any of their colleagues in any of their three parties?

Either they know what was going on and turned a blind eye - which I believe should be a criminal offence.

Or they didn't know, in which case are they 'true and proper' people to be leading their parties, especially as they bent the rules themselves?

In the commercial world, I believe the answers to these questions are as clear as daylight.

And why it is time for people like me to stand up and be counted.....

Not one of the political parties have even begun to define how to allow and encourage free enterprise yet, at the same time, protect society as a whole – particularly from financial greed and criminal behaviour.

In this free market economy, as our politicians themselves have shown, we have failed to place a value on the importance of integrity and this must change.

I would like to call for a major cross-party review of how Government can make laws which foster and encourage a free market economy and, at the same time, protect society from the wilful exploitation of this freedom.

For example, I believe that, in any business, action by an employer to knowingly pressurise an employee to lie on behalf of the management should be made a criminal offence. The perpetrators of these crimes should face prison sentences.

This is just one example. There are many others, including the experience I lived through myself, so neither the banking crisis nor the MPs expenses scandal surprised me. They are the tip of the iceberg. In business, it is far too easy to 'get away with it'.

I support and applaud the work of the charity 'Public Concern at Work' (www.pcaaw.co.uk) which helps whistle-blowers act in the public interest.

We have seen from the banking crisis that the effect of the 'gambling culture' on which our market economy relies can negatively impact society as a whole. Far more regulation is needed, particularly in creating a dividing line between the traditional role of the High Street banks from the 'deal-makers' in the City.

Furthermore, I believe the role of the stock markets should be thoroughly reviewed and examined. The business models of companies like John Lewis and the Co-op should be more pro-actively encouraged, pension funds should be ring-fenced from day-to-day corporate transactions and the Directors and Managers of public companies should be held to account far more rigidly.

Strict rules and codes of behaviour should be set and breaches thereof should be criminalised and punished by heavy fines and lengthy prison sentences. Madoff is the tip of another very big iceberg.

In my own legal action, I wrote every year to the Chief Executive of Interpublic saying that I did not want this court case to happen and that, if he would apologise and give me employment somewhere else in his large group of companies, then I would drop the whole thing.

In the event, my action against that publicly quoted company must have cost over £2million and not one employee was effectively punished.

I believe the time has come for me to use this experience and help fight for honesty and integrity in our so-called free-market economy and develop strategies to ensure to ensure the free market forces work in the best interests of all of us, not just line the pockets of the few.

THE MEDIA

I believe in the 'freedom of the press', although share many people's concerns about children's access to the internet. How to give children the 'freedom' to access the huge volume of knowledge and information whilst, at the same time, 'protect' them from internet abuse? This is a very serious debate and will only become more serious over time.

I believe that 'being of interest to the public' is different from 'acting in the public interest' and support recent decisions by the judiciary that all of us, including politicians, have the right to a private life.

However, I cannot abide hypocrites who say (preach) one set of values and act in another. Politicians have been guilty of this in the past.

I have a suggestion which the last may be the most important thought in this manifesto (and possibly of my life).

I believe there is one vitally important area where we are under-using the potential of the media.

It concerns what politicians call 'Defence' but recently has been 'Attack' (Iraq).

A seminal moment in my life came when I was one of the first European businessmen to visit Vietnam. At the time, I was the General Manager of Ogilvy & Mather in Thailand. Our US clients were embargoed from engaging with Vietnam and our European and Thai clients wanted to find potential business opportunities in the Vietnamese population of 70million before their American competitors were allowed in.

I was told I would have a 'guide' but that really he was a Government employee who would report back on all of my movements. A spy.

At the War Museum in Saigon, in rows of glass jars, were the deformed embryos who had been conceived by Vietnamese mothers whose homes had been blanket-bombed by napalm dropped by American airplanes.

During this trip, I was constantly urging my guide that I was European, not American. He told me I did not need to do this. The Vietnamese held nothing against Americans. After all "we won the war" he claimed "but what we couldn't understand

was that the Americans were bombing us in South Vietnam when our leaders told us they were on our side”.

Of course, the Americans could not tell the difference between a North Vietnamese 'enemy' citizen from a South Vietnamese 'friendly' citizen – so they decided to bomb the lot of them.

And, more recently, I fear this ruthless military strategy may have caused the appalling, and unforgivable, suffering of the children of Fallujah in Iraq.

We are told that we are in Iraq and Afghanistan to win over the 'hearts and minds of the people'.

Yet when President Obama, who inherited this mess, wanted to win over the hearts and minds of Republican voters to win the US election, did he do it by sending in the troops, by shooting people or by dropping bombs? Of course he didn't. He used sophisticated 'new media' techniques.

Do we, here in cosy Britain, with a General Election looming, know who votes Conservative and who votes Labour? No, of course we don't. And I don't think even our ruthless and unprincipled politicians will be blanket bombing us all in the hope that they will mop up the other side.

And now consider what happened when it emerged that thousands of Iranians felt that their election in Iran had been fixed. What did they do?

They used new media channels, especially Twitter, to protest at what was happening. In June 2009, the BBC reported: 'Although there are [signs](#) that the Iranian government is trying to cut some communications with the outside world, citizen journalism appears to be thriving on the web.'

Yet, in that region, when it comes to us communicating to them, we send in the tanks.

Where is the media strategy that we could develop to work alongside our brave Army soldiers?

In Iraq or Afghanistan, how on earth can these brave service men and women tell the Al Qaeda or the Taliban from the rest of the population?

Recently, I heard a radio report that an issue facing our brave servicemen and women in Afghanistan is that the Taliban disguise themselves as local people, enter a village, lay a few bombs, blow up some soldiers and then disappear back into the hills.

What if we provided the villagers (who presumably know who all The Taliban insurgents are but are too scared to say) with the media technology such as laptops and mobile phones to keep our soldiers, or select 'middle men' informed as to presence of our real enemies within?

And how differently would our Army be perceived if, instead of firing guns and parading around in tanks and dropping bombs as well, of course, as dying for the cause themselves, they handed out laptops and mobile phones and developed

creative messages to help these poor people understand what on earth we are aiming to achieve there (because most of us don't)?

Wouldn't it help these poor people in these poor countries if we told them more clearly and more often what we are doing there and what we are fighting for – human rights, the difference between right and wrong, the rule of law, the importance of education, respect for others, 'do as you would be done by', tolerance, freedom of speech, liberty, democracy?

Quite apart from the lives lost, the BBC have reported that the ultimate size of the bill for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan could reach \$3 trillion (\$3,000bn). That is a lot of second-hand laptops and mobile phones.

So, my proposal is to allocate just a small percentage of these vast costs to develop a media strategy to communicate what we are up to?

If millions of Americans and Europeans cannot understand why we are in Iraq and Afghanistan, how on earth can we expect the indigenous people to have a clue what we are doing there either?

I believe passionately that, as one of the great 'creative' countries of the world, we should be developing a more sophisticated approach.

We have the expertise to persuade people to change the way they behave. It is called Behavioural Economics. But I do not believe we use our skills in this area to help overcome the really important things in our society or in the world.

Instead, we have our creative, media and communications experts using meerkats to sell insurance and a gorilla to sell chocolate.

Come on, we can do better than this.

One further thought:

Why is it that the responsibility of countering terrorism within Britain is the responsibility of The Home Office (i.e. the Police), but outside Britain is the responsibility of the Ministry of Defence (i.e. the Military)?

Surely terrorism is an international problem that, like the internet, transcends national borders?

In my experience, expecting two units within one Government Department to communicate with each other is a recipe for disaster, let alone two completely different Departments with different hierarchies and different Ministers.

I reckon this muddled management structure makes us sitting ducks.

CRIME

In my life, I am lucky not to have been the victim of serious crime.

However, my family has suffered from anti-social behaviour, and we know the culprits, so we understand the difficulty of taking them to task, or calling the

authorities, because one is fearful of escalating the problem. I am sure this is a dilemma many of us have faced and it is a terrible indictment of society today.

My parents had their house robbed once. My dad didn't care much about the stuff that got nicked. But he was distraught that his war medals and OBE were among the haul. How can any thief look at himself in the mirror with any self-dignity having in robbed a poor old man of such priceless possessions for the sake of a few quid? I just don't understand it.

I am against the death penalty for domestic murders. Any of us who were living near Wandsworth and Clapham Commons following Rachel Nickell's murder on Wimbledon Common in July 1992 must have felt a real sense of concern - and deep sympathy for her two-year-old son who was with her.

However, the way the police tried to frame Colin Stagg for this murder was an absolute disgrace and has compromised my feeling of trust in the police forever. For me, this was the death knell for capital punishment.

There may be a case for capital punishment for terrorist offences as indiscriminate acts of war. After all, you don't hear many complaints about the hanging of Saddam Hussein. I would have to think carefully about this if asked to vote.

As for the Police, since I have started writing this manifesto, only a few short weeks before the General Election, a seven year old girl has been starved to death, a man has fathered nine children by repeatedly raping his own two daughters and a sad and vulnerable 64 year old man has been hounded to death after 10 years of harassment by local youths.

I have said that for most social issues, the Role of Government comes down to defining and ensuring freedom and protection. Nowhere is this more important than the local areas where we live.

I am not an expert in how the Social Services work in Battersea but I promise you that, if you vote for me as your MP, I soon will be. And I know I will identify new and creative insight to help overcome anti-social behaviour. It is a crime that people in our society can behave in this way.

Our flipping politicians have totally let us down in this area.

HOUSING

I fear that, in modern Britain, our housing system divides us as much as our education system. We are divided by the 'private' and 'state' sectors. As someone who has either paid rent or owned a house, I have always live in 'private sector' housing.

More recently, I have come to learn more about 'public sector' housing – and I am keen for a dialogue with the people of Battersea to examine whether or not the system is as fair as it should be.

I have an instinct, but no evidence, that there are people who 'play the system' to the detriment of others whose housing needs are far greater.

If you have any evidence of this, please [contact me](#). It is a vitally important issue and one which I would very much like to address with more knowledge and evidence behind me.

IRAQ

Until he appeared at the Chilcot enquiry, I was prepared to give Tony Blair the benefit of the doubt in that, if he was convinced that the US were going into Iraq to get Saddam anyway (which they were), then he may have judged that by going in alongside Bush, he would have avoided a USA vs Europe clash (which is just what Al Qaeda would have wanted).

As we now know this was not the case, I feel more let down than the rest of you – but hope I have contributed to a more speedy outcome, and an earlier withdrawal of troops, by my media proposals above.

TAX

I believe that tax should not be so onerous as to discourage a healthy free market economy but should be sufficient to deliver 'front-line' services.

Businesses need the freedom to make profits and thrive. The Role of Government is to set tax levels that will encourage legal, free enterprise in such a way that Government can protect for the poor, the old, the sick, the disabled and the 'underclass' that divides our society.

Before the banking crisis, I believe we had the taxation balance about right – except we spent too much in the good times which has left us short of cash for the bad times. This is not a party political point. It is the truth.

EUROPE

I believe Britain should be a self-governing nation state within a free enterprise, trading co-operative with our neighbours in Europe.

I do have one insight here which is that, if we do ever have to join the Euro, all this would mean would be 'pegging' our currency to the Euro.

We would not have to throw away the pound. In The Bahamas, where the Bahamian dollar is pegged to the US dollar, both Bahamas and US currency exist and are used side-by side.

If ever we do enter the Euro zone, we would have to make sure we went in at a favourable exchange rate, which is certainly not now.

ENVIRONMENT

I am in line with the majority thinking on the environment, although the society cannot be governed on a totally 'green' agenda. The 'haves' may think we can live this way but the 'have nots' know we can't.

The priority is to identify and minimise waste.

I recently joined the much-despised people in London who drive a 4x4 car. This decision was taken because I am disabled by chronic back pain and it is easier for me to get in and out of one of these cars. I would rather have bought a car that was more environmentally friendly (and cheaper).

Chewing gum on pavements is really annoying. I believe chewing gum manufacturers should provide wrapping for every 'pastel' and urge their customers to do this to discard chewing gum less selfishly.

Sir Alex Ferguson, I'm marking you!

Lastly, we need more waste re-cycling points in Battersea. The queues for the tip in Smugglers Way are ridiculous, especially just when you need them. This seems to be a seasonal issue, so the tip needs to be open for longer hours at these times of year.

FAMILY

I am lucky to have come from a close family and to be a happily married husband and father.

Others are not so lucky, but I do not think it is the 'Role of Government' to massage the tax system with a view to socially engineering marriage. What if you are a widow – or your husband beat you up?

'Family' is not just Mum and Dad. As we know from other cultures, family is a much wider support group, including friends and neighbours.

ID CARDS

I do not mind carrying an ID card. In fact, I think it might be quite useful. But I do not believe it is the 'Role of Government' to force people to do so.

FOX-HUNTING

In my late teens, a farmer friend invited me shooting. I shot a pigeon but when I approached where it had landed, I saw I had not killed it and had to blow its brains out. I did not enjoy this experience and vowed never to shoot again. So I haven't.

I do not think it is the 'Role of Government' to ban people from traditional countryside pursuits although I do hope that, over time, social awareness will be such that we do not kill animals for sport.

I am happy to talk to Battersea people, and Wandsworth Council, to sound out opinions on urban foxes. They make a mess and smell. But I don't want to shoot one.

That would be the end.