

academic trade likes to describe as heuristic functions. They can direct us, that is, to what we should be looking for. But they are often pitched at too abstract a level to help policy-makers reach decision on specific issues here and now. The empirical evidence is a better guide. Failed and fragile states, for example, are not all the same. Sudan, Iraq, Haiti, Afghanistan and Rwanda are very different from one another. What they have (or have had) in common is that they have failed or are fragile – but not necessarily for the same reasons. Hence they may require very different treatment, to the extent that they are prone to treatment at all.

*Exhortation 10:* Whatever the domestic political incentives, avoid criticising your allies – or even your adversaries – gratuitously or ostentatiously. If you do, it will set you up for expensive costs of repair later on, and in the process it may distort your priorities and misdirect your attention to problems that could have been avoided. Even the Bush administration – renowned for foot-in-mouth disease – has begun to learn this lesson, albeit far too late to avoid getting itself and others, too, in a lot of difficulty.

*Exhortation 11:* If, in deference to the Comprehensive Social Engineering Model, you really do commit to a multi-dimensional programme of action, then do it properly and responsibly. It is no good, for example, pretending that such a programme is really guiding the behaviour if CIDA devotes itself in Afghanistan largely to handing over fat cheques to the government in Kabul, while delivering naught but dribs and drabs to the PRT in Kandahar.

Mr. Chairman, I could dream up other injunctions of a similar sort, thereby lengthening my list. But I think my eleven may be more than enough to display my pitch.

I therefore end with the hope that, if Mr. Skelton were here this evening and familiar with the circumstances we face, he might regard at least some of what I have said as sensibly prudent. Certainly he would have agreed that our reach should not exceed our grasp; that our claims should not exceed our accomplishments. And he would insist, I am sure, that we should cut our coat according to our cloth.

Thank you.