

Flicking through the Sunday papers, I noticed that another Chinese company is making inroads into UK manufacturing. Nanjing Automobile Corporation is in pole position to take over MG Rover. Just as everything seemed to be made in Japan a few years ago, now it is made in China or by Chinese companies. Och weill, I thought (Scots accent seem right for making fatalistic comments), at least I'll be able to boycott their goods now! For while China is the most fascinating and colourful country I have ever visited, it occupies Tibet and has missiles trained on Taiwan and has banned a religion that seems as sinister as a Pentecostal version of yoga.

But then the USA imprisons people indefinitely and without charge and, although Tony Blair says that terrorists won't change our way of life, the truth is that they already have. We have control orders imposed in secret and Labour is pushing for the introduction of ID cards, a measure the fiercely individualistic British people would never tolerate, it used to be said.

People have also said that we should not ask: "Why London was bombed?" because to seek reasons makes it sound as if the attacks can be justified. They can't be justified, but that does not mean that we should not address the issues behind them. We have a frail calm in Northern Ireland because certain leaders were willing to look beyond the acts of violence to what would bring peace.

There was a token step towards this in the deal that came out from G8 with three billion dollars being given to build some basic amenities in the Palestinian state. Palestine is one item on the terrorists' - and reasonable Muslims' - list of grievances along with Afghanistan and Iraq.

Instinctively I am pleased at this step taken by the G8, the help given to Africa and just that eight of the most powerful men in the world spent two days discussing poverty and global warming at all, but my head reins in my pleasure.

The EU and US have promised to end the subsidies that hamper African farmers' attempts to work their way out of poverty, but there is no when. President Bush won't curb in carbon emissions in the US because he fears it will put his struggling economy at a disadvantage compared to the emerging industrial nations, even though the US has been a major cause of the problem. Then there is aid, the G8 nations have pledged to double aid to 50 billion dollars a year by 2010, but to set that figure into context, the US has spent 1.4 billion dollars just on its next space flight.

G8 was never going to be final solution. It was another step along the road. The question was how big that step would be. G8 may be over, but the journey continues.