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On 26 February 2003, British Prime Minister Tony Blair faced the largest parliamentary rebellion in over a hundred years. Some 120 of his Labour Party colleagues voted against the government's policy of support for US military action against Iraq. Earlier that month, more than one million people had taken to the streets of London to protest against the prospect of war, while respondents to a UK Internet poll had voted America the country that posed the greatest threat to world peace. The UK's major partners in Europe—France and Germany—also opposed Britain's stance, the government having singularly failed in its self-appointed role of providing a bridge of understanding between Europe and the United States. Prime Minister Blair faced personal attacks in the media, being frequently portrayed as America's lap dog; even Nelson Mandela referred to him disapprovingly as the foreign minister of the United States. The Prime Minister's political survival itself seemed to be at stake.

In the face of such pressures, it would have been understandable if the British government had taken a less determined position on Iraq. In spite of the oft-touted "special relationship," British and American governments have not always seen eye-to-eye during international crises. But that was not the case. Notwithstanding dissension and resignations from his Cabinet, Prime Minister Blair's advocacy of the Bush Administration's hard line on Iraq hardly wavered, diplomatic support remained constant and vigorous,

and Britain was the only American ally to make a sizable military contribution to the campaign. It is not surprising then that Tony Blair has been hailed as a hero in the United States, becoming the first Briton since Winston Churchill to be nominated for a Congressional Gold Medal.

Blair's firm leadership was critical to sustaining the British government's support for US policy in Iraq. For some commentators, the Prime Minister's resolve demonstrated principled, international statesmanship; to others it displayed a naïve faith in American virtue. Regardless, foreign policy in a parliamentary democracy is rarely made at the whim of even a powerful personality like Tony Blair.[1] There are many factors beside Blair's leadership that helped to shape the government's thinking. These included the long-standing special Anglo-American relationship, an institutionalized habit of security cooperation between the two countries, an ambitious perception of Britain's role in the modern world, and an apparently genuine conviction that Saddam Hussein's regime posed a threat to national security. This article addresses these issues and places them in historical context. It also draws conclusions about the British government's support for US policy on Iraq and its significance for Anglo-American relations in the medium term.

A Special Relationship

The partnership between the United States and United Kingdom has been described as "a relationship rooted in common history, common values, and common interests around the globe."[2] It has been become a journalistic cliché to refer to this as a "special relationship," but such a description has been in common usage since first coined by Winston Churchill during his famous "Iron Curtain" speech at Fulton, Missouri, in 1946. The close diplomatic and military relationship between the UK and the United States had its origins in the strategic partnership of the Second World War. It was sustained by common security concerns throughout the Cold War, and was revived in the 1990s by a mutual recognition of the need to cooperate against new threats to international peace and stability. After 9/11, Prime Minister Blair's proactive role in the war against terrorism and his strong, supportive line on Iraq brought new vigor to the Anglo-American partnership. On a visit to Britain in

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May 2003, US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, not a notable Anglophile, exclaimed, "The special relationship between the US and the UK is stronger than ever, and Americans are the better for it."[3]

Some would argue, like Churchill, that shared history, common values, language, and legal traditions are enduring factors that alone are enough to sustain a particularly close bond between the two countries.[4] There is no question that language and cultural factors, as well as deep and well-established social and intellectual connections, ease the process of Anglo-American relations. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to take cooperation for granted, as British and American interests have not always coincided. Before 1939, the relationship was clouded by commercial and naval rivalries. Some US leaders and commentators continued to harbor suspicions about British imperialism until well after World War II. Even at the height of the Cold War, there were international crises where British and American priorities and policies diverged, notably over Suez, Vietnam, the Yom Kippur War, and Grenada. More recently, disagreements between the Clinton and Major governments over policy in Bosnia and Northern Ireland in the early 1990s seemed to reinforce a perception that the special relationship between the two states had not survived the downfall of the Soviet Union.[5]

Despite being nurtured by political elites on both sides of the Atlantic, the concept of a special relationship with the UK is of little relevance or interest to most Americans. It is rarely a topic raised or discussed by the media or political analysts. British support for US foreign policy, if discussed at all, is largely assumed. On the other side of the Atlantic, the special relationship generates significant debate and is often a source of controversy, because an influential minority of British politicians and commentators has never shared its government's enthusiasm for especially close ties with the United States.

The Anglo-American Security Partnership

The term "special relationship" is most often associated with national security policy, where national interests and geopolitical factors are far more important than sentiment. Notwithstanding the examples of differences given above, both countries have sought to sustain a partnership that has brought many mutual, practical security benefits. Britain has proved to be America's most consistent and reliable global ally and friend, being a champion of American leadership in NATO, a strong "atlanticist" voice in the European Union, and a largely unequivocal advocate of US strategic policies. Even after Prime Minister Blair's incoming Labour government enthusiastically embraced the European Common Foreign and Security Policy in 1997, the Prime Minister took pains to stress the continuing primacy of the transatlantic alliance. He made the British position clear on numerous occasions, such as in the House of

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Commons debate on the European Union Rapid Reaction Force in December 1999, when he stated that any such capability must remain "entirely knitted together with America on the key NATO issues."[6] Along with fellow Briton and NATO Secretary General, Lord Robertson, Blair has been among a minority of leaders on both sides of the Atlantic who have fought vigorously to maintain a transatlantic strategic consensus. Critically, Britain's willingness to back up diplomatic support with troops on the ground has contrasted with the relative inconstancy of the United States' other traditional major European allies, France and Germany. If the UK is perceived as having greater influence in Washington on security issues than other European powers, its readiness to use armed force in common cause with the United States remains a principal factor in such leverage.

Given the power asymmetry between the two countries, the maintenance of a close security relationship has almost always been of greater concern in London than in Washington. Unlike France, the UK has long been reconciled to US power and leadership. Successive generations of British policymakers, unencumbered by concerns about Anglo-Saxon dominance, have accepted the role of junior partner in order to sustain a relationship regarded as critical to national security. A close alliance with the United States has remained the cornerstone of British foreign and security policy for more than 70 years. It enabled Britain to weather the Nazi and Soviet threats to its national survival and, by helping to sustain Britain's influence in the world, it eased the impact of Britain's dramatic decline in power after 1945.

In the early 21st century, the United Kingdom is no longer strategically dependent on the United States. The direct military threats have gone, and the retreat from empire has long since been completed. Britain is a member of the European Union and, notwithstanding strong business and financial ties, the United States is no longer the UK's creditor. Nevertheless, there is no evidence to suggest that the British government would place the UK's security relationship with its European allies above that of the United States. The strategic defense reviews of 1998 and 2002 reinforced this standpoint, emphasizing continued close cooperation with the United States as Britain's principal ally.[7] Uniquely in Europe, Britain is committed to the development of military

"network-enabled capabilities" to remain technologically interoperable with US forces.[8] Prime Minister Blair expressed the reality of Britain's commitment somewhat starkly in a BBC interview on Iraq in September 2002 when he said that Britain had to be prepared to pay a "blood price" to secure its special security partnership with the United States.[9]

Britain as a "Pivotal Power"

Like most previous British Prime Ministers, Labour or Conservative, Blair has recognized that close collaboration with the United States requires more than merely supportive rhetoric. A firm commitment to share the military burden in pursuit of common interests affords the UK the potential to influence American strategic thinking and assists Britain to continue to "punch above its weight"[10] in international affairs. Unlike most European countries, the UK still regards itself as an "out of area" player with global interests. The UK has far-flung economic ties, and the British political establishment and public retain the appetite for a proactive foreign policy.[11] Well before 9/11and the buildup to war with Iraq, Blair confirmed this continuing commitment to an international role when he articulated his vision of the UK's place in the world:

> It is to use the strengths of our history to build our future not as a superpower but as a pivotal power, as a power that is at the crux of the alliances and international politics which shape the world and its future. Engaged, open, dynamic, a partner and, where possible, a leader in ideas and in influence, that is where Britain must be.[12]

It has remained an article of faith for Britain's leaders that, although no longer a superpower, the country is nevertheless more than just another middle-ranking European nation. Blair's confident assertion that Britain was a "pivotal power" represented the latest attempt by a British Prime Minister to define the country's post-imperial role.[13] In a variation on the theme, he told British ambassadors in January 2003 that the UK should act as a "unifier" in helping to establish a new global consensus based on shared values and norms, operating through international institutions.[14] To realize Blair's ambition for Britain requires the maintenance of close partnerships with both America and the European Union and the role of trusted intermediary when disputes erupt between the two. The Iraq crisis proved a serious test for Blair's pretensions, as British ministers shuttled back and forth between America and Europe and vainly attempted to build a transatlantic consensus. Blair exploited his close relationship with President Bush to obtain a hearing in Washington for European reservations about the wider impact in the Middle East of military action against Iraq. Concurrently, he attempted to persuade his European colleagues of the need for a robust stand against Saddam Hussein.[15]

Blair and his colleagues also were anxious to counter the powerful figures within the US Administration that believed America should act unilaterally. They found themselves on the weaker side in the internal debate within the Bush Administration, siding with the "doves," led by Colin Powell, who sought international legitimacy for the exercise of American power by channeling it through the UN.[16] For Blair, the UN route offered the prospect of building the international consensus for action that was central to British diplomacy. Despite spirited efforts, the British government was ultimately unsuccessful, failing to preserve even a semblance of the transatlantic unity so dear to generations of British leaders. Blair's failure also thwarted his aspirations to re-brand the UK as a pivotal power, leaving his country with little alternative but its perennial role as America's faithful ally.

However, short of the government's fall, there was no prospect of Britain abandoning the United States. Blair made it clear on numerous occasions that America should not have to confront security challenges alone that were properly the responsibility of the whole international community.[17] Besides, as noted above, the British government was anxious to contain the unilateralist instincts of the Bush Administration. US unilateralism is perceived as a potential threat to Britain's special security partnership and could have wider, unpredictable international repercussions. Speaking in March 2003, the UK Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, sounded almost apocalyptic when he warned against the consequences of leaving the United States alone to take military action against Iraq:

> What I say to France and Germany and all my other European Union colleagues is take care, because just as America helps to define and influence our politics so what we do in Europe helps to define and influence American politics. We will reap a whirlwind if we push the Americans into a unilateralist position in which they are at the centre of this uni-polar world.[18]

Bush and Blair: The Odd Couple

Shared interests frequently make for common cause between the US State Department and British Foreign Office. But the personal chemistry between the respective national leaders has traditionally mattered more for the overall health of Anglo-American relations. While it is dangerous to oversimplify often complex personal and political interactions, the warmth of the bilateral relationship during the leadership of Churchill/Roosevelt, Macmillan/Kennedy, and Thatcher/Reagan can be contrasted with the relative chill of the Heath/Nixon and Major/Clinton eras. Personal friendships between leaders during international crises can help to relieve the stresses and isolation of

> *"US unilateralism is perceived as a potential threat to Britain's special security partnership."*

power. This was evidently the case when George Bush and Tony Blair became fast friends in the wake of 9/11.

Blair's unstinting support and solidarity were enormously appreciated by the White House. Nevertheless, the bond between the two leaders surprised many observers; unlike Reagan and Thatcher, the two were not natural political allies.[19] Bush is a right-wing Republican, with an uncompromising approach to US national interests, while Blair is a liberal with internationalist instincts, who remains a close friend of Bill Clinton. Commentators have noted both men's strong religious convictions and shared belief that an interventionist foreign policy can be used as a force for good in the world.[20] But it was Tony Blair's willingness to back supportive diplomacy with military force, in a just cause, that made the biggest impression on George Bush.

Blair was the European leader who rallied support for the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999 and was America's staunchest ally in the war in Afghanistan. However, although Blair did not balk at the prospect of military action against Iraq, neither he nor his ministers and close advisers actively sought such an outcome. The British government contained no hard-liners to partner the Bush Administration's leading hawks. On the contrary, Blair's personal and political preferences were for an international consensus for action, one legitimized by international law, to force Saddam Hussein to cooperate unconditionally or stand down from power. He actively sought to persuade Bush of the benefits of such an approach.

It is not clear the extent to which Tony Blair's personal standing with the President influenced US strategy, in particular Bush's decision in September 2002 to seek UN backing for action against Iraq. Like his predecessors, Blair hoped to exploit the UK's status as America's closest ally to gain influence in Washington. Britain's vast experience of global diplomacy and its ability to apply the techniques of "soft power," are widely respected in the United States.[21] Yet it is rare for British diplomacy to have a direct impact on American policy formulation, and there have always been limits to the influence of even the most highly regarded British Prime Ministers.

That said, in the aftermath of 9/11, the US/UK relationship became closer than at any time in recent memory. Ivo Daalder of the Brookings Insti-

tution, commenting on this development, stated, "There is a different relationship than with any other country. This administration . . . looks to London as a true ally in a common cause. It actually listens to London."[22] George Bush was prepared to listen to Tony Blair in September 2002 when the latter advocated trying to secure UN Security Council backing for action against Iraq. But it would be wrong to conclude that Blair's views single-handedly swayed the President. The State Department's arguments and domestic political considerations appear to have carried greater weight in modifying Bush's natural inclination to favor the advice of hawks such as Vice President Cheney and Secretary Rumsfeld.[23] The Bush Administration was certainly opposed to Blair's attempt to obtain a second UN resolution in January 2003, believing that all the authority needed to go to war with Iraq was already contained in Resolution 1441, passed the previous November. Bush was persuaded to give grudging backing to his closest ally, if only to help Blair placate domestic opposition to war.[24] This was hardly a significant concession, as earlier, in September 2002, it appears that Tony Blair had pledged to George Bush privately that he would go to war against Iraq if necessary, even if it proved impossible to rally international support.[25]

The Custom of Anglo-American Security Cooperation

Blair's pledge of military support was facilitated by an ingrained, institutionalized habit of cooperation in military planning and intelligence-gathering that dated back to the Second World War. Robin Oakley, CNN's European Political Editor, has described Britain and the United States as "traditional and instinctive military allies."[26] Accommodation, consultation, and cooperation have characterized relations at the working level, often operating outside official channels and continuing through periods, such as Edward Heath's premiership in the early 1970s, when the Anglo-American relationship at a governmental level was particularly strained.[27] During the Falklands war in 1982, US Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger even started to provide assistance from the Pentagon to British forces before support for the United Kingdom had become official US policy.[28]

Since the UKUSA Agreement of 1948, the signals intelligence organizations of the United States, Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand have been closely linked. Britain passes intelligence to the United States and other English-speaking countries that it does not share with its European partners; members of the CIA and Canadian and Australian intelligence services even attend the UK's Joint Intelligence Committee meetings on a regular basis.[29] A former director of the Central Intelligence Agency, James Woolsey, has described the intelligence relationship between Britain and America as "as close as it gets" between two independent, sovereign states.[30] The war on ter-

rorism reinforced an already tight relationship in the intelligence sphere, and both countries freely exchanged information in making the case against Saddam Hussein—material from British sources being included in Colin Powell's briefing to the UN Security Council in February 2002. The postwar controversy about the accuracy of intelligence estimates of Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction (WMD) capabilities called into question the quality of intelligence-gathering equally on both sides of the Atlantic.

The defense establishments of the two countries have what has been described as a "familiar confidence"[31] in their dealings with each other. Giving oral evidence before the House of Commons Defence Committee after the Iraq war, the UK Secretary of Defence, Geoffrey Hoon, made the following comment about his relationship with Donald Rumsfeld:

> Bear in mind that I would meet with the Defence Secretary in the United States on a pretty regular basis even before Iraq was a direct and specific issue, so our relationship goes back further than this particular context. We have always been able to speak frankly and openly to each other and part of the reason for that is that we do not disclose the contents of those conversations, but I can assure you that there was excellent co-ordination at every level between the Ministry of Defence and the Pentagon.[32]

Traditionally, such close cooperation was particularly true in the nuclear field. Even today, Britain's *Trident* missiles are leased from the United States, British scientists work on nuclear research programs in the United States, and the UK's nuclear forces are targeted in conformity with US strategic doctrine.[33] However, since the end of the Cold War, Britain's willingness to employ its modest, if effective, power-projection capabilities in cooperation with the United States has resulted in ever closer military ties. Prior to the attack on Iraq, one British official at the UK/US Joint Task Force headquarters in Qatar was quoted as saying that the two countries' militaries were "as tight as two coats of paint."[34] Another British officer quoted in *The New York Times* stated, "There is no ally with whom we train more than the Americans, and we are so comfortable with each other that we sometimes forget they are there."[35] The close partnership between US and British marines was acknowledged when, for the first time since World War II, a substantial force of US troops was placed under the command of the UK's 3 Commando Brigade for operations in southern Iraq.

British and US forces had worked together on military operations against Iraq since 1990. The UK provided an armored division to the coalition that liberated Kuwait, making a military contribution second only to the United States. Britain also backed the United States in maintaining, and periodically enforcing, the "No Fly Zones" set up after the Gulf War. Well before

the formal invasion in March 2003, the Royal Air Force was engaged in attacks on Iraqi air defenses, the Royal Navy was occupied with mine-clearance operations in the northern part of the Persian Gulf, and British special forces were employed on stealth operations inside Iraq, often working closely with their US counterparts. UK and US officers and officials were jointly involved in planning for the war, building on integral, if not always harmonious, staffing procedures and processes established during earlier operations in the Balkans and Afghanistan.[36]

It is tempting to argue that the close relationship between the respective military establishments committed the British government to the use of force against Iraq once military planning and coordination had begun in earnest in Autumn 2002. Certainly, by March 2003, with British troops deployed and joint planning so well advanced, Prime Minister Blair would have lost all credibility internationally and domestically had he pulled back from military action after his failure to secure a second UN resolution. On the other hand, while the British military contribution was undoubtedly welcomed by the Bush Administration, there is little doubt that the operation could have been mounted successfully without it. Secretary Rumsfeld simply stated the truth when he announced at a Pentagon press conference in March 2003 that the United States was prepared to go to war without the British.

Iraq as a Security Threat

A close security partnership with the United States remains a cornerstone of British foreign and defense policies. The Iraq crisis offered an opportunity to reinforce the UK's credentials as a uniquely reliable ally, as well as its status as Europe's most significant diplomatic and military power on the world stage. British support for the United States was undoubtedly facilitated by the mutual admiration and rapport between Tony Blair and George Bush. The customary practice of close intelligence and defense cooperation also made it hard for Britain's security establishment to stand aside.

Yet it would be mistaken to assume that British support for the US hard line on Iraq was inevitable. Even before the buildup to war, there was considerable disquiet in the UK over the Bush Administration's actions on a wide range of issues as diverse as the Kyoto Protocol and the International Criminal Court. In the circumstances, more guarded backing for the United States would have been understandable, especially as military action against Iraq was widely viewed in the UK as the Bush Administration's most contentious international policy to date. Significantly, Prime Minister Blair did not hesitate to court domestic unpopularity by canvassing for solidarity with the United States. However, to claim that Blair was motivated by an unquestioning loyalty to the United States would be naïve and unfair. No British govern-

ment would have taken the country into a war of questionable legitimacy on account of the "special relationship" alone. In the past, British governments have distanced themselves from the United States when the short-term national interests of the two countries have diverged or clashed. This was not the case with Iraq. The leadership in both countries shared a common perception of the threat posed by Saddam Hussein's regime and had a mutual interest in countering it. The British government's robust stance on Iraq went back many years, fueled primarily by a suspicion that Saddam Hussein was continuing to develop WMD, a concern reinforced by his regime's persistent refusal to comply with the cease-fire conditions mandated after the Gulf War and its unwillingness to cooperate unconditionally with UN weapons inspectors.

Even before 9/11, the United Kingdom regarded the problem of Iraq as very high on the agenda of Anglo-American relations. Shortly after his appointment as Ambassador to the United States in 1997, Sir Christopher Meyer stated that "the analysis of the British and American governments as to what should be done is very close indeed. We react instinctively and politically and intellectually very similarly to the challenge that Saddam presents."[37] When Iraq blocked the work of UN weapons inspectors in 1998, Tony Blair stressed the risks of allowing Saddam Hussein to possess WMD and actively supported the use of US and UK airstrikes to enforce the UN's will. The joint press statement released after Blair's first meeting with George Bush in February 2001 also emphasized the determination of both leaders to oppose the development and use of WMD by Iraq.[38] Before 9/11, it could be argued that it was the British who were forcing the pace for action against Iraq, rather than the Americans.[39]

In the buildup to war, the threat from WMD was given particular prominence by the British government. The Prime Minister's foreword to the Joint Intelligence Committee's September 2002 dossier on Iraq claimed that WMD represented "a current and serious threat to the UK's national interests."[40] His statement to the House of Commons at the time developed this theme and contained a warning of the dire consequences of ignoring the challenge from Saddam Hussein: "And if people say: why should Britain care? I answer: because there is no way that this man, in this region above all regions, could begin a conflict using such weapons and the consequences not engulf the whole world."[41]

Just prior to the war, the UK Foreign Secretary gave specific details of Saddam Hussein's perceived capabilities to the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee. The following statement summarized the government's case for war: "Our assessment is that Iraq has the capability to produce the chemical agents mustard gas, tabun, sarin, cyclosarin, and VX, and the biological [agents] anthrax, botulinum toxin, aflatoxin, and ricin. The Iraqi re-

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gime has put up an elaborate screen of concealment based on intimidation and deception."[42]

Although the British government accepted that there was no evidence of a direct link between Saddam Hussein's regime and al Qaeda, it expressed no doubt about the relationship between terrorism and WMD, as Tony Blair made clear during a keynote speech in November 2002: "Terrorism and WMD are linked dangers. States which are failed, which repress their people brutally, in which notions of democracy and the rule of law are alien, share the same absence of rational boundaries to their actions as the terrorist. Iraq has used WMD."[43]

Blair was not the only British political leader with strong convictions about the danger posed by Saddam Hussein. Iain Duncan Smith, leader of the Conservative Party, also shared the government's view that Britain's national interests were directly affected. In his speech to the 2003 Conservative Spring Conference, he was even more strident than Blair regarding the threat from Saddam Hussein: "He rails against us on a daily basis; please do not pretend we are not a potential target, for I believe we are and if anybody thinks otherwise, I am sorry but I think you are living in cloud cuckoo-land. We are a legitimate target and will become one."[44]

As a Prime Minister commanding a large parliamentary majority and with Duncan Smith, the leader of the biggest opposition party also in favor of a hard line on Iraq, Tony Blair was in a stronger position to prepare for war than evidence of widespread public unease and political opposition to his policy at the time suggested.

The Joint Intelligence Committee's dossier, referred to above, was one of two published by Blair's government in the months before the war which purported to show that Saddam Hussein was actively developing and hiding chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons in defiance of UN resolutions. The pre-war intelligence reports generated considerable controversy on both sides of the Atlantic after the fall of the regime, when investigation failed to unearth evidence to validate their findings. There were accusations that the Bush and Blair administrations had doctored the intelligence assess-

ments to justify war by misrepresenting Iraq's WMD program as a real and present danger. However, like George Bush, Blair remained defiant in the face of his critics, although his early, bullish confidence that WMD would be found gave way over time to a more cautious assessment.[45]

The postwar investigation by the House of Commons Committee on Foreign Affairs raised significant doubts about the validity of British government's case for war and the way some intelligence data were presented and handled. However, it did not question the sincerity of Tony Blair, his ministers, or MI6 in believing that Iraq was actively pursuing the illegal development of WMD before the war.[46] In hindsight, Blair's government probably placed too much emphasis on the threat from WMD to justify military action against Iraq, maybe because other arguments for removing Saddam Hussein were less tangible.[47] However, given the severity of the military and political risks, not least to Blair's reputation domestically and internationally, it is hard not to conclude that government policy was ultimately driven by a genuine conviction that Saddam Hussein posed a real and continuing threat to Britain's security.

Anglo-American Relations After the War in Iraq

The Iraq war left the reputation of Tony Blair and British diplomacy bruised and battered, both domestically and internationally. The creditable performance of the British armed forces aside, there was little solace for the government in the quick military defeat of Saddam Hussein's regime. The British government's foreign policy ambitions had been thwarted, and relationships with European partners and the Muslim world undermined. Far from bridging the gap between Europe and America, Britain's attempts to engineer consensus and build a coalition for action had singularly failed. For the United States, the UK had failed to deliver the major European powers; for the Europeans, it had failed to act as a restraint on the Bush Administration.

Like other internationalists, including those in the US political establishment, Blair had hoped that Iraq might prove a model for how the world community could cooperate to confront new security challenges in the 21st century.[48] Instead, the experience offered succor to the neoconservatives, already the dominant group within the Bush Administration, as the role played by the UN and many traditional US allies in the run-up to war reinforced a perception that working through international institutions created unwarranted constraints on American action. The damaging diplomatic exchanges before the war left the Bush Administration as jaundiced with the UN as Clinton's was disillusioned with NATO following Operation Allied Force in 1999.

Common cause over the war against terrorism and Iraq created an artificially close relationship between Bush and Blair. As noted earlier, they are far from ideological soul mates, and political differences were bound to resur-

face. In fact, these emerged even before the end of the war, over the postwar role for the UN in Iraq and the Middle East peace process.[49] While the chaos in postwar Iraq may have blunted the neoconservatives' appetite for fresh, unilateral foreign adventures, it is unlikely to bring them any closer to the Blair government's position on issues such as the role of international institutions, the environment, or world poverty. Only the return of a Democratic administration might give Blair the chance to promote successfully his internationalist agenda in Washington. He can trade on his popularity in the United States for a while, but there seems little prospect of the British government having more than minimal influence as long as the neoconservatives hold sway.

Relations between the US and British governments may be set to cool, although this does not spell the end of the special relationship, which as always remains founded on continuing mutual, practical security benefits. It is hard to imagine the disentangling of institutionalized defense and intelligence arrangements that have endured for so long. Nevertheless, at present there is little in the way of a common transatlantic security assessment or threat perception to reinvigorate the NATO alliance. The global war on terrorism and the threat from the proliferation of WMD have so far failed to generate the same sense of urgency in Europe as in the United States. And as Europe has shrunk in strategic importance to the United States, the UK's role as chief lobbyist for an atlanticist agenda is much less vital than hitherto. Over time, this development, coupled with the potential technological and structural impact of US military transformation, may yet cause the special US/UK security relationship to wither. This is not, however, inevitable. Efforts are being made on both sides of the Atlantic to limit the damage caused to transatlantic relations by the Iraq war. NATO is finally starting to adapt to the new security environment and even the EU may in future be prepared to support robust action to address common Western security challenges that transcend transatlantic rivalries and disagreements.[50]

As the efforts to rebuild Iraq have graphically illustrated, the United States cannot carry the security burden alone. At the very least, it needs its European allies to contribute troops for peace support operations and resources for nation-building. However, if European states want to be in a position to influence the global strategic agenda, rather than having it dictated to them by the United States, they will ultimately need to be able and willing to contribute a "hard" security capability. If the European Union and the United States were to become true strategic partners, Britain would have a crucial role in facilitating revitalized military cooperation. The United Kingdom possesses the only armed forces with the prospect of remaining interoperable with the United States for the foreseeable future, while any serious attempt to build a European power-projection capability would be reliant on British commit-

ment and expertise. In these circumstances, the UK might yet be able to remain both a leading player in Europe and a special partner of the United States and thus realize Prime Minister Blair's vision of Britain as a pivotal power.

NOTES

1. Prime Minister Blair's personal leadership probably had a greater impact on government policy on Iraq than would be normal for a British Prime Minister. Comments by ex-Labour ministers following the Iraq war have criticized the Prime Minister for bypassing cabinet government and accountability in favor of informal groupings of officials and advisers.

2. "Joint Statement by President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair," The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, Camp David, Md., 23 February 2001, http://www.usis.it/file2001_02/alia/a1022309.htm.

3. Steve Sciffers, "US Congress Set to Honour Blair," *BBC News Online*, 7 May 2003.

4. See for example the discussion by Raymond Seitz, a former US ambassador to the UK, in Raymond Seitz, *Over Here* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1998), pp. 339-50; and also the analysis in Kevin Phillips, *The Cousins' Wars: Religion, Politics & The Triumph of Anglo America* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), pp. 603-05.

5. John Baylis, ed., *Anglo-American Relations Since 1939: The Enduring Alliance* (Manchester, Eng.: Manchester Univ. Press, 1997), p. 223.

6. UK Parliament, House of Commons, Hansard Debates for 13 December 1999, column 39.

7. See, for example, UK Ministry of Defence, *The Strategic Defence Review: A New Chapter*, Introduction, Cm. 5566, July 2002.

8. Ibid., sec. 2, paras. 35, 45.

9. "Britain Will Pay Blood Price—Blair," *BBC News On line*, 6 September 2002, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/2239887.stm.

10. One recurring theme in British foreign policy is that the country "punches above its weight" militarily and diplomatically compared to the more economically powerful Germany and Japan. A former Foreign Secretary, Douglas Hurd, coined the phrase in a 1993 speech to The Royal Institute for International Affairs (Chatham House).

11. Laurence Martin and John Garnett, *British Foreign Policy: Challenges and Choices for the 21st Century* (London: Chatham House Papers, Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1997), p. 139.

12. Speech by the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, at the Lord Mayor's Banquet, Guildhall, London, 22 November 1999, http://www.fco.gov.uk.

13. Former US Secretary of State Dean Acheson recognized Britain's image problem back in the 1950s when he made his oft-quoted remark that Britain had lost an empire but not yet found a role.

14. The full text of the speech is available in George Jones, "Britain's Role Is to Unite the World," *The Daily Telegraph*, 8 January 2003.

15. See, for example, Philip H. Gordon and Michael O'Hanlon, "Tony Blair Has a Chance to Bridge the Gap on Iraq," *International Herald Tribune*, 5 April 2002; and Warren Hoge, "Tony Blair's Role: Statesman or Poodle?" *The New York Times*, 26 September 2002.

16. See comments by Peter Mandelson, a former member of Blair's Cabinet, and Sir Christopher Meyer, British Ambassador to the United States, in "Blair's War," *PBS Frontline* transcript, 4 March 2003, p. 5, http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/blair/etc/script.html.

17. See Jones, for example.

18. UK Parliament, House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, 4 March 2003, column 173.

19. Paul Reynolds, "Tony Blair's Unlikely Partnership," BBC News, 28 March 2003, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/2895793.stm.

20. Lexington, "The Odd Couple," *The Economist*, 15 March 2003. However, there is little evidence to suggest that President Bush shared Tony Blair's views on foreign policy prior to 9/11.

21. For an insight into the subtle impact of British diplomacy, see, for example, Henry Kissinger, *The White House Years* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1979), p. 90; and Seitz, p. 298.

22. Quoted in Kamal Ahmed and Ed Vulliamy, "United They Stand: The Odd Couple Offensive," *The Observer*, 8 September 2002.

23. See Quentin Peel et al., "How the US Set a Course for War with Iraq," *Financial Times*, 26 May 2003; and Randeep Ramesh, ed., *The War We Could Not Stop: The Real Story of the Battle for Iraq* (London: Faber and Faber, 2003), p. 25.

24. See Toby Harnden, "White House Tires of Blair's UN Diplomacy," *The Daily Telegraph*, 14 March 2003; and Gerard Baker et al., "Blair's Mission Impossible: The Doomed Effort to Win a Second UN Resolution," *The Financial Times*, 30 May 2003, p. 17.

25. See comments by Sir Christopher Meyer, British Ambassador to the United States, and others in "Blair's War," PBS, p. 9; also see the review article by Claire Short, former Secretary of State for International

Development and Cabinet member in "Why Did He Do It?" *The Guardian*, 7 June 2003. Some commentators have suggested that Blair had made an open-ended commitment to support the United States militarily against Iraq well before serious planning began in autumn 2002. See, for example, Bagehot, "Tony's Act of Faith," *The Economist*, 13 April 2002.

26. Robin Oakley, CNN, 18 July 2001.

27. Michael Clarke and Rod Hague, eds., *European Defence Cooperation: America, Britain and NATO* (Manchester, Eng.: Manchester Univ. Press, 1990), p. 24.

28. John Dumbrell, *A Special Relationship: Anglo-American Relations in the Cold War and After* (Basingstoke, Eng.: Macmillan, 2001), p. 160.

29. Robin Harris, "The State of the Special Relationship," *Policy Review*, June 2002, p. 8, http://www.policyreview.org/JUN02/harris_print.html.

30. Gideon Rachman, "Is the Anglo-American Relationship Still Special?" *The Washington Quarterly*, 24 (Spring 2001), 8. The postwar controversy over intelligence reports on Iraqi WMD revealed that there were limits to the degree of Anglo-American cooperation. See, for example, Glenn Frankel, "Allies Didn't Share All Intelligence On Iraq," *The Washington Post*, 17 July 2003.

31. Martin and Garnett, p. 106.

32. UK, Parliament, House of Commons, oral evidence taken from the Rt. Hon. Geoffrey Hoon MP before the Defence Committee on Wednesday, 14 May 2003.

33. Dr. Ian Davis, "US-UK Nuclear Cooperation and the Future of the UK Trident System," presentation to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Global Security and Non-Proliferation, The British American Security Information Council (BASIC), London, 5 February 2002.

34. Quoted in Michael Smith, "We'll Fight Our Own Way, Says UK General," *The Daily Telegraph*, 11 March 2003.

35. Warren Hoge, "British Forces Meld with Those of the U.S., and Relish Sharing the Burden," *The New York Times*, 27 March 2003.

36. Smith. Anglo-American military cooperation has not always been as smooth as official statements suggest. For a more jaundiced view, see, for example, Christina Lamb, "Blair's Aides Denounce US Blundering in Afghan War," *The Sunday Telegraph*, 30 June 2002.

37. Sir Christopher Meyer, "The UK-US Global Partnership," speech before the Los Angeles World Affairs Council, 12 January 1998, http://www.lawac.org/speech/meyer.html.

38. "Joint Statement by President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair," The White House, Office of the Press Secretary.

39. Ramesh, p. 24.

40. Foreword by the Prime Minister to *Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction: The Assessment of the British Government*, September 2002, http://image.guardian.co.uk/sys-files/Politics/documents/2002/09/24/dossier.pdf.

41. Prime Minister's Iraq statement to Parliament, 24 September 2002, available from http://www.number-10.gov.uk.

42. UK, Parliament, House of Commons, Foreign Affairs Committee, 4 March 2003, column 146.

43. Prime Minister's speech at the Lord Mayor's Banquet, 11 November 2002, available from http://www.number-10.gov.uk. The Lord Mayor of London's annual banquet traditionally provides a Prime Minister with the opportunity to make a keynote speech on government policy.

44. Iain Duncan Smith, "Statement on Iraq at Conservative Spring Conference," 15 March 2003, available from http://www.conservatives.com.

45. As late as 4 June 2003, Tony Blair was telling the House of Commons that he had no doubt that evidence of WMD would be found. No such claims were made by the time he addressed Congress on 17 July 2003.

46. UK, Parliament, House of Commons, Foreign Affairs Committee, Ninth Report, 3 July 2003, http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200203/cmselect/cmfaff/813/81302.htm. Apparently MI6 was not happy with the publication of intelligence information on Iraq's WMD program. However, this was because of security concerns rather than because it had doubts about the case against Saddam. See: "Casus or Casuistry?" *The Economist*, 31 May 2003, p. 23; and John Simpson, "MI6 Really Does Seem to Believe that Saddam had WMDs" *The Daily Telegraph*, 8 June 2003.

47. See Martin Woollacott, "Why We Were Sold Only One Reason to Go to War in Iraq," *The Guardian*, 11 July 2003, p. 24.

48. Ronald Brownstein, "The War About War," book review in *The American Prospect*, May 2003, p. 4, http://www.prospect.org/print/V14/5/brownstein-r.html.

49. See Joe Conason, "Love ya Tony," *The Guardian*, 14 April 2003; and Glenn Frankel, "Fissures Show in United Front," *The Washington Post*, 28 March 2003.

50. The proposed new EU security strategy envisages the use of force to counter rogue states with WMD. Such measures might yet help to rebuild a transatlantic security consensus. See "Europe Spies a Threat," *The Economist*, 21 June 2003.