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**Testing the Strength of the Special Relationship:
Policy Pressure Between the United States and the United Kingdom**

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I. Introduction and Purpose

One of the greatest success stories for the proponents of international cooperation, the post-World War II period of the long and colorful history of the relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom has been marked by nearly seventy years of apparently uninterrupted cooperation, alliance and progress. The bilateral agreements set between the two countries and the mutually acceptable policies that their governments set in both domestic and foreign spheres show the strength and vitality of the world's first "special relationship" as dubbed by the British statesman Winston Churchill; in a similar address he noted the commonalities present between citizens of both countries, in regard for their defense of natural rights, justice and personal freedom: "Let our common tongue, our common basic law, our joint heritage of literature and ideals, the red tie of kinship, become the sponge of obliteration of all the unpleasantness of the past."¹ Other heads of state, members of government, scholars and observers have championed the Anglo-American alliance in similar fashions throughout its existence.

Underneath the records of positive news accounts, recollections of the countries' leaders, and details of superficial history books, however, the complex special relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom is far more lopsided and inequitable in reality and practice. As a result of its inception with the Atlantic Charter of 1941 between President Franklin Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill, British interests in maintaining their empire were exchanged for United States aid in the war effort against the Germans; a greater cause of self-determination among native peoples of colonial and oppressed areas was agreed to be pursued by both nations. Such terms were clearly not in the best interests or policies of the British Empire when they were agreed upon. American pressure upon Britain to decolonize its

¹ Gilbert, Martin. *Churchill and America*. New York: Free Press, 2005. xxi.

vast, global empire did not proceed without intensely detrimental effects upon the strength and vitality of the special relationship; the British ambassador to the United States in 1967 even went as far to refer to the “so-called Anglo-American special relationship” as “little more than sentimental terminology.”² Further series of conflicts among former British colonial possessions and the American response to those incidents have created further discrepancies within special relationship between the two countries.

Cooperation between states can occur as a result of those states changing or adapting their goals and programs for intended potential benefits, much as the United States and Britain have aligned their policies in both domestic and foreign affairs; however, as Leeds states, “these benefits cannot be achieved without active effort; the interests of the actors are not in harmony. Because mutual benefit is possible when policy is coordinated, state leaders wish to cooperate, but the condition of anarchy in the international system may make cooperation difficult to achieve.”³ While maintaining their agreements and alliance, both countries have striven to only incur costs that do not outweigh the benefits of these agreements; otherwise, the agreements would not return a favorable outcome for the country in question. Based on studies that concern the special relationship, centered within some of the key compliance theories of international relations, however, the data seem to indicate that the benefits are far less substantial for the United Kingdom than for the United States.

The purpose of this thesis is to evaluate the relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom. I will argue that British domestic and foreign policies have been shaped in certain areas by the existence and durability of its special relationship with the United States.

² Hyam, Ronald. *Britain's Declining Empire: The Road to Deolonisation, 1918-1968*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. 28.

³ Leeds, Brett Ashley. 1999. “Domestic Political Institutions, Credible Commitments, and International Cooperation.” *American Journal of Political Science* 43 (4): 981.

First, I will provide a historical background detailing the Anglo-American relationship, and then continue with a comparative literature review based on the themes of international cooperation. The paper will describe the theory of expected utility for both countries as a source of noncompliance, and examine two case studies that highlight the existence of pressure placed upon British government and its interests by the United States in the postwar period, specifically within the themes of decolonization and military action. In doing so, the paper will support the argument that British domestic and foreign policies have been shaped in certain areas by the existence and durability of its special relationship with the United States.

II. Historical Background to the Special Relationship

The history of the connection between the United States and the United Kingdom began when colonists immigrated from England, either for religious or economic purposes, to the North American continent in the early seventeenth century, but the true partnership between the countries began over three hundred years later in the twentieth century. Regardless of the commonalities of law, language, free enterprise and natural rights held in high regard by the citizens of both countries, the level of cooperation between the two remained distant at best throughout much of their mutual existence; American interests were primarily focused on domestic and hemispheric concerns until the twentieth century, while Britain dealt with the burdens and maintained the benefits of its vast, globe-circling empire. Although trade and economic issues certainly grew during the nineteenth century, along with increasing ties felt by immigrants from Europe to the United States, close bilateral relations were not natural for the time, and were therefore not actively pursued by either government.

Ironically, the first opportunity for a “special relationship” to be formed was not followed through, despite positive efforts from both countries. After the American-aided victory in World

War I, President Woodrow Wilson, along with then Secretary of War Winston Churchill, hoped that the alliance would continue to evolve into a strong bilateral bond between the two countries; with Congress' defeat of the Treaty of Versailles, however, such further American involvement overseas would end. Churchill, himself an Anglo-American, was reported to have been deeply upset by the lack of American presence in the post-Great War Europe; he noted that the "harmony & success of this co-operation form a clear precedent, & one which is of the highest value to the future in which such vast issues hang on unity between our two countries in ideals & in action."⁴ Furthermore, Churchill went on to describe the ways that America "did not make good" on its promises to partner with Britain for the security of the European continent, showing an early example of the costly anarchic system that the governments of the two countries worked within.⁵ Following World War I, the onset and long duration of the Great Depression shifted American policy away from foreign interests and onto the state of its own economy and security.

The outbreak of World War II in Europe created another chance for the United States and Britain to revive the bilateral ties that had been attempted after the conclusion of the First World War. While officially neutral, the United States aided Britain against Nazi Germany "in all ways short of war", which typically brought America some sort of strategic security or commercial advantage, creating an interesting foreshadowing effect of events to come.⁶ Further negotiation led to trades for destroyers and bases, as well as the Lend Lease Act, which extended an inexhaustible line of credit to Britain for the purchasing of wartime supplies, in exchange for freer access to global markets once dominated by Britain.⁷ These hints of pressure on Britain toward decolonization and future policy cooperation were officially laid down in the Atlantic

⁴ Gilbert. 90.

⁵ Ibid., 95.

⁶ Donnelly, Mark. *Britain in the Second World War*. New York: Routledge, 1999. 97.

⁷ Donnelly., 98.

Charter, the product of the first wartime conference between Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill, which established the foundations and guidelines for the future of the transatlantic relationship.

The Atlantic Charter agreed to by Roosevelt and Churchill had two main roles, firstly including a blueprint of sorts for continued wartime cooperation. Meeting in secret at Placentia Bay, Newfoundland, the two leaders effectively held the first wartime summit between heads of government and came away with “a means of waging a more effective war.”⁸ More importantly, the Charter served as a guideline for the desired postwar international order; Gilbert comments on the nature of this international aspect to the document, stating that Churchill had remarked about a paragraph “pledging an ‘effective international organization’ that would afford all nations security ‘within their own boundaries...without fear of lawless assault or the need to maintain burdensome armaments.’”⁹

In addition, the Charter also spelled out the plan for self-determination after the war’s conclusion, by stating that it would support and “respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live; and they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them.”¹⁰ Within this clause, the underlying costliness to any agreement and the lack of enforcement in compliance is made clear: at the time Britain presided over the largest empire in history, with little intention of ending its authority at the war’s end. Even at the time Churchill viewed the clause as referring to those peoples under the harsh rule of Nazism or other totalitarian regimes.¹¹ Roosevelt and Churchill had clearly different ideas on the British Empire and its life expectancy; Wilson

⁸ Gilbert, 234.

⁹ Gilbert, 232.

¹⁰ Ibid., 232.

¹¹ Stewart, Andrew. *Empire Lost*. New York: Continuum US, 2008. 84.

imparts that the prime minister and other like-minded imperial thinkers viewed the Empire in romantic terms, whereas Roosevelt saw its possessions, particularly India, as fully oppressed, potentially disloyal subjects unlikely to aid the war effort without some genuine award at the end.¹² While it is clear that Churchill did not want to lose the United States as an ally and presumably went along with the stipulations of the Charter in order to secure Britain's future security in the war effort, this clause became a central theme of the postwar decolonizing world in which the United States exerted a great deal of pressure on Britain to end its influence over its colonial possessions.

From the Atlantic Charter, and the Allied victory over the Axis Powers some four years later came the special relationship between the two countries that has since been kept alive through to the present by a variety of convergent interests on both domestic and foreign areas, as well as strong partnerships between heads of state and government. Where the special relationship has triumphed in military alliance, cultural progression, economic benefits and mutual respect, it was also one of the constituent factors in breaking down Britain's global empire and reducing it to its current great, but not super, power status within the international system.

The decline of the British Empire, which shifted into high gear after the perilous economic and security state that Britain found itself in following World War II, was the product of a number of dysfunctional factors that yielded little positive results for the mother country. Hyam marks the most important of these factors as including "Indirect Rule, a white man's country, an imperial palace, an international language, and the 'special relationship' with the USA," highlighting the preeminent placement of United States pressure on Britain during the

¹² Wilson, Theodore A. *The First Summit: Roosevelt and Churchill at Placentia Bay, 1941*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991. 109.

decolonization period.¹³ While the attempts at establishing semi-autonomous government within certain colonies like India and Nigeria, along with mandatory English instruction, are important in explaining this demise, the British governments' sights were constantly fixed upon United States' policy, often misinterpreting its intentions or objectives.¹⁴ As a result, unilateral decisions based upon United States policies were often taken, with Britain being swept along for the ride as on a one-way street. In the cases used to evaluate this paper's thesis, these misinterpretations caused by noncompliance or disavowance of the agreements in place between the two countries prove the clearly different points that have been taken on decolonization and military intervention.

III. Literature Review of Cooperation Themes

States enter into agreements with other states based on a number of important factors. Commonly, alliances are formed for defense, or negotiations brokered for increased economic or social opportunity, in order to increase a state's own security or utility. Agreements are typically only made, however, when some sort of benefit is expected to be gained by the states in question. An emphasis on initial bargains and negotiations, coupled with a record of compliance to the deal, are necessary for both states to derive their benefits; according to Leeds, "when actors are deciding whether to propose and form agreements to coordinate policy, they consider the likelihood that the agreement will be fulfilled and the costs to be borne should the agreement be broken."¹⁵ As a result, agreements can be difficult, if not impossible to reach if there are deeply conflicting interests or benefits that the negotiating states might hold or incur for entering into agreements too hastily, making some agreements more costly than others.

¹³ Hyam, 12.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁵ Leeds, Brett Ashley. 1999. "Domestic Political Institutions, Credible Commitments, and International Cooperation." *American Journal of Political Science* 43 (4): 982.

A number of researchers have put forth their own hypotheses and results for the emphasis on the costliness of agreements, beginning with the methods by which states negotiate agreements. Fearon's bargaining model specifically cites delays in negotiation or agreements as being extremely costly, as the increase of the time past without the potential benefits of an agreement, and increases the risk that one side might end any agreement negotiations. This "war of attrition" can be detrimental to an agreement between states before it has even been enacted.¹⁶ In addition, Fearon notes that "expectations about what will happen in the enforcement phase will affect how the states bargain." If the agreements are not enforceable, then no incentive can exist for the states to effectively bargain with any sort of serious intent for a constructive outcome.¹⁷

Lacking proper enforcement for agreements can make them costly due to the effect of noncompliance by the participating states. If the international system of states is agreed to be anarchic, then it is clear that there are no inherent enforcement mechanisms existing to ensure that states comply with the agreements that they make. Although it is typically expected that states will comply to some extent with the agreements that they have made, the exact level can never really be empirically determined. Compliance problems additionally do not have to be an intentional decision to violate the terms of an agreement; rather, they can be the result of uncertain or ambiguous treaties, limitations by states to adhere to agreements, or social or economic policies and fluctuations.¹⁸ Containing deviations or discrepancies within agreements to "acceptable levels of compliance" is therefore an easier and more effective way of enforcing

¹⁶ Fearon, James. 1998. "Bargaining, Enforcement, and International Cooperation." *International Organization* 52 (2): 277.,

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 279.

¹⁸ Downs, George W., David M. Rocke, Peter N Barsoom. 1996. "Is the Good News about Compliance Good News about Cooperation?" *International Organization* 50 (3): 392.

the agreements, rather than keeping to every clause and provision.¹⁹ By not reaping all the potential benefits of following the exact terms, however, abridged or abbreviated agreements can have the potential to be quite costly for either state involved.

Treaties and agreements that do not change the participating states' policies too drastically are another source of noncompliance, yet without overt consequences. Downs, et. al, propose that because most treaties only require states to deviate slightly from what they would have done otherwise, states are "presented with negligible benefits for even unpunished defections; hence the amount of enforcement needed to maintain cooperation is modest."²⁰ Such agreements may therefore not be necessary to be enforced, but also run the risk of lax adherence as a result of the similarities between the policies pursued both before and after the agreement. As the research presented here proves, the potential costliness of an agreement to a state and its welfare, raised from concerns over bargaining, benefits, and compliance, comprises a central theme within the domain of interstate cooperation.

While the initial costliness of an agreement may prevent states from initial cooperation, there are other theories that explain the existence of continuing cooperation among states that have already entered into agreements. According to liberal theorists, the cooperation among states within bilateral agreements or under the framework of international organizations occurs due the concept referred to as the shadow of the future, which imparts that states are more likely to cooperate in the short term if they are likely to benefit from the agreement or relationship in the long term.²¹ States can expect to continue to rely upon each other or continue to interact with each other into the future, and as a result "international politics is characterized by the

¹⁹ Chayes, et. al., 198.

²⁰ Downs, George W., et.al., 380.

²¹ Bueno de Mesquita, 142.

expectation of future interaction.”²² The shadow of the future conceptual model relies upon the “prisoner’s dilemma” game in deriving its theory. The prisoner’s dilemma problem finds that two players in a game or interaction are better off if they defect and cooperate with each other; Bruce Bueno de Mesquita states that “by choosing rationally they each suffered an outcome that was worse than what they would have gotten if they had cooperated.”²³ If there is sufficient time to recover from a setback or wrong decision that a player makes, then mutual cooperation is far more beneficial than going against the goals of the other player. This proper coordination outcome of prisoner’s dilemma creates an atmosphere convenient for the shadow of the future theory to be effective.

Other theorists describe the shadow of the future phenomenon as not only making enforcement easier in the future but also making agreements harder and more difficult to make. This can lead to more intensive bargaining in order for states to achieve a better result; Fearon notes that “though a long shadow of the future may make *enforcing* an international agreement easier, it can also give states an incentive to *bargain harder*.”²⁴ He also suggests that more bargaining for the promise of more future gains can cut back on the relative gains that a state could achieve in the present, leading to a breakdown in cooperation.²⁵ The shadow of the future is therefore important in determining the motivations for cooperation between states but has a double effect of impeding negotiations that establish such cooperation.

Under the auspices of the shadow of the future and further cooperation, research has shown that democratic states are less likely to conflict with each other and more likely to engage in cooperation that will last for longer periods. Known as the democratic peace, the studies

²² Oye, 12.

²³ Ibid., 143.

²⁴ Fearon, James. 1998. “Bargaining, Enforcement, and International Cooperation.” *International Organization* 52 (2): 270.

²⁵ Ibid., 296.

argue that liberal democracies rarely fight wars, reach peaceful settlements and are more constrained in their abilities to wage war as more influential world powers.²⁶ The democratic peace or reliability is quite important when referring to the special relationship of the United States and Britain; as democratic states, the two countries are far more likely to cooperate even when disputes between them arise. Democratic states are additionally viewed as being reliable in their ability to hold to agreements; Gaubatz derives a number of reasons for this theory, including preference and policy stability and the consistency of democratic leadership and institutions. Public preferences within liberal democracies are liable to be very stable; under the auspices of majority rule for government, public opinion is not easily swayed nor quickly changed. For governments to stay in power, they have to abide by the popular support of the people that they govern.²⁷ Additionally, constraints on terms in office and public approval of leaders, as well as the natural stability of liberal democracy government organization and bureaucracies are more likely to increase the chances of cooperation in the future.²⁸ Democratic reliability for future cooperation and interaction show a more positive shadow of the future than cooperation between non-democratic states.

The shadow of the future can additionally be used to describe the nature in which both domestic and international institutions coordinate their activities and function effectively to guide the development and execution of their policies. The core premise of liberal international relations theory holds that “the relationship between states and the surrounding domestic and transnational society in which they are embedded critically shapes state behavior by influencing

²⁶ Bueno de Mesquita, 437.

²⁷ Gaubatz, Kurt Taylor. 1996. “Democratic States and Commitment in International Relations.” *International Organization* 50 (1): 114.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 116-7.

the social purposes underlying state preferences.”²⁹ Within one state’s government, policies are shaped by the people that it represents, especially in the case of elected democracies; domestic groups follow their interests and agendas by putting pressure upon the government to enact policies that are favorable to them.³⁰ Moravcsik goes on to cite the necessity of pushing for policies that are outside of the influence of the private sector: “Government policy is therefore constrained by the underlying identities, interests, and power of individuals and groups (inside and outside the state apparatus) who constantly pressure the central decision makers to pursue policies consistent with their preferences.”³¹ The leaders that retain their offices and coalitions that are built as a result of international cooperation are subject to be removed or discredited should an international agreement go without compliance; as a result, while they remain accountable for the agreements, they are more likely to abide by them.³² Domestic institutions remain extremely important in establishing the agendas and policies for governments to follow when making agreements with other states.

International institutions are generally made up of three or more states that serve to organize and execute agreements among its members; they range in size from broad organizations such as the United Nations, to smaller groups such as the G8. Institutions are created in order to achieve beneficial cooperation among the member states, but can also be ineffective because there is usually no superior central judge or authority that polices the organizations.³³ At an international level, individual governments use these institutions to maximize the agendas set by their own domestic interests and pressures while minimizing

²⁹ Moravcsik, Andrew. 1997. “Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics.” *International Organization* 42: 516.

³⁰ Putnam, Robert D. 1988. “Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games.” *International Organization* 42: 434.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 518.

³² Leeds, 986.

³³ Bueno de Mesquita, 488.

foreign influence or pressure.³⁴ Organizations can have primary economic goals, such as the OPEC group of petroleum producing countries, be in place for political cooperation, such as the United Nations, or else have defensive purposes, such as NATO. However, they all serve as checks on their constituent states in order to ensure policy cooperation.

The international structure of these institutions can be a decisive factor in ensuring that agreements are kept; according to Fearon, the theory usually “understands international regimes primarily as institutional solutions to problems of monitoring and enforcement.” However, the more states are involved with any decision or policy-making, the shadow of the future and associated costs or rewards will be increased as well.³⁵ Shadow of the future is a key factor in determining a state’s reliability and commitment to an agreement, especially when concerned with democratic peace, domestic institutions, and international institutions.

Alliances that are created between states for mutual security benefits are a core method of committing to agreements, and will be central to the cases presented in this thesis detailing the United States and Britain. According to Bueno de Mesquita, alliances can be made between two or more states for military purposes, as an agreement “concerning the actions each will take in the event that a specified military contingency occurs.”³⁶ As a result, alliances are viewed as being beneficial for all parties involved; they serve as “tools for aggregating capabilities against a threat; nations form alliances to increase their security by massing their capabilities against a common enemy.”³⁷ Alliance agreements can be structured differently, in such forms as neutrality pacts, defense agreements, or collective security promises, but all intend to prevent or dissuade military aggression or use of force.

³⁴ Putnam, 434.

³⁵ Fearon, 297-298.

³⁶ Bueno de Mesquita, 529.

³⁷ Morrow, James. 1991. “Alliances and Asymmetry: An Alternative to the Capability Aggregation Model of Alliances.” *American Journal of Political Science* 35 (4): 904.

The participating states' forces or strength within an alliance, however, may not always be equal; in fact, nearly all alliances that exist today are asymmetric, or one in which the different states contribute or receive different amounts of autonomy or security under the terms of the agreement.³⁸ Asymmetry in alliances usually leads to more stability due to the differing costs and benefits incurred by the participating states; according to Morrow, "Because the two sides in asymmetric alliances derive their benefits from different interests, they strike a more stable bargain of interests than those in symmetric alliances."³⁹ There is a strong collection of evidence that the United States and Britain cooperate within such an asymmetric alliance: the United States is stronger militarily than Britain and brings more military forces or strength to its security; while Britain gains these protective measures, it must also comply with United States policies concerning its foreign policy. This relationship will be further illustrated by the case studies.

Preferences and pressure comprise the final area of cooperation theory and help in the formation of clear ideas of the mechanics behind the United States-Britain relationship. Preferences involve the policies or agendas that states intend to uphold or deliver upon; they can be created by public mandate, government or military action, and so forth; Moravcsik relates that "States require a 'purpose,' a perceived underlying stake in the matter at hand, in order to provoke conflict, propose cooperation, or take any other significant foreign policy action."⁴⁰ Pressure in negotiation of agreements is the manifestation of such preferences: in the Atlantic Charter conference, for example, Franklin Roosevelt lobbied strongly for Britain to begin a process of decolonization upon Allied victory in World War II; this preference took the form of pressure on Britain for compliance in exchange for continuing the delivery of American aid to

³⁸ Bueno de Mesquita, 535.

³⁹ Morrow, 905.

⁴⁰ Moravcsik, 520.

their war effort. While pressure is often an effective means of ensuring that a state's intentions are met, it is only truly successful if that state has more power, either in bargaining or within an agreement framework, to back up the pressure that it places upon another state. If the state does not have the means to stand by its preferences as such, then adverse consequences may be incurred; Oye notes that "unilateral actions that limit one's gains from exploitation may have the effect of increasing one's vulnerability to exploitation by others."⁴¹

Such unilateral action outside of preexisting agreements taken by the United States and the United Kingdom throughout the post-war era forms the basis of the cases presented in this paper to show the costliness that renegeing on these agreements on each country. Based on these theories of compliance, shadow of the future, institutions, alliances, and preferences, the paper will detail the lapses in compliance to agreements on decolonization and military action between the two countries. These breakdowns in cooperation are few; as both the United States and Britain employ systems of liberal democracy, hold the same values and norms, and share a long military alliance, incidents of such pressure are naturally rare. And although the impact of such conflicts is likely to be smaller than a conflict between two enemy states, there are still important conclusions to be drawn from the events.

IV. Theoretical Basis for Cooperative Behavior

After preferences and pressure are taken into account, the cooperative agreements in place between the United States and Britain achieve their strength and usual success through a careful calculation of estimated costs and benefits. The governing principle behind such a partnership, however, lies with the theory of expected utility. Utility as a single word can be broadly defined as usefulness or having useful qualities or benefits; expected utility, therefore, involves the expected overall benefits that a state can reasonably project to receive as a result of

⁴¹ Oye, 10.

complying with an agreement; leaders, legislators and policy-makers must be able to effectively calculate expected utility in order to predict their payoffs and anticipate how the opposite side will act in the event of different stimuli.⁴² These stimuli, or situations that create the potential for either side to renege on the agreement, have to be responded to properly in order to maintain the relationship or agreement between the states. If a decision is misjudged or the other player underestimated, then the state can possibly incur costly consequences as a result of such incorrect comprehension of the situation.

The United States and Britain, just as other countries with successful bilateral relations, act according to the expected utility theory in their policy- and decision-making. These decisions are often made without absolute knowledge that the other country will follow suit or be supportive; Bueno de Mesquita notes that “Expected utility estimates allow leaders to make calculated risks. By assessing alternative consequences that might arise from a course of action, decision makers can compare the costs and benefits of those consequences with the costs and benefits associated with alternative courses of action.”⁴³ Such assessments are vital to ensuring that states take courses of action that benefit their well-being the most. Some of these decisions come with higher prospects of incurring either more costs or more benefits, giving them more elements of risk than decisions with less costly or beneficial outcomes.⁴⁴ This inherent risk in decision-making can have the opposite effect of simply maintaining the status quo, however; if either state can receive a compensation that equals their currently expected utility, then they will likely refrain from acting on a risk that has the potential to diminish their benefits.

⁴² Bueno de Mesquita, 88.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 88.

⁴⁴ McDermott, Rose. *Risk Taking in International Politics*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1998. 11.

Numerous examples of actions taken with utility expected in return can be cited by both Britain and the United States throughout the history of the special relationship, from the decisions of the Allied commanders in World War II to later military action and issues over decolonization. In most of these cases the expected utility on both sides is achieved, leading observers to tout the strength of the countries' bond. When larger risks are taken, though, the potential for negative backlash also becomes larger; because of the United Kingdom's accepted status as the lesser partner in the asymmetric alliance, it usually incurs more costs than benefits from these riskier decisions, regardless if they are made in the intention of delivering a profitable outcome. The United States, on the other hand, can usually meet its expected utility without resorting to heavier decisions or radical policy changes. This imbalance within the relationship is documented in two clear cases where Britain took higher risks through the expected utility theory by challenging its accepted status quo with the United States in order to increase its benefits; in both cases Britain ended with more costs than when it began.

V. Research Design

As evidence to document the consistent presence of pressure from the United States on the United Kingdom to adapt and follow its policies, the paper will focus on two cases of international crises, both of which related to the effects of the decolonization of Britain's once vast empire. I have chosen to present these data in the form of intensive case studies because of the case study's ability to present a single instance or outcome for the purpose of comprehending a larger amount of similar instances.⁴⁵ In this way, these two cases are intended to represent the situations and yield similar results in other similar cases regarding United States pressure on Britain for compliance.

⁴⁵ Gerring, John. 2004. "What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good for?" *American Political Science Review* 98: 342.

The cases will take the form of a scientific explanation, which Lijphart says consists of two elements, including “(1) the establishment of general empirical relationships among two or more variables, while (2) all other variables are controlled, that is, held constant.”⁴⁶ The controlled, or independent, variable remains unchanged throughout the cases, while the dependent variable fluctuates upon response to certain stimuli. In order to hold other untested variables constant, the studies will eliminate those variables that are unimportant to the cases.⁴⁷ The independent variable for both cases will be the constant intentions and goals of the United Kingdom to maximize its benefits, as explained by the expected utility theory. The dependent variable will be the response from the United States to Britain’s pursuit of such benefits, with a key emphasis on those negative interactions. For the purposes of this paper, I will eschew any positive responses to Britain from the United States that this variable might invoke, because the cases are meant to show the asymmetric and imbalanced side of the Anglo-American relationship.

The first case will study the Suez Crisis between Britain and Egypt in 1956 and the ensuing conflict that arose over ownership and operation of the Suez Canal. The second case will review the United States-led invasion of Grenada in 1983 in order to depose a Communist insurgent government. Although it can be argued that the United States had a negligible influence over Britain in the actual dismantling of its empire, mainly because of the economic benefit for the United States in keeping the empire together, America has had a strong effect on the military interventions and crisis management that has occurred in former British colonies

⁴⁶ Lijphart, Arend. 1971. “Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method.” *American Political Science Review* 65: 683.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 690.

since they have become independent.⁴⁸ These former colonies have evolved into many areas perceived by the United States as trouble spots in the Third World. America's refusal to cooperate with Britain in certain instances where Britain's expected utility could be fulfilled and possibly increased have instead had the opposite effect, showing the single direction that the transatlantic alliance is often set on by the United States.

VI. Case Studies

The Suez Canal was built in the 1860s over the narrow strip of land connecting the Mediterranean and Red Seas between the Sinai Peninsula and the African portion of Egypt, and has forever since been a crucially important point for international trade, military campaigns and national interest. Opening a route for much quicker trade between Europe and Asia, the canal was then, and still is today, an incredibly important resource. Britain especially reaped the benefits of easier and faster trade with India, the jewel of its empire. Although it had managed the canal since its opening, under the auspices and agreement of its status as a neutral zone, the British government had long since decided what traffic was allowed through the canal, effectively disregarding its aforementioned neutral nature. After Egypt became independent under a British-installed puppet government, the canal management was officially given to Britain for a twenty-year period under a treaty signed in 1936.⁴⁹ Upon that treaty's expiration in 1956, Egyptian President Gamal Abdul Nasser quickly moved to nationalize the canal under Egyptian control. Fearing a loss of use or influence over the canal as the vital transportation link between Europe and Asia, Britain, along with France and Israel, moved for a military action against the Egyptians to regain control of the Suez Canal territory.

⁴⁸ Krozewski, Gerold. *Money and the End of Empire: British International Economic Policy and the Colonies, 1947-1958*. New York: Palgrave, 2001. 208.

⁴⁹ Hyam, Ronald. *Britain's Declining Empire: The Road to Deolonisation, 1918-1968*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. 221.

The United States' response to Britain's handling of the conflict ranged from an initial recommendation to hold diplomatic negotiations to a later outright criticism of the British government ministers for their decision to use force against the Egyptians. Evidence for this preference on the part of the United States can be found clearly from written records of the event; early communication between Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and the British ministers reads that "Eisenhower's text 'refers not to the going through the motions of having an intermediate conference, but to the use of intermediate steps as a genuine and sincere effort to settle the problem and avoid the use of force.'"⁵⁰ Although the British did agree to act in a diplomatic setting before reverting to brute military force against the Egyptians, they did so under the assumption that the United States would back their policy of renegotiated control of the canal, which shows a clear study in risk taking for higher benefits based on Britain's expected utility. This blunder by the British government in predicting the actions of the United States ultimately led to a breakdown in communication between the two allies, leaving Britain to wait for a positive signal to begin military action that was never to come from the United States.⁵¹

American pressure on Britain to stand down from the conflict against the Egyptians came largely as a surprise and unexpected action to the British government and military command. Depending upon quiet economic assistance but not military support, the British government predicted that the United States would not act in a negative fashion.⁵² This pressure manifested itself as a United States-sponsored resolution at the United Nations for a withdrawal of aggressor forces from the Suez region; without the United States support, Britain, France and Israel were

⁵⁰ Verbeek, Bertjan. *Decision-making in Great Britain during the Suez Crisis: Small Groups and a Persistent Leader*. Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2003. 87.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 90.

⁵² Verbeek, 121.

unlikely to have succeeded in their goal to liberate the canal from Egyptian control. The miscalculation of British ministers on the subject United States policy and response led to a relatively quickly end to open hostility; Selwyn Lloyd, the British foreign minister, wrote later that “not to have the Americans at least winking and benevolently neutral was unthinkable.”⁵³ Britain suffered fairly intense consequences from not complying with the United States and leaving the Suez alone; the cabinet within Eden’s government was reorganized, oil shortages became the norm, and their financial system underwent a minor collapse.⁵⁴ United States pressure on Britain to comply, therefore, very clearly led to a reaction in the form of an ultimate cessation of military action and giving up any claims for control over the Suez Canal.

This argument can of course be critiqued by providing alternative explanations for the British failure to regain control of the Suez Canal. Such factors as poor military execution by the Western forces, and Prime Minister Sir Anthony Eden’s desire for an ideological triumph over Nasser, regardless of the cost, have been cited as possible reasons.⁵⁵ Although it is unlikely, the Suez Canal may have become less lucrative method for the British government to raise money. Despite these conjectures, however, the negative response given by the United States to Britain’s pursuit of benefits, whether it was the fruit of anti-colonial policies or other factors, is most clearly the leading factor in their failure to reestablish control over the Suez Canal and return the area to the status quo ex ante.

The second case concerns the United States-led Operation Urgent Fury, a military action undertaken to liberate the Caribbean island of Grenada, a Commonwealth Realm of the United Kingdom, from a communist government that had overthrown the previous government and was

⁵³ Hyam, 235.

⁵⁴ McDermott, 136.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 227.

threatening the safety of American citizens in the region.⁵⁶ Independent since 1973, Grenada had undergone a coup in 1978 that brought Maurice Bishop, leader of the authoritarian New Jewel Party, to power. His murder in 1983 and subsequent unrest directly led to the invasion by United States forces in order to restore security to the island for its American residents and end its potential for becoming another Soviet satellite state in the Western Hemisphere. Although the invasion was criticized in various international circles, especially by Britain, the United States pressure in this instance prevented Britain from acting. Britain had only one year previously defended its South Atlantic territory of the Falkland Islands from an Argentine invasion; it expected in this case not necessarily to benefit but to at least preserve its status quo with Grenada as an integral part of the Commonwealth, a Realm ruled by a Governor-General in the Queen's stead. The American invasion challenged the expected utility that Britain wanted to maintain in its relationship with Grenada.

The United States managed to handle the invasion, ensuing conflict and completion of its goals in Grenada without much recourse from the international community; the speed and immediate success in overtaking the island and ousting the government proved that their policies were clear and actions strong. Prior to the invasion, a senior official stated that “the overriding principle was not to allow something to happen worse than what we were proposing to do. The purpose was to deny the Russians/Cubans a feeling of potency in grabbing small vulnerable states in the region.”⁵⁷ After the invasion, the United Nations moved to condemn the action, as well as the governments of other neighboring Western Hemisphere nations. British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher personally decried the conflict, stating that the United States “had no business interfering in [the Commonwealth's] affairs,” a clear sign that Grenada, as a former

⁵⁶ Crandell, Russell. *Gunboat Democracy: U.S. Interventions in the Dominican Republic, Grenada, and Panama*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2006. 106.

⁵⁷ Crandell, 142.

colony and a current Commonwealth Realm under the British monarchy, should have been left alone by the United States.⁵⁸ Yet among all the rhetoric from international organizations and leaders, especially from Britain, no action was taken against the United States, most likely due to pressure placed upon them to comply. This compliance can be shown by quiet approval from other ministers from states or international organizations, stating that the invasion was necessary to preserve the peace in the region; one such minister from Latin America remarked that “We have to protect...And I cannot overlook the fact that the Caribbean nations not only joined the intervention but asked the U.S. for it.”⁵⁹ The Grenada invasion succinctly provided an example of United States pressure on Britain to not intervene in its unilateral decisions, even those pertaining to a specific former colony and Commonwealth partner. Britain’s aggressive reaction notwithstanding, their policies clearly converged to toe the line to the United States’ demands and actions in Grenada.

The most glaring critique of the Grenada case study stems directly from the fact that Britain clearly would have invoked more costs if it had acted against the United States than it would had it remained outside the action; indeed, the Grenada incident had no real observable impact upon British policy or the well-being of the state. As referenced, other Caribbean nations, of which some are also classified by Britain as Commonwealth Realms, were supportive of the invasion for their own national security reasons. Regardless of the presence of American pressure, therefore, Britain had very few options for action that would have elevated it to a better, more beneficial status than before. Nevertheless, the fact that Britain did not attempt to interfere within the affairs of one of its own Commonwealth Realms is most clearly attributed to

⁵⁸ Ibid., 143.

⁵⁹ Crandell, 155.

the negative recourse that it might have incurred as a result of going against the accepted policies of the United States.

VII. Conclusion

The eighteenth-century American colonists that declared their independence from Great Britain in 1776, and created a new country based on liberalism and natural rights, had probably very little intention that their experiment in democracy would claim as its closest twentieth-century ally the very kingdom it once sought so ardently to sever itself from. Yet for nearly seventy years, the special status of the relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom has grown from wartime ally to supporting partners in policy and action around the world. During his address to the United States Congress in March 2009, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown solidly affirmed his country's recognition of its closest partner, stating "I come in friendship to renew for new times our special relationship that is founded on our shared history, our shared values, and, I believe, our shared futures."⁶⁰ With this cooperation, however, comes costs and benefits based on the expected utility the states wish to achieve; and while both countries usually incur strong benefits from their partnership, the costs of cooperation, both actual and opportune, on the British side routinely appear to be greater than those incurred by America.

Regardless of the cut and dried analysis, however, is it not acceptable for the two countries to continue reaping their benefits even with the discrepancies in the costs? Both states look to the other and with few exceptions, like those incidents reviewed in the case studies, receive support with their military, economic and political agendas; the current and future benefits associated with such agreements should logically far outweigh any exorbitant costs. Yet both the United States and Britain should be wary of the unsupervised status quo. Without some

⁶⁰ Brown, Gordon. Address to Joint Session of United States Congress. 4 March 2009.

give and take leeway expected of any successful partnership, Britain may find itself without the security provided by the United States, and America may find itself in turn without the support of its most common and consistent ally. The cases in the paper show that the events that have occurred in the past and have the potential to occur in the future can throw off that support and push the countries apart. The ramifications of a break in such an alliance have the potential to be disastrous for not only the preservation Anglo-American cultural norms and values but also for the well-being of the greater international system. If the potential costliness of agreements are not forgotten nor ignored by either of the two countries, however, then the special relationship between the English-speaking peoples on both sides of the Atlantic will continue to thrive and achieve great accomplishments far into the future.