

# EUI WORKING PAPERS

RSCAS No. 2004/22



A Bridge Too Far:  
The United Kingdom and the Transatlantic  
Relationship

William Wallace and Tim Oliver



**EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE**

Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies  
Transatlantic Programme Series

**EUI Working Paper RSCAS No. 2004/22**

**William Wallace and Tim Oliver, *A Bridge Too Far: The United Kingdom and the Transatlantic Relationship***

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**EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE, FLORENCE**  
**ROBERT SCHUMAN CENTRE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES**

*A Bridge Too Far:*  
*The United Kingdom and the Transatlantic Relationship*

**WILLIAM WALLACE AND TIM OLIVER**

EUI Working Paper **RSCAS** No. 2004/22  
**BADIA FIESOLANA, SAN DOMENICO DI FIESOLE (FI)**

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ISSN 1028-3625

© 2004 William Wallace and Tim Oliver

Printed in Italy in October 2004  
European University Institute  
Badia Fiesolana  
I – 50016 San Domenico di Fiesole (FI)  
Italy

<http://www.iue.it/RSCAS/publications/>

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## **Abstract**

For the past fifty years, British foreign policy has attempted to act as a 'bridge' between the continental European governments and US administrators. The end of the Cold War did not change this stance. First by John Major and more significantly by Tony Blair, British Prime Ministers continued to declare Britain's intent to remain 'at the heart of Europe' while also maintaining its 'special relationship' with the US. The period from September 11th 2001 to the invasion of Iraq, however, has severely shaken this concept as the British government has given its strong support to American policy. The argument of this chapter is that Prime Minister Blair's firm support came more from his personal conviction that Saddam Hussein's regime was a threat to global security than from his commitment to transatlantic cooperation under all circumstances. His support also resulted from the British preference for seeking influence within Washington through offering public support while moderating the direction of American policy through private criticism. Blair's double commitment to Europe and America, however, has created a diplomatic dilemma by deepening the level of distrust among its European partners about Britain's real intentions in the EU while also leaving its foreign policy success dependent on Washington's willingness to work with its NATO partners.

**Keywords:** transatlantic relations, British foreign policy, US-UK 'special relationship'

## **Introduction**

For the past fifty years, British foreign policy has attempted to act as a 'bridge' between continental European governments which (at least from the perspective of the British conventional wisdom) were parochial in their concerns, and US administrations which often forgot that their European allies had legitimately distinct interests. The end of the Cold War did not alter this stance. First John Major and then Tony Blair came into office declaring their intention to place Britain 'at the heart of Europe' while also attempting to maintain what they saw as a 'special relationship' with the United States.

Developments in the period from September 11, 2001 to the invasion of Iraq, and even more in the aftermath of that invasion, have severely shaken this concept of a special relationship and the whole idea of Britain as a bridge between Europe and the United States. The government—above all, Britain's strong-minded prime minister—gave strong support to American policy in Iraq; much of the prime minister's party, and a substantial segment of public opinion, equally strongly questioned the rationale for American pre-emption. The argument of this chapter is that Prime Minister Blair's firm support came more from his personal conviction that Saddam Hussein's regime was a threat to global security than from his commitment to transatlantic cooperation under all circumstances. It also derived from the settled British preference for seeking influence within Washington through offering public support and private criticism, in the hope of moderating the direction of American policy—to adopt a stance of 'Yes, but', in contradistinction to the French stance of 'No, unless'.

The political success of this strategy, however, depended upon visible evidence of British influence over US policy. President Bush's visit to Belfast, in April 2003, conveyed a strong message of American-British transatlantic solidarity; President Bush publicly promised that the UN would play 'a vital role' in the reconstruction of Iraq after the conflict, and assured his British counterparts that Washington would press forward with the 'Road Map' towards a settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Accumulating evidence in the year after the invasion, however, that Washington was not delivering on either of these concessions to British views and interests left the British government uncomfortably committed to an American strategy in the Middle East over which it appeared to have no influence. Britain's public support for the Bush administration, No. 10 recognized, also severely damaged other prime ministerial objectives in pursuing closer European cooperation. In the months after the invasion of Iraq, the British government attempted to rebuild relations with the French and German governments, above all on closer cooperation in defence. The depth of suspicion in Washington of French motives, however, and especially resistance within the US Department of Defense to any modification of NATO's dominant role in European security, suggested that there were many in Washington who wanted Britain to choose between its transatlantic and European links rather than to balance between them.

## **The 'English-Speaking Peoples' and the Special Relationship**

In the early postwar years British governments stayed apart from the European integration process despite US encouragement to become more directly involved. First the Truman administration and then the Eisenhower administration attempted to push the British into full participation in the institutionalized integration which—under American sponsorship and encouragement—France, Germany, the low countries and Italy were building.<sup>1</sup> The discovery that President Kennedy's incoming administration intended to pursue the same strategy was one of the factors that pushed Prime Minister Macmillan and his Conservative cabinet towards Britain's first application to join the European Communities, in 1961.

Britain's aloofness from continental integration in the 1950s stemmed from a number of different factors. Less than a generation earlier, Britain had maintained its independence—with American support—when Nazi Germany had overrun the continent as far as the English Channel. In the tense circumstances of 1949-50, with Communist forces invading South Korea and a visible threat that Red Army forces in central Europe might link up with supporters in western Europe and again overrun



France and the low countries, it seemed self-evidently unwise for a British government to submit its key coal and steel industries to a supranational authority based in Luxembourg. For example, a UK Chief of Staffs paper in 1950 discussed the possibility of maintaining a redoubt on the Iberian Peninsula in the event that the rest of western Europe should be overrun.<sup>2</sup> More generally, Britain was still an imperial power, with forces spread across the Mediterranean, the Middle East and ‘east of Suez.’ The Commonwealth and Empire were still seen as assets to Britain’s international standing, economy, and security, as they had proved during the Second World War. In contrast, relations with the European continent were seen as a necessary commitment but a continuing burden.

The United States had tipped the balance in continental conflicts which had threatened Britain twice in the previous forty years. By the end of the Second World War, the British war effort (and the British economy) had become desperately dependent on American support; but politically and militarily the Anglo-American relationship remained one in which British policy-makers saw themselves as valued junior partners, offering advice that was often taken, tempering the raw edges of American power with the nuances of Britain’s global experience. Winston Churchill spoke of Britain’s post-war role as resting on ‘Three Circles’ of global influence: transatlantic, Commonwealth and Empire, and Europe. For him, and for other British policy-makers, there was no doubt that Britain gained most from the first of these, and least from the third. Churchill’s efforts to re-imagine Britain’s place in the world included a two-volume *History of the English-Speaking Peoples*, linking Americans with Britons and the white emigrants of the British Commonwealth into a chain of free-minded people spreading the principles of constitutional democracy and law around the world.<sup>3</sup>

The United States carried immense prestige in Britain in the early 1950s as Britain’s main partner and ally (and since 1949 again with substantial forces in Britain), and as the symbol of modern culture, management, and innovation. The US, in British media and political discourse, was the land of the future; continental Europe, in contrast, with news of mass strikes and slow economic reconstruction, looked like the past. British diplomacy had played a central role in constructing the North Atlantic Alliance, in which Britain and the United States occupied privileged positions. Anglo-American cooperation in intelligence, under the terms of the 1947 UK-US Agreement on the same, was supplemented by naval cooperation and alliance on the ground in the Korean War. The development of US air bases in Britain, reopening wartime air force stations as staging posts to re-supply American forces in Germany as well as for conventional and nuclear bombers to deter a Soviet advance across Germany, made the UK a crucial factor in maintaining a link between the North American continent and the renewed US commitment to European defence. Britain thus provided, in effect, a geographic as well as political ‘bridge’ between the American and European continents, holding the newly-imagined Atlantic Community together.

The classic era of the ‘special relationship’, however, ended with the crisis over Suez in 1956. Anthony Eden, a British Prime Minister obsessed with maintaining Britain’s global role and with avoiding ‘another Munich’, negotiated a secret alliance with France and Israel to overthrow the nationalist-military regime in Egypt and thereby regain control of the Suez Canal, the linchpin of imperial Britain’s global military deployment.<sup>4</sup> But no one in London had consulted with their partners in Washington. President Eisenhower placed greater weight on maintaining the stability of the Arab Middle East than on support for Israel or for what seemed to be an ill-judged Anglo-French intervention; the Federal Reserve withdrew support for the pound sterling on the international exchanges, there followed a run on the pound, and British withdrawal from halfway along the Suez Canal Zone was accompanied by Eden’s resignation.

Both British and French political leaders drew the lesson from the Suez intervention that they could not sustain their pretensions to empire or to global standing with their own limited resources. Harold Macmillan, Eden’s successor as Prime Minister, took great care to re-establish a mutually-confident Anglo-American relationship, managing in 1957 to sign a series of agreements that gave Britain privileged access to American nuclear research and delivery systems, and the promise of continued close cooperation in foreign policy, military developments, and intelligence. This was a much more unequal ‘special relationship’, with Britain very clearly both the dependent partner and the partner

which gained most from the relationship. President de Gaulle, taking office after the collapse of the French Fourth Republic in 1957-8, attempted to claim a similar privileged position, alongside the US and Britain, within NATO; when this was denied him, he turned to Germany to supply the resources and the political support France alone lacked. Gaullist rhetoric from then on portrayed Britain and the United States as 'les Anglo-Saxons', outside Europe and opposed to European autonomy under French leadership. The British self-image of the UK as holding the two sides of the Atlantic together was thus countered by Gaullist France's insistence that the British had to choose.

Successive British governments nevertheless did their best to avoid any irrevocable choice between Atlantic and European linkages. Harold Macmillan's decision in 1961 to apply for EEC membership was paralleled by the Kennedy Administration's 'Grand Design' to reshape the Atlantic Community as a partnership with an enlarged EEC, within the wide framework of NATO and a reshaped OEEC/OECD. Both these initiatives were blocked by President de Gaulle, who saw Britain as a potential Trojan horse for American influence within European institutions.<sup>5</sup> Months of British haggling to protect Commonwealth economic interests in its accession negotiations, followed by the Nassau Agreement (which reaffirmed Britain's privileged relationship with the US in nuclear weapons and nuclear delivery systems), provided the justification for the French leader to dismiss the British application.

Macmillan's Labour successor as prime minister, Harold Wilson, renewed Britain's application in 1967, offering closer technological cooperation with France and Germany as an incentive; only to be again refused by an entrenched, and now evidently anti-American, President de Gaulle. Maintaining Britain's international balance became particularly difficult in the years following, as the US administration pressed Britain to contribute troops to the worsening war in Vietnam. Wilson skilfully played on the opposition within his own party and among the wider public to justify his refusal to send troops, as well as playing up the contribution Britain was making to containing radical regimes by protecting Malaya and Borneo from Indonesian infiltration. The British government did not withdraw its EEC application, using the framework of the otherwise redundant seven-member Western European Union for political consultations with the six EEC states (against the opposition of France). In 1970, Edward Heath's returning Conservative government was thus able to pick up Labour's preparations for negotiated entry, in the wake of de Gaulle's resignation in 1969. British-French bilateral discussions over the next two years included defence cooperation, even potential nuclear cooperation, and the British foreign secretary took part in the new framework for European foreign policy coordination, 'European Political Cooperation', well before the UK formally joined the European Communities in January 1973.

The British government thus faced from inside the EC the bitter Franco-American confrontation of 1973-4, which included Kissinger's 'Year of Europe' speech, the October Middle East war, the EC's launch of the Euro-Arab Dialogue and the Ottawa Agreement of June 1974. British diplomats took the lead in drafting a 'Declaration of European Identity' in the summer of 1973, in response to American demands that their European allies clarify their objectives in foreign policy cooperation. They followed the Americans into the new International Energy Agency, intended by Washington to strengthen western coordination in the face of threats from oil-producing states; but Britain joined with the French, too, in developing the Euro-Arab Dialogue. The Conservative government's ambivalence about the balance of commitments between transatlantic and European cooperation was succeeded in 1974 by an even more ambivalent Labour government, one that learned to value the advantages of foreign policy consultations with its continental partners but preferred to maintain sterling's global and dollar links rather than join France and Germany in launching the European Monetary System to stabilize their currencies.

## **The Legacy of Margaret Thatcher**

Margaret Thatcher did not enter office as prime minister either a confirmed Atlanticist or a settled sceptic about European integration. Her disillusionment with Edward Heath's approach as Conservative prime minister had much more to do with his acceptance of the 'corporatist' framework for British economic policy—in which ministers bargained with representatives of employers and

trade unions, and government subsidies supported key industries—than with his commitment to closer European cooperation. There was, of course, a link between these mindsets: the EC reflected, both in its institutions and its policies, the settled corporatism of continental economic governance to which both Christian Democrats and Social Democrats were committed, while the American economy was much closer to the economic liberalism which attracted Mrs. Thatcher. After the settlement of Britain's bitter dispute over the EC budget in 1984, there was a brief period of harmony during which her government entertained hopes of extending the tide of deregulation from Britain across the continent through the 1992 program and the Single European Act. It was not until her Bruges speech of September 1988 that Mrs. Thatcher set her face against what she saw as the entrenched corporatism and centralization of the Brussels institutions and their French and German supporters.<sup>6</sup>

Personal relations shape political affiliations, particularly when heads of government hold office for prolonged periods. It was a tragedy that Thatcher and Chancellor Kohl, who shared many common interests and attitudes, developed such a disastrously poor relationship; Kohl's efforts to build a personal rapport, and to explain to Mrs. Thatcher the particularities of German politics, only made the relationship worse.<sup>7</sup> In contrast, her relations with President Reagan rapidly became close, and grew closer over the eight years of his presidency—in spite of occasional sharp disagreements, as over the American failure to inform their British allies about their October 1983 intervention in Grenada, a former British colony and member of the Commonwealth. Thatcher and Reagan shared a robust approach to east-west relations, a commitment to free market economics, and a direct political style that contrasted with the indirection and compromise characterizing the coalition politics of continental governments and multilateral European negotiations. On coming into presidential office in January 1989, however, George Bush Sr. signalled his determination not to listen to Mrs. Thatcher with the same patience Ronald Reagan had displayed. His first European visitor was Chancellor Kohl, later described by President Bush as 'a true friend [...] a statesman of the highest order.'<sup>8</sup> It was the close US-German partnership that successfully negotiated the reunification of Germany with the Soviet Union, while the British government resisted from the sidelines.

In her last two years in office, Margaret Thatcher grew increasingly antagonistic to Europe in general, and to Germany in particular. Senior members of her cabinet grew increasingly unhappy about her loss of transatlantic balance. Her negative approach to German reunification followed her instinctive resistance to closer monetary integration. Michael Heseltine's 1990 challenge for the Tory leadership rested partly on the case for more positive engagement with Britain's European partners; a deeply divided Conservative Party thereupon chose not Heseltine but John Major, seen as a potential reconciler of pro- and anti-European factions within the party.

Mrs. Thatcher's political legacy included a Conservative Party with a 'Thatcherite' wing that was now strongly anti-European, that had developed close links during the 1980s with the rising think tanks of America's Republican right, and that shared the latter's views on free market economics and on an American-led western alliance. Partly in response to this, the opposition Labour Party shifted from a strongly anti-European (and anti-American) stance in the early 1980s to a more open approach to European integration, which was now seen as a social-democratic enterprise with which British Labour politicians and trade union leaders could be comfortable. The balance of British domestic politics, however, had been tipped in the opposite direction by changes in the ownership of British print media. Mrs. Thatcher had encouraged Rupert Murdoch's acquisition of the *Sun*, *The Times*, the *News of the World* and the *Sunday Times*, altogether some forty percent of British national newspaper circulation, which played a crucial role in breaking the power of the unions over the British press; but it also brought into British politics a more combative style of journalism that combined a commitment to open markets with deep antagonism to the regulatory regimes of the EC/EU. Together with the entrenched nationalism of the *Daily Mail* and the transfer of the *Daily Telegraph* from the traditionally-Conservative Berry family to the Canadian Conrad Black, a devotee of the Commonwealth and the idea of the English-speaking peoples who was also close to Reagan's White House, this built a pro-American and anti-European bias into British politics.

On a wider front, changing religious factors within the UK were impacting on Britain's approach to the Middle East. Margaret Thatcher's north London parliamentary seat was Finchley, which contained one of the highest proportions of Jewish voters in Britain. The leaders of Britain's Jewish community, though deeply committed to Israel, had however been closer to Israel's Labour elite than to the Likud governments of the 1980s; there were many doubts among its political leaders about the expansionist policies of the Israeli right and about their actions in the occupied West Bank. Conservatives in Britain were also attempting to attract votes from within Britain's now substantial and socially conservative Muslim community (though the overwhelming majority of Britain's 1.5 million Muslims, as is typical of recent immigrants starting with little, voted for the Labour Party). A growing number of wealthy Arabs were acquiring second homes in southern England, becoming a major force within British horse-racing and a visible presence within London's social and financial elites. Religious affiliation among Britain's new right was high-church Anglican or, rejecting the liberal trend within the Church of England, Roman Catholic; with few exceptions, the British Conservative Party was drifting away from the strict Protestantism of Ulster Unionism, the closest movement in the United Kingdom to the evangelical churches of the American south. There was thus no strong constituency within Britain for the strong pro-Israeli image of Middle Eastern politics that developed within the United States in these years.

John Major, Mrs. Thatcher's successor as Prime Minister, attempted to recapture the traditional sense of balance between Britain's continuing transatlantic loyalties and its growing engagement with Germany, France and institutionalized Europe. 'My aims for Britain in the Community can be simply stated,' he declared in March 1991: 'I want us to be where we belong—at the very heart of Europe, working with our partners in building the future.'<sup>9</sup> Chancellor Kohl went out of his way to cultivate this new face in European conservative politics, hoping to extend the established Franco-German partnership into a triangular relationship with Britain. With Lady Thatcher (as she had now become) still in the background, however, proclaiming a sharpened message of Atlantic solidarity and European perfidiousness to British and American audiences, he found it increasingly difficult to maintain his preferred course. The Euro-sceptic 'bastards' in his Cabinet, as he bitterly described them, held him back from playing the European role to which he aspired.<sup>10</sup> In the final stages of negotiating the Maastricht Treaty of European Union, in December 1991, he felt it necessary to phone Michael Howard, then Secretary of State for Employment in his own Cabinet, to check the acceptability of the terms he proposed with his party's Thatcherite wing.<sup>11</sup> His second administration limped to its end in 1997 unable to agree on the British position towards the next EU Inter-governmental Conference, and with other EU governments delaying the conclusion of what became the Amsterdam Treaty until after the British election.

The Anglo-American special relationship after Margaret Thatcher, and after the Cold War, retained special elements in military and intelligence matters. The United Kingdom provided a fully equipped armoured division for the US-led force which expelled Saddam Hussein from Kuwait in 1991, more than any other NATO ally. French efforts to match Britain's contribution exposed shortages of deployable troops and equipment, providing a smaller French division for the allied forces' northern flank. Prime Minister Major led in committing troops to northern Iraq, after the conflict, to protect Iraqi Kurds from Saddam Hussein. The British government's touch was less sure in handling the disintegration of Yugoslavia, on which the Bush Administration had signaled that this was a crisis for its European allies to manage. Anti-Europeans within the Major cabinet insisted that this was better left to continental powers; hesitant intervention saw Britain first refuse to commit troops, and then contribute troops (alongside France and others) to a UN force, before uncomfortably acquiescing to American-led negotiation between the parties to the conflict in the Dayton conference of November 1995.

Experience of fighting alongside French forces in Bosnia had, however, tipped attitudes within the British military towards pursuing closer cooperation with France. Michael Portillo as Minister of Defence, though formally a 'Euro-sceptic', agreed to establish a joint Air Wing with his French counterparts in 1995. The British government had attempted to reconcile closer European cooperation in foreign policy and defence with the continued superiority of the NATO framework since the end of

the Cold War and the negotiation of the Maastricht Treaty. Relations between London and Washington cooled with the election of a Democratic president, exacerbated by allegations (firmly denied) that the British government had assisted Republican efforts during the campaign to investigate Bill Clinton's behaviour as a student in Oxford during the Vietnam War. From 1993-7, therefore, the Conservative government found itself without close and confident partners on either side of the Atlantic.

## New Labour and Old Europe

When the Labour Party regained office, in May 1997, it had been out of power for eighteen years. Few of its senior members had previous experience of office; its new prime minister had not been elected to Parliament until 1983. Tony Blair and many of those around him were marked by their recollections of the early 1980s: an unelectable Labour Party, ideologically anti-American and anti-European, dominated by unwieldy party activists and unable to reach out to a wider electorate. 'New Labour' was a self-conscious break with Labour's past; Blair's efforts to 'modernize' his party, building on the more cautious efforts of his two predecessors, led him to adopt a style both in domestic and foreign policy that sometimes pitched him explicitly against the language and instincts of his own party members. In particular, his style of leadership tolerated little dissent, especially in contentious areas such as foreign policy.<sup>12</sup>

Most traumatic for the party leadership had been their unexpected failure to win the 1992 general election against a divided and uncertain Conservative Government, the third campaign they had fought since they had lost office in 1979. Murdoch's press claim that 'It woz the *Sun* wot won it'<sup>13</sup> for the Conservatives against the earlier trend of the election campaign led Tony Blair to cultivate Rupert Murdoch in person, flying to his island retreat in Australia in July 1995 to assure him that Labour would abandon its plans to reduce Murdoch's *News International's* position within the British media.<sup>14</sup> The Labour leadership was cautious in its whole presentation of policy between 1992 and 1997, traumatized by its 1992 defeat and uncertain that it could guarantee victory in the next election. Blair was clear that the anti-Americanism of 'old Labour' had cost it support in the media and among uncommitted voters; its past reputation for instinctive anti-Americanism now required it to keep as closely in step with the White House as possible. Close relations with the Clinton White House were, however, easy to develop. The success of the Clinton campaign in projecting a moderate image to uncommitted voters provided a model of the 'Third Way' that Blair and his advisers sought to promote: a Third Way between free market economics and corporatist social democracy, that was also implicitly for New Labour a middle path between Atlanticism and commitment to European integration.<sup>15</sup>

While in opposition Blair had put explicit emphasis on his party's regained European credentials. As he told the 1994 Labour Conference, the first after he became party leader, 'I will never allow this party to be isolated or left behind in Europe.'<sup>16</sup> Labour's manifesto for the 1997 general election stressed cooperation within Europe, together with 'strong support for NATO', but said more about the future of the Commonwealth than about relations with the United States—or about policy towards the Middle East. Labour's first efforts in office were to differentiate itself from its predecessor by setting out an 'ethical foreign policy', oriented beyond the Euro-Atlantic world: emphasizing human rights, tighter controls on arms sales, and the re-establishment of a separate Department for International Development.<sup>17</sup>

Tony Blair personally found it easy to be at home on both sides of the Atlantic. He was the first British prime minister since Harold Macmillan to speak good French, a legacy from student days in Paris. While the French Socialist prime minister, Lionel Jospin, was suspicious of the centrist credentials of the Third Way, the German Social Democrats looked to the incoming Labour government to be allies in building a broad international consensus for a 'modernizing' agenda. The Clinton White House loved debating broad ideas; a succession of Third Way seminars and 'think-ins' (or 'wonkathons', as a White House spokesman once called them) on both sides of the Atlantic from 1997-9 built closer relations among centre-left parties and their leaders. Time was even found to discuss the Third Way at NATO's fiftieth-anniversary celebrations.

The key issue that underpinned Third Way debates was globalization and how it was transforming domestic politics. The Third Way, however, did not give much guidance on the hard questions of foreign policy outside Europe, particularly towards the intractable issues of the Middle East region. On relations between Israel and Palestine, there was a broad consensus across British politics that a two-state solution was the only acceptable outcome, that Jewish settlements across the West Bank and Gaza should be withdrawn, and that Britain and its European partners should play a role in assisting the development of a Palestinian state alongside Israel. The British press gave sympathetic coverage to Palestinian as well as Israeli perspectives; right-wing Americans protested that there was now a structural bias against Israel within the British media.<sup>18</sup> Meanwhile, British forces continued to operate in the Gulf region following the Iraqi expulsion from Kuwait in 1991, helping to enforce UN sanctions against Saddam Hussein's regime in close cooperation with US air forces. This reflected the settled assumption of the previous Conservative government that Britain should demonstrate its value to Washington as its most loyal and militarily capable ally wherever possible, outside the NATO area as well as within it. This was not an assumption that Labour challenged on its return to office.

Tony Blair had little experience of foreign policy before he became Prime Minister. But he had a deeply moral view of world politics, derived partly from his personal religious faith, from which he developed in office a strongly-held vision of Britain's responsibilities in the world. He set out his approach most explicitly in a speech delivered in Chicago in April 1999, in the context of the contested western intervention in Kosovo, in which the British government was arguing for military commitment on the ground against American preference for air bombardment and limited commitment on the ground.

This is a just war, based not on any territorial ambitions but on values. We cannot let the evil of ethnic cleansing stand. We must not rest until it is reversed. We have learned twice before in this century that appeasement does not work. If we let an evil dictator range unchallenged, we will have to spill infinitely more blood and treasure to stop him later.

In facing this and other challenges, he went on to say,

The EU and US should prepare to make real step-change in working more closely together. Recent trade disputes have been a bad omen in this regard. We really are failing to see the bigger picture with disputes over the banana regime or [aero engine] hushkits or whatever else. There are huge issues at stake in our co-operation. The EU and the US need each other and need to put that relationship above arguments that are ultimately not fundamental [...]

Many of our problems have been caused by two dangerous and ruthless men—Saddam Hussein and Slobodan Milosevic. Both have been prepared to wage vicious campaigns against sections of their own community. As a result of these destructive policies both have brought calamity on their own peoples. Instead of enjoying its oil wealth Iraq has been reduced to poverty, with political life stultified through fear [...]

America's allies are always both relieved and gratified by its continuing readiness to shoulder burdens and responsibilities that come with its sole superpower status. We understand that this is something that we have no right to take for granted, and must match with our own efforts. That is the basis for the recent initiative I took with President Chirac of France to improve Europe's own defence capabilities [...]

For the first time in the last three decades we have a government that is both pro-Europe and pro-American. I firmly believe that it is in Britain's interest, but it is also in the interests of the US and of Europe.<sup>19</sup>

This was a foreign policy program that encouraged and supported American military engagement in support of ambitions that were far beyond Britain's capability to achieve. It also expressed renewed confidence that the European and American dimensions of British foreign policy could be reconciled, that there was a continuing community of values across the Atlantic, and that Britain was well placed to hold the two sides together in promoting those shared values in an unstable world. Finally, it was a definition of foreign policy framed in ethical terms and explicitly opposed to Saddam Hussein's regime, provided some four years before George W. Bush assumed office. But reconciling these different ambitions was never likely to prove easy. In particular, Britain had moved away from France and Germany the previous year in supporting the US on the withdrawal of UN arms inspectors from

Iraq (in the face of active obstruction of their efforts), together with a tightening of the sanctions regime and an increase in air patrolling and in the suppression of hostile air defences across Iraq.

The evidence suggests that Blair had been convinced by the intelligence reports to which he gained access as prime minister that the Iraqi regime—and Saddam Hussein as its dominating figure—was a threat to world order, and had to be contained. Paddy Ashdown, then the leader of the British Liberal Democrats, was closely consulted by Blair on the Kosovo intervention; he recalls in his diaries a talk with Blair in November 1997 where all he could talk about was Saddam and weapons of mass destruction. ‘I have now seen some of the [intelligence] stuff on this. It really is pretty scary. He is very close to some appalling weapons of mass destruction. I don’t understand why the French and other [sic] don’t understand this. We cannot let him get away with it. The world thinks this is gamesmanship. But it’s deadly serious.’<sup>20</sup> Compared to his European counterparts Blair, and the British Government, saw in these reports a growing threat; a perception shared with the United States, with whom the sharing and gathering of information was still based upon the UK-US Agreement on Intelligence Cooperation.

In this perception of the Iraqi regime as a threat the Prime Minister was well ahead of his party, and of much of his own government. The ‘old’ left of the Labour Party was anti-imperialist by instinct and suspicious of attempts to forcibly impose western values on the regimes of developing countries. Though it had been his foreign secretary, Robin Cook, who had launched the concept of an ethical foreign policy in the summer of 1997, Blair’s Chicago speech was prepared in the Prime Minister’s Office, with scarcely any consultation with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on the other side of Downing Street. Blair’s foreign policy style was intensely personal. Important initiatives were led from within the Prime Minister’s Office; here, as in other areas of Labour policy, the Cabinet as a collective entity played little part.<sup>21</sup> The Prime Minister depended on his own rhetorical skills to carry his party with him, devoting a major part of his speech to the Labour Party conference in October 2000 to justifying the stance he had taken in foreign policy as he argued to his activists that ‘standing up for Britain means knowing we are stronger with the US if we are stronger in Europe, and stronger in Europe if we are stronger with the US.’<sup>22</sup>

The balancing initiative which demonstrated Blair’s commitment to closer European cooperation came in the autumn of 1998, when he introduced a number of proposals on closer defence cooperation at an informal meeting of EU heads of government, and followed those with a bilateral initiative with President Chirac at St. Malo. Building on the positive experience of Franco-British cooperation on the ground in Bosnia, the two leaders proposed to bridge the longstanding gap between British loyalty to NATO and French commitment to European military autonomy by promoting closer EU defence cooperation within the wider NATO framework. Reactions in Washington reflected the entrenched suspicion of French motivations that marked the US defence establishment. British participation provided some reassurance to US policy-makers, and British negotiators made sure that their American counterparts were kept fully informed as the initiative moved forward. The Vienna European Council in December 1998 welcomed the proposals, and the Helsinki European Council the following December agreed a set of targets for a future European Rapid Reaction Force, together with a small military staff attached to the EU Council Secretariat.<sup>23</sup>

Like John Major before him, however, Tony Blair found it difficult to maintain a balance which involved as full a commitment to closer European cooperation as to Atlantic solidarity. He had fewer Eurosceptics in his party, certainly, but the press which he cultivated was largely North American by ownership and affiliation, and maintained its long-established anti-European bias. It would have required a sustained political effort to alter British public attitudes to the European Union; the bitter antagonism of Mrs. Thatcher’s final years as Prime Minister had been sustained by her supporters in the Conservative Party and the press since then. But there was no equivalent to the Chicago speech in Paris or Berlin; the Prime Minister felt inhibited by the hostility of the media from spelling out a British vision for European integration. Similar caution about public reaction had led the incoming government to rule out reversing Conservative opt-outs on the Schengen Agreement, which lifted internal border controls within EU states, and on proposals for monetary union, now moving ahead

towards the introduction of a single currency. The 1998 defence initiative was therefore vital to demonstrate that the Labour Government differed from its predecessor in its approach to the European continent—and that Labour ministers had to tread delicately between the mutual suspicions of Washington and Paris.

Divergent developments in the American and continental European economies also pulled Labour ministers—and British opinion—back towards a transatlantic orientation. The contrast between the dynamism of the US economy in the late 1990s and slow growth in Germany, France and Italy reinforced old images of America as the future and Europe the past. British investment flowed into North America, while continental governments resisted deregulation and foreign ownership; indeed, the successful takeover of Mannesman by Britain's Vodafone caused a political furore in Germany. While Peter Mandelson, Blair's confidante within the government on the Third Way, cultivated links with social democrats in Germany and the Netherlands, Gordon Brown as Chancellor of the Exchequer was becoming increasingly critical of European economic governance and vocally enthusiastic about American patterns of innovation. Just as Margaret Thatcher had attempted to carry her Anglo-Saxon agenda of deregulation onto the European level, so Blair and Brown pressed their continental colleagues to accept the so-called 'Lisbon Agenda', agreed at a European Council under the Portuguese presidency in 2000, 'to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion', by 2010.<sup>24</sup>

### September 11th and After

Blair's government had learned from the Major government's mistakes during the 1992 presidential election campaign; British officials had made contacts with the Bush team during the campaign, and worked on the assumption of continuing good relations as the new administration prepared to take office. The Blair government was committed to maintaining a stable balance between the USA and Europe, whatever administrations and governments came and went. Poor personal relations with Chirac had not been allowed to damage the Franco-British partnership beyond repair; anticipated difficulties with incoming Republicans should similarly be managed.

There was nevertheless much initial suspicion about the Bush administration within the British elite, and even considerable criticism within the press. Neoconservatives who had visited London in the months before the new administration took office had made it clear that they had no sentimental attachment to Britain, and that the British government would be judged by how loyally it followed the vigorously-asserted American line.<sup>25</sup> The controversy over the election outcome strengthened the doubts of those within the Labour Party who were in any event both happier and more familiar with a Democratic administration. Washington's unilateralist rhetoric unsettled a government that was deeply committed to multilateral cooperation and international institutions; dismissal of the Kyoto Protocol on global warming, and renewed commitment to missile defence, added to the dismay. Prime Minister Blair was determined, however, to ensure that good relations were established with the new president and his team, even using the good offices of an old school friend, Bill Gammell, who had gone into the oil industry and become an acquaintance of George W. Bush, to ease initial exchanges.<sup>26</sup>

The two leaders' first meeting, at Camp David in February 2001, was not easy; but the British team had prepared carefully, and the prime minister appears to have returned to London reinforced in the view that a British voice within Washington was needed to moderate the American approach to world politics. The aggressive responses of successive EU heads of government to President Bush on climate change at the EU/US summit in Gothenburg in June 2001 made clear that transatlantic understanding would not be easy. Plainly, Britain's 'bridge' function would be even more necessary to hold European and American leaders together as this new administration settled in.

Transatlantic relations were immediately transformed by the events of September 11. Other European governments were as vigorous as the British in offering support and sympathy; for the first time, their assembled representatives within NATO invoked Article Five of the Atlantic Treaty, doing so on behalf of the United States. In keeping with Britain's established role as America's most



dependable ally, British forces were mobilized in support of the US intervention in Afghanistan. British Special Forces operated with US counterparts; British air-tankers provided re-fuelling to a substantial segment of aircraft from the US carrier fleets; a Royal Navy task force comprising the aircraft carrier HMS *Illustrious*, an amphibious assault ship, two other warships, three submarines armed with cruise missiles, and seven auxiliary vessels was deployed to the Indian Ocean; and over 1800 UK troops led and coordinated the initial deployment of ISAF.<sup>27</sup> Here Britain was ahead of other European governments, but not alone: French forces were also on offer to the Americans, and Special Forces from several European states, including Germany, were deployed in Afghanistan.<sup>28</sup>

As has now become clear, the trauma of September 11 enabled the hawks within the Bush Administration to pursue a larger pre-existing, neo-conservative agenda: the remaking of the Middle East, including regime change in Iraq followed also by Iran and Syria. So it was that President Bush's State of the Union message in January 2002 identified Iraq and Iran, with North Korea, as part of an 'axis of evil'. For his part, Tony Blair did not need convincing of the need to tackle Iraq. He had, after all, been convinced of the Iraqi threat to world order over the previous years and had actively engaged the UK in limited armed conflict against Iraq in Operation Desert Fox. But the rest of his government, his party and his public—who had not been party to the intelligence reports or their interpretation—were much less convinced that now was the time to force regime change on Iraq.

A key difficulty in approaching war in Iraq lay with the Prime Minister's style of government and managing of foreign policy. Like Thatcher, a previous dominant Prime Minister, Blair has had a distant relationship with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, though his staff in Downing Street included a number of people from the Diplomatic Service. During the Iraq war the UK did not have an Ambassador in Washington, with most contact run on a Downing St-White House link. While distant from the FCO machine, the PM did have the full support of the Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw.<sup>29</sup> The rest of the Cabinet was marginally involved. Full Cabinets have little time for broad discussion, but there was little attempt to open informed discussions in cabinet committees. The Ministerial Committee on Intelligence was by-passed and never met in the run-up to Iraq. There were only occasional Defence and Overseas Policy Committee Meetings. That Blair kept information and decisions to himself and the small group of people who surround him has become a recurring theme in criticisms of his administration. This situation led the Prime Minister's Office to promote a case for solidarity with the US in moving towards intervention in Iraq based upon incomplete reports and inadequate intelligence, relying on management of the press and of Parliament to carry its case.

When Blair and Bush met at the latter's ranch in Texas in early April 2002, the president made it clear that he intended to intervene militarily in Iraq; and the prime minister made it clear (privately) that he would commit the British to the same objective.<sup>30</sup> But the Blair and the Bush administration agendas were nevertheless different; and the modifications to US rhetoric and to the rationale it presented for intervention that Blair needed to carry a reluctant party and public only accentuated those differences. US officials were comfortable with sidelining the UN, brushing aside the inspection process, and being seen as bringing democracy to the Middle East. Downing Street, on the other hand, needed legitimization for intervention through the UN, and visible efforts to revive the Middle East peace process in order to carry domestic support and to keep lines open to its continental partners.

The prime minister had invested a good deal of political time and capital in building a relationship of trust with this Republican administration; after September 11 he gained increasing popularity and prestige within the US as a leader who stood four-square alongside the Americans, and indeed one who could articulate the case for standing up to terrorists more fluently than their president. But the US administration appears to have done little to make it easier for Blair to carry his own government or his country behind him. In a divided administration, the reasonable case that Colin Powell could make for British listeners was repeatedly undermined by others in the Pentagon and elsewhere.<sup>31</sup> It remains unclear whether Donald Rumsfeld's suggestion in March 2003 that the US would be willing to go ahead without the British, was intended to be helpful. The 'Quartet' initiative on Arab-Israeli peace negotiations had Powell's commitment, alongside Javier Solana on behalf of the EU (and the UN and the Russians); but Powell did

not represent the consensus of the Bush Administration on relations with Israel, and counter-pressures from the Christian right on Republican Party strategists and Congressmen were strong.

The State Department and Colin Powell were willing to try to build multilateral support through the UN, so helping the British to maintain a dialogue with the sceptical French and other European governments. But, again, Powell's position was repeatedly undermined from elsewhere within Washington by harsher language and explicit commitment to remove Saddam Hussein, whatever the UN Security Council might say.<sup>32</sup> Resolution 1441 was the best that the State Department and the British government could achieve in building a Security Council consensus; the ambiguities built into this multilateral compromise, however, left much room for American hawks on one side, and French and German leaders on the other, to interpret in contradictory fashion, with the UN inspectors caught in between.

So it was that the British government slipped towards presenting a case for intervention in Iraq that was based on evidence it knew to be thin, to justify support for an American administration that wanted to intervene for different reasons. From this difficult position Blair found himself facing a series of repeated crises and dilemmas. The 'doctored dossier'—the February 2003 'Iraq—its infrastructure of concealment, deception and intimidation'—was shown to have been plagiarised from various sources, most notably from a Californian student's thesis. Blair's Cabinet was sidelined by a Prime Minister who increasingly consulted with a small cadre of top officials and advisors. The Labour Parliamentary party was also uneasy at the lack of reliable evidence, with some rebel MPs seeing in the situation an opportunity to oust Blair as party leader and Prime Minister. In the end the whole untidy process led to the resignation of two Cabinet Ministers (Robin Cook, former Foreign Secretary and then Leader of the House of Commons, and Clare Short, Secretary of State for International Development), to the largest back-bench rebellion the Labour government had ever suffered, and to the suicide of Dr David Kelly, an expert on weapons of mass destruction within the Ministry of Defence, and two official inquiries. The British government went to war in Iraq alongside its American allies; but it went with a deeply divided country and a crisis in relations with its European neighbours. Estimates of the numbers of people who marched on February 3, 2003 against a British intervention in Iraq range from 750,000 to two million—perhaps the largest demonstration that London had ever seen. Local Labour parties were reporting losses of members.

Relations were just as uneasy with the continental governments which New Labour had attempted to cultivate over the previous five years. The German Social Democrats, who had followed domestic public opinion in taking an increasingly hostile line on US policy towards Iraq in the 2002 election campaign, had moved from their earlier friendly relations with British Labour to renewed Franco-German partnership. Schröder had visited London soon after his re-election to discuss transatlantic differences with Blair, but the British Prime Minister could not bridge the gulf between American imperatives and German doubts. Indeed, his assurance to President Bush that he could bring Schröder and the Germans onboard, and his subsequent failure to do this, displayed the problems inherent in his belief that he could act as a bridge across the Atlantic.<sup>33</sup> Franco-British relations were also stormy. The relationship between Blair and Chirac was never easy; Chirac saw Blair as a rival as much as a potential partner.<sup>34</sup> Nor had Blair achieved a good relationship with the French socialist leader and Prime Minister Lionel Jospin. The defeat of Jospin in the French presidential elections of 2002 and the ending of 'co-habitation' resulted in a more self-confident Chirac, determined to assert French interests in Gaullist style. Events reached a climax at a Brussels EU summit in October 2002 when Blair and Chirac clashed angrily, and publicly, after Blair challenged a Franco-German agreement on CAP reform. As a consequence of 'Le row', as it became known, Chirac cancelled the annual Franco-British summit due to be held at Le Touquet.<sup>35</sup> The following January France and Germany marked the fortieth anniversary of the Elysée treaty with a grand celebration. The Franco-German axis which Blair had worked so assiduously to break now appeared to be alive and kicking, and kicking in the direction of 'les Anglo-Saxons'.

A meeting to discuss defence in Brussels in April 2003 between France, Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg, again signalled the idea of an alternative to NATO and transatlantic co-operation. However, Britain, France and Germany were at the same time developing a trilateral relationship over

defence and foreign policy issues. Similarly, the EU's draft 'Security Strategy Document',<sup>36</sup> circulated in June 2003, reflected French and British perspectives on a more active and more global approach to foreign policy. While British and French leaders clashed on transatlantic relations and Iraq, their officials nevertheless continued to discuss the creation of a common European armaments agency, and cooperation in the design and building of aircraft carriers. These developments were all set against the impending enlargement of the European Union and the entry of mainly pro-NATO and pro-American eastern European states. 'New Europe', as US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld termed them, very much included the UK, set against the 'Old Europe' of a Franco-German axis.

Within the UK the situation for Blair did not remain easy. The failure to locate weapons of mass destruction—the whole basis upon which Blair had justified military action against Iraq—has plagued him more than it has the Bush administration, which saw and presented the Iraq war as more than just about WMD. The Hutton Inquiry into the suicide of Dr David Kelly—a UK weapons expert who had given an unauthorised interview to a BBC reporter during which he apparently stated that intelligence on WMD had been 'sexed up' by Downing St—cleared the Prime Minister and those around him, but left a negative impression of the style with which the PM and the government had approached the war in Iraq.<sup>37</sup> Not long after the publication of the Hutton Report, Blair established the 'Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction', commissioned in February 2004 and chaired by Lord Butler; it was established to investigate the way intelligence material was gathered and why no weapons of mass destruction had been found.<sup>38</sup> Yet it was so tightly circumscribed in its objectives that the Liberal Democrats refused to participate and the Conservatives withdrew after only a few weeks. In such a context President Bush's visit to London in November 2003 was viewed with great trepidation by those in Westminster. Such has been the unease with appearing too close to President Bush that the Prime Minister has not yet found the time to collect his Congressional Medal of Honor.

Throughout the lead-up to war Blair had sought three assurances from Bush: that the reconstruction of Iraq would be handled in an effective, efficient and responsible way; that post-war Iraq would involve the UN; and finally that Bush would address the Israel-Palestine issue. To manage an effective reconstruction of Iraq the man the Pentagon put in charge was retired Lieutenant-General Jay Garner, whose main area of expertise was missile defence. Widespread looting and increased lawlessness signalled an almost complete collapse in state apparatus and civil society. The increasing number of attacks against US and allied forces, and the lack of US military capabilities or preparation for handling this, revealed the Pentagon's failure to plan for post-war reconstruction.

On the second point of involving the UN early indications were that the US would do so. When President Bush visited Belfast, in a political gesture to his most important ally in April 2003, he spoke of a 'vital role' for the UN, stating 'vital role' no less than eight times in one press conference. But this does not appear to be what the Pentagon wanted, and the UN was given only an auxiliary role before the attack on its Baghdad headquarters led to an effective withdrawal. This has been particularly difficult for Blair who from the beginning was keen to maintain the principles of multilateral support and of legitimation through UN approval and engagement.

It was on Israel-Palestine that Blair initially appeared to have made some progress. However, the state of the 'Middle East Roadmap' as it stands today leaves this looking like an empty gain. President Bush's approval in April 2004 of the Israeli plan for withdrawal from Gaza effectively discarded the Roadmap that Blair thought he had helped commit Bush to. It was this change in approach to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict that provoked 52 retired prominent British diplomats to write an open letter to the Prime Minister, stating their frustration at the approach he was taking. The letter, which many felt reflected the opinions of the majority of the British diplomatic community, criticised the approach taken to Iraq and how 'the conduct of the war in Iraq has made it clear that there was no effective plan for the post-Saddam settlement.' It further criticised the level of force employed in countering resistance, noting the use of 'heavy weapons unsuited to the task in hand.' It urged the Prime Minister to take a more determined approach to the policies of the United States with which the UK disagreed. It concluded:

We share your view that the British Government has an interest in working as closely as possible with the US on both these related issues [Iraq and Israel-Palestine], and in exerting real influence as a loyal ally. We believe that the need for such influence is now a matter of the highest urgency. If that is unacceptable or unwelcome there is no case for supporting policies which are doomed to failure.<sup>39</sup>

### **Is Transatlantic Balance still Possible?**

Like so many other British Prime Ministers since the Second World War, Tony Blair has become increasingly preoccupied by foreign policy. In six years he has committed British forces to Operation Desert Fox, Kosovo, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan and the 2003 Iraq war. Such a preoccupation has presented similarly numerous problems. His commitment to a multilateral international order, his determination to play a more positive role in European politics, and his pursuit of a close partnership with the US have never knitted together as neatly as he would like. In particular his double commitment to Europe and America has impaled him on the horns of the diplomatic dilemma that has caught so many British PMs before him. On the one hand the historical relationship with the US has brought significant gains, but the experience of Iraq calls into question how much longer this is sustainable when little is given in return by the Americans. The Europeans, on the other hand, have been divided and frequently portrayed as weak, with euroscepticism remaining a strong impulse in British domestic political debate.

While Blair did not need much convincing over the case to attack Iraq, the British public did. Fewer argued the case for military action more passionately and compellingly than he did. His belief in his abilities to convince led him to engage in discussions at every level and subject himself to intense criticism. For Clare Short, who resigned as Secretary of State for International Development, Blair saw the issue of WMD as an 'honourable deception'.<sup>40</sup> While his role as an 'ambassador', often putting the argument more forcefully than anybody from the US, gave him access to the White House, he often appeared to be taking responsibility for things he could not control. We have already noted how with the Americans he failed to secure a commitment to the United Nations being fully involved; its increasing involvement only coming to pass because of the problems the US and the UK have faced in the day to day running of Iraq. In doing so he endangered his leadership, his government and encouraged rebellion within his own party. The price paid was to inject a further level of distrust with the French and other European partners about Britain's real intentions in the EU. It destroyed any real chance of his winning a referendum on the euro in the near future; furthermore, the referendum on the EU constitution to which he agreed in early 2004 in order to take the wind out of the sails of the Conservative campaign for the European elections looked an insuperable task. The European elections in June 2004 saw significant gains for the UK Independence Party, committed to taking Britain out of the EU. The European dimension of Blair's foreign policy now seemed as unpopular with the public as the American.

Blair remains committed to the concept of Britain as a 'bridge' across the Atlantic; he does not appear to consider this concept as irrecoverably damaged by the events of 2003. However, as former British Foreign Secretary, Sir Malcolm Rifkind, pointed out, 'any bridge will be very unstable if it leans too much in one direction.'<sup>41</sup> Gerhard Schröder similarly noted that traffic across the bridge nearly always seemed to be in one direction.<sup>42</sup> Playing this bridging role is becoming increasingly difficult, with its success depending on the attitude of Washington towards working with other members as key partners and through NATO as a whole. In the aftermath of the Iraq war and occupation, it looks unlikely that Washington elites will attach sufficient importance to partnership with European governments to be willing to modify American foreign policy, however active British ministers and officials may be in attempting to persuade them that this is worthwhile.

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## Notes:

- 1 Geir Lundestad, 1998. *'Empire' by Integration: The United States and European Integration, 1945-1997*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- 2 See Paul Cornish, 1995. 'The British Military view of European Security 1945-50', in: Anne Deighton (ed.), *Building Post-War Europe: National Decision-Makers and European Institutions, 1948-63*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- 3 Winston Churchill, 1956-58. *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples*. London: Cassell.
- 4 Eden, as foreign secretary in 1938, had had direct experience of the Munich Agreement and its consequences, unlike the many policy-makers since then who have evoked the image of Munich to justify their behaviour in other crises.
- 5 Alfred Grosser, 1980. *The Western Alliance*. London: Macmillan, pp. 199-208.
- 6 Margaret Thatcher, 1993. *The Downing St Years*. London: Harper Collins, pp. 742-6.
- 7 Thatcher, *The Downing St Years*, p. 257.
- 8 George Bush on the selection of Helmut Kohl as the first recipient of the 'George Bush Award for Public Service', Berlin, November 1999.
- 9 Speech given at the Adenauer Haus in Bonn, March 1991.
- 10 See 'Major Hits Out at Cabinet', *The Observer*, July 25, 1993.
- 11 Anthony Seldon, 1997. *Major: A Political Life*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, p. 247.
- 12 Nicholas Jones, 2001. *The Control Freaks*. London: Politico's.
- 13 *The Sun*, April 1992.
- 14 In addition to the two national dailies and national Sunday newspapers that News International owned, it was building a dominant position in satellite television, including Sky News.
- 15 See Tony Blair, 1996. *New Britain: My Vision of a Young Country*. London: Fourth Estate.
- 16 Peter Riddell, 2003. *Hug Them Close: Blair, Clinton and the Special Relationship*. London: Politico's, p. 75.
- 17 For a detailed discussion of the New Labour Government's initial approach to foreign policy see Richard Little and Mark Wickham-Jones, 2000. *New Labour's Foreign Policy: A New Moral Crusade?* Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- 18 Some in Washington went further, alleging that British reporting suffered from 'structural anti-Semitism' (personal information from off-record discussions in Washington, 2000-1). Conrad Black's newspapers, at least, offered an alternative (pro-Likud) line.
- 19 Tony Blair, 1999. *Doctrine of the International Community*. Chicago, April 24, available on: <http://www.number-10.gov.uk/output/Page1297.asp> [Accessed May 2004].

- 20 Paddy Ashdown, 2001. *Ashdown Diaries: 1997-1999*. London: Penguin Books.
- 21 See J. Kampfner, 2003. *Blair's Wars*. London: Free Press; P. Stothard, 2003. *Thirty Days: An Inside Account of Tony Blair at War*. London: Harper Collins.
- 22 For the full text of Tony Blair's speech to the 2000 Labour Party Conference see the Guardian online, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/labour2000> [Accessed May 2004].
- 23 See Helsinki European Council, Presidency Conclusions, available on: [http://europa.eu.int/council/off/conclu/dec99/dec99\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/council/off/conclu/dec99/dec99_en.htm). [Accessed May 2004].
- 24 Presidency Conclusions, Lisbon European Council, March 23-4, 2000, available on: [http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/pdf/PRESIDENCY\\_CONCLUSIONS\\_lissabon.pdf](http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/pdf/PRESIDENCY_CONCLUSIONS_lissabon.pdf). [Accessed May 2004].
- 25 John Bolton, who became Under-Secretary of State for Arms Control in the Bush administration, led a team from the American Enterprise Institute round London in September 2000, propounding a clear message that the Bush foreign policy would be 'America first'.
- 26 Riddell, *Hug Them Close*, pp.134-5.
- 27 See Ministry of Defence, 2002. *Performance Report 2001/2002*, November, available on: <http://www.mod.uk/publications/performance2001> [Accessed May 2004].
- 28 See US State Department's 'Allied Contributions to Common Defence', available at: [http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/allied\\_contrib2002/02-Chptr2/02-Chptr\\_2tx.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/allied_contrib2002/02-Chptr2/02-Chptr_2tx.html). [Accessed May 2004].
- 29 Although John Kampfner in *Blair's Wars* (pp. 301-304) argues that Straw wobbled in his commitment to war in Iraq.
- 30 Kampfner, *Blair's Wars*, p. 167.
- 31 See Bob Woodward, 2004. *Plan of Attack*. Simon & Schuster: New York, pp. 128-129, 148-153, 174-176, 226, 411, 415.
- 32 See Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, especially pp. 148-153 and 174-176.
- 33 See Kampfner, *Blair's Wars*, p. 242.
- 34 Chirac appears to have seen this conflict as personal as well as political, and according to reports from British intelligence was out to undermine Blair. See Philip Stephens, 2004. *Tony Blair: The Making of a World Leader*. New York, Viking, p. 226.
- 35 See Stephens, *Tony Blair*, pp. 224-226.
- 36 European Council, 2003. *A Secure Europe in a Better World: The European Security Strategy*. December, available on: [http://ue.eu.int/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/2004/4/29/European%20Security%20Strategy.pdf](http://ue.eu.int/uedocs/cms_data/docs/2004/4/29/European%20Security%20Strategy.pdf) [Accessed May 2004].
- 37 For full transcripts and details of the Hutton inquiry see: <http://www.the-hutton-inquiry.org.uk>.
- 38 For further details see: <http://www.butlerreview.org.uk>.
- 39 'A letter to Blair: Your Middle East Policy is Doomed, Say Diplomats', *The Independent*, April 27, 2004. Full text at <http://argument.independent.co.uk/commentators/story.jsp?story=515676> [Accessed May 2004].
- 40 Clare Short before the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, June 17, 2003.
- 41 Sir Malcolm Rifkind, 2003. *The Special Relationship Between the United States and the United Kingdom—Is It Special?* Speech at the London School of Economics, November 18.
- 42 Riddell, *Hug Them Close*, p. 142.