

## PAX AMERICANA THROUGH THE EYES OF BRITANNICA

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**Michael Cox\* and Tim Oliver\*\***

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Since the turn of the twenty first century there has been a manifest shift in the foreign policy of the United States, something accelerated most clearly by the election of President George Bush, the horrific events of 11 September and ensuing policies such as the 'War on Terror'. As the sole remaining superpower Washington's new approaches have shaped the unipolar world in ways that have not always been to the liking of even her allies, including one as close as Great Britain. This chapter will take the experiences of the United Kingdom as an example of how a European state has responded to these new conditions. London has long been seen to be amongst America's most loyal allies, yet even the UK finds it increasingly difficult to align itself with the new approaches taken by the USA.

This is not to argue that Britain will not continue to agree with large areas of US foreign and security policy; in matters of security and defence the UK has long chosen to continue to appear as closely aligned to the US as at anytime since the war-time alliance of Sir Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt. This is an aim driven by a desire in London to influence the way Washington as the pre-eminent power in a unipolar world –often referred to as 'pax Americana'– is shaping the international system. However, this task is made increasingly uneasy by developments in both Europe and the USA and as we explore Britain's attempts

–and in particular Prime Minister Tony Blair's– to reconcile these differences have often failed.

As we highlight, the UK-US relationship has not been without its problems and difficulties. As the period after 2001 reveals only too graphically, the partnership with the United States has carried with it an increasingly high price for the UK in general and Prime Minister Tony Blair in particular. This first manifested itself in the early part of 2001 when the new President Bush, backed by a Republican Senate, effectively abandoned the policies of his predecessor in favour of a new raw brand of US unilateralism which went on to characterise Washington's approach towards Iraq. The result has generated political difficulties in Britain, Europe and the world and more broadly produced something close to a crisis in relations with a number of America's and Britain's major European and international partners.

This article will begin with some further brief scene setting of Britain's main foreign and security policy concerns pre 11 September 2001, especially with regard to relations with the US and Europe. We will then proceed to examine in more detail such issues as the 'War on Terror', the Iraq War, relations between Europe and the United States, the influence of the 'neo-cons' on both US and British foreign policy and the changing nature of international security. In particular we will contrast the foreign policy outlooks of President George Bush

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\* International Relations Department. London School of Economics and Political Science, United Kingdom.  
E-mail: mec Cox@lse.ac.uk.

\*\* International Relations Department. London School of Economics and Political Science, United Kingdom.  
E-mail: t.l.oliver@lse.ac.uk.

Jnr and Prime Minister Tony Blair to show how the two men's outlooks differed and what this tells us about the differences that exist between the way the USA views international security and that held by European partners such as Britain.

### 1. BRITAIN AND AMERICA BEFORE 2001

It was US Secretary of State Dean Acheson who in 1962 neatly summarised what he and many saw as the fundamental dilemma facing British foreign policy in the post-war period (see Mangold, 2001). Great Britain, he opined, had lost, or was fast losing an Empire, but had yet to discover a new role for itself in a superpower world where its influence was clearly on the wane. Naturally, he went on, the British continued to believe that close ties with the US on the one hand, and a role based on being 'head' of the British Commonwealth/Empire on the other, could sustain it into the future. But this was no substitute for a genuine mission. On this, Acheson was typically blunt. If Britain was to find a role he believed, it would have to look for it in Europe. Indeed, the time was fast approaching for the British to face up to their destiny and become a serious player on the European mainland. Outside of Europe, the UK could easily become stranded. Only within it, and not 'apart', would it be able to find that elusive role of which it was now desperately in need. All other strategies had been played out. It was high time for Britain to change course.

At one level of course Acheson was only repeating the standard State Department mantra: in effect, that Britain's influence was on the wane and that its usefulness for the United States would be measurably increased if it threw in its lot with the new Europe in the making. Yet there was still something fundamentally disingenuous about his remarks. For as he himself recognized in his own controversial speech, Britain had already discovered a role for itself with which it still felt entirely comfortable - in the arms of the United States itself. Nor was it about to abandon its powerful patron across the Atlantic. Indeed, this 'special relationship' had not only brought the British advantage in the shape of economic aid and privileged access to something that most other West European countries resented and envied in equal measure - American military and intelligence resources - but also helped maintain its place at the high table of

international politics. As critics and supporters alike were quick to point out, London's close connection with Washington permitted Britain to exercise the kind of global role it could increasingly not have hoped to have on the basis of its own resources alone. Of course, this position of dependency was not one that everybody felt comfortable with. In fact, more than a few commentators (including Acheson himself) saw the whole policy as one based on pretence, whose only consequence was to stop the British thinking seriously and for the long-term about its position within a changing world order.

This was not a position however with which the British foreign policy establishment appeared to agree then, or, more importantly, have appeared to have agreed with since. Membership of Europe was no doubt a good idea; and in fact Britain formally joined the European Community just a decade after Acheson delivered his words of warning. But this was not to be at the expense of its close ties with the United States. Indeed, there always remained a genuine ambivalence in London about the European project. Not so with the US; and whenever confronted with the choice, one British government after another - with the exception of Edward Heath's in the early 1970s - always privileged the relationship with Washington over that with Brussels. In a world of hard choices the best choice open for the UK, or so it was felt by officials, was alongside its powerful (and English-speaking) imperial successor across the Atlantic, than with a grouping of European/continental states, one of whom happened to be Germany - a nation the British were weary of trusting - and France whose increasingly anti-Atlanticist policies under de Gaulle after 1958 began to diverge sharply from those of Great Britain.

Of course, when Acheson spoke in 1962 Britain was in a very different position to the one it was to be in by the start of the twenty first century. Indeed, in the intervening years its position underwent something close to a revolution, the product on the one hand of Thatcher's attempt to reverse Britain's seeming irreversible decline that had culminated in the 1970s with Britain being labelled the 'sick man of Europe', and on the other of the implosion of communism in Europe in 1989. Yet amidst all these momentous changes, one thing seemed to remain constant: Britain's close, almost intimate partnership with the United States. The

end of the Cold War, Britain's increasing economic association with the continent of Europe, even the odd spat or two with Washington in the 1990s over Bosnia and Northern Ireland. None of this appeared to make the slightest difference to the US-UK relationship. If anything the partnership assumed an almost intimate form, first between Thatcher and Reagan during the 1980s as they took on the 'Evil Empire' and expanded the virtues of the free enterprise system, then between Blair and Clinton during the second half of the 1990s as they tried to carve a new international 'Third Way' between social democracy and neoliberalism. Blair, like previous British Prime Ministers made use of the idea that Britain could play the role of a bridge across the Atlantic; something which after the election of George Bush and in particular September 11 Tony Blair strove to perform as he and George Bush stood shoulder to shoulder in a combined effort to take on and defeat the forces of international terrorism (see Riddell, 2003; Wallace; Oliver, 2005). If this was a relationship built more on sand than concrete, more on sentiment than shared interests – as some continued to believe – then it certainly did not look like it as one century gave way to another.

## 2. BRITAIN, AMERICA AND 9/11

British, American and indeed European Union foreign policy were transformed by the events of September 11 (see Andrews, 2005). In response Britain undertook a role that was militarily, diplomatically and politically substantial. While it was Jacques Chirac who was the first foreign leader to visit the US after the attacks it was Tony Blair who seemed to be the first and most eager to rush to America's aide, although to what extent he influenced the course of decision making in Washington has been doubted (see Hill, 2005).

The attacks also provoked an unprecedented reaction from NATO, invoking Article V which states that an attack upon one member of the alliance was an attack upon all. Yet despite both NATO and the Belgian EU Presidencies hopes, neither the EU nor NATO was represented in Afghanistan and the pursuit of Al Qaeda. Instead it was individual states such as Britain or Germany that contributed. The Americans, in their desire to see swift and decisive action, brushed aside offers of multilateral support, in doing so provoking feelings of frustration from those they did not invite to contribute.

### 2.1. The legacy of the Former Yugoslavia

Such an approach was in part the product of memories of European efforts in the former Yugoslavia and especially of experiences in the Kosovo War of 1999. The conflict saw increased tensions between the Americans – who did most of the fighting – and the Europeans who insisted on the war being conducted through the NATO committees where everybody from Luxembourg upwards commanded a veto over the targets US warplanes were to attack. The American approach to Afghanistan and Iraq, known as 'coalitions of the willing' was born of such experiences.

The experience also reaffirmed the British attitude for opting to remain close to the Americans. While Blair had been disheartened by President Clinton's apparent weak leadership over Kosovo, he had not quite chosen to throw in Britain's lot with the Europeans despite only the previous year having signed the St Malo declaration with France in which the UK committed itself to developing a European defence capability. For London, keeping the Americans engaged in European feelings and concerns remained central to British plans to reform the EU's emerging foreign and defence capabilities with NATO playing a central role; the aim being very much to engage the Americans, never to offer a counter-balance.

At the height of the Kosovo War Blair set out his own and many would argue very personal approach to international affairs during a speech he gave in Chicago; a speech to which he was to return in understanding the post 11 September world (Blair, 1999). The speech known as the 'Doctrine of the International Community' set out several key themes which more broadly:

Encouraged and supported American military engagement in support of ambitions that were far beyond Britain's capability to achieve.

Expressed renewed confidence that the European and American sides of British foreign policy could be reconciled and that there was a continuing community of values across the Atlantic.

That Britain could perform the role of a 'transatlantic bridge' holding the two sides of the Atlantic together to promote these 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 several years before George W. Bush assumed office.

We will return to the speech later in the chapter for as we will see, achieving the ambitions set out in the speech did not prove easy.

## 2.2. Blair's Wars

In the era following 11 September the Prime Minister returned to and developed many of the themes he had outlined in Chicago, in particular the idea of 'liberal intervention' and the rejection of outdated Cold War era concepts of sovereignty and national interests. In particular, the Prime Minister was drawing upon the work of Robert Cooper, a British diplomat who argued that the world was composed of three types of state (see Cooper, 2003):

Lawless pre-modern states too weak to enforce the rule of law, e.g. Afghanistan.

Modern-states pursuing foreign policies and national interests very much in the style of the nineteenth century or Cold War, e.g. China, Russia and perhaps the USA.

Post-modern states which have overcome the need for power politics in favour of multilateralism and integration, e.g. the members of the European Union.

As part of the EU and deeply embedded in a globalised world Britain belonged firmly to the latter. However a challenge lay in whether such 'post-modern' states could employ the methods of an earlier era –force, sometimes pre-emptive, and acting beyond the rule of law– in order to safeguard and advance the world they had achieved. This seemed especially urgent when dealing with organizations and individuals such as al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden who made use of failing pre-modern states to advance their cause, one which if combined with advanced weapons could prove disastrous. Blair it seemed was prepared to undertake such a task, from intervention –militarily if necessary– in Afghanistan to assistance in Africa.

A powerful testament to this commitment is to be found in the level of British military intervention since 1997, something the Prime Minister was keen to advance (Kampfner, 2003). Since 1997 the UK has committed British military forces to: Iraq, Operation Desert Fox (1998); Kosovo (1999); East Timor (1999); Sierra Leone (2000); Afghanistan (2001); DR Congo (2003); and Iraq

(2003 onwards). This list excludes participation in many other military linked operations, notably UN led operations such as in the former Yugoslavia (SFOR).

## 3. THE IRAQ WAR

Given the long involvement of British forces in Iraq and the willingness of the Prime Minister to use military force the decision to commit Britain to the 2003 Iraq War should have been no surprise. Yet the logic by which the UK went to war in Iraq was significantly different to that presented by the United States, with the prime minister in particular placing an emphasis upon international law for both domestic and European purposes. For Blair the decision to follow the Bush Administration in attacking Iraq was very much a result of his own personal convictions that the action was morally correct and necessary as it was his concern to ensure that the UK always sides with the Americans (see Wallace; Oliver, 2005).

### 3.1. The road to war

The events of 11 September provoked a change in the approach of the Bush Administration which until that fateful day British diplomats and Blair had worried was becoming more isolationist than over-zealous in its use of power. This abrupt change provided an opportunity for 'neo-conservatives' (of whom more later) to advance their agenda involving transformation of the Middle East, regime change in Iraq followed by Syria and Iran. So it was that President Bush's State of the Union message in January 2002 singled out Iraq, Iran, with North Korea, as part of an 'axis of evil'. For his part, Tony Blair did not need convincing of the urgent need to tackle Iraq. In his aforementioned 1999 speech outlining his 'Doctrine of the International Community' he had stated that:

"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..."

While it is quite clear that the Prime Minister would not have considered an invasion of Iraq if the USA had not intended to do the same, he was nevertheless keen to see action. But the rest of his

government, his party and the public were much less convinced of the urgent need to tackle the issue of Iraq.

This is not to argue that everybody except Blair saw Iraq as posing no form of genuine threat. To many the intelligence provided about Iraq—and indeed Iraq's own actions— all seemed to point to the conclusion that Saddam was involved in some form of WMD related activities. Combined with the absence of any possibility of justifying invasion on humanitarian grounds (because of its lack of basis in international law but something which Blair also accepted) the issue of WMD became, especially for the British government, the central justification for war (see Hill, 2005).

Washington was to a large extent keen to see the participation of the UK (see Meyers, 2005). Yet the US and British agendas for war were different; Washington only appearing to modify its rationale for war in order to assist the Prime Minister in achieving the support of the House of Commons. The most apparent differences lay with the divergent attitudes towards the United Nations and the Middle East Peace Process with the Bush Administration's indifference or contradictory messages contrasting with Blair's search for a form of internationally recognised legitimacy and visible progress in bringing about peace in Israel-Palestine.

Attempting to modify this American position became something of a 'raison d'être' for the PM with him striving to make use of the close relations he had developed with the Bush administration. His response to September 11 appears to have provided him with a high level of prestige and respect in America although what effective influence he was able to wage has been questioned most powerfully by the argument that he appears to have committed Britain to war before gaining concessions from the US (Hill, 2005; Meyer, 2005). Undeniably however he did appear a more eloquent Ambassador for America and Britain's position, able to articulate the key arguments more fluently than President Bush.

At the same time it appears that some within the Bush Administration did little to make it easier for Blair to carry his own government or his country behind him. In the divided Bush administration the reasonable case that Colin Powell and the State Department could make for British listeners was repeatedly undermined by others in the

Pentagon and elsewhere (see Woodward, 2004). The more Blair and British diplomacy engaged with the political dynamics of Washington the more they bound themselves to the eventual outcome while also alienating several heavyweight figures. 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. Vice President Dick Cheney's relationship with the Prime Minister was best described as 'cool'.

Resolution 1441 was the best that the State Department and the British government could achieve in building a UN Security Council consensus. The resolution—the result of protracted discussions and compromises but eventually agreed by the entire Security Council— offered Iraq a final opportunity to comply with its disarmament obligations, threatening 'serious consequences' if it failed to do so. Problems emerged however over the need for a second resolution to authorize the use of force. The compromises of 1441 left plenty of room for American hawks on one side and states who sought more time for the UN's weapons inspectors on the other to interpret the document in contradictory fashion regarding whether or not it authorized the use of force. Britain was stuck in the middle. Blair, having initially sought a second resolution eventually argued 1441 gave all the necessary authorization required to go to war.

### 3.2. Post-war dilemmas

The post-Saddam situation has if anything intensified the pressure on Blair due to the failure to locate WMD and the catalogue of mistakes that have characterised post-war US and UK policy towards the rebuilding of post-war Iraq. The failure to locate weapons of mass destruction—the central reason for military action— has plagued Blair more than it has the Bush administration, which saw and presented the Iraq war as more than just about WMD. Several inquiries have cleared the Prime Minister and those around him of any misdemeanors, but left a negative impression of the style with which the PM and the government had approached the issue of WMD, the war in Iraq and relations with Washington.

It has become something of a truism that there was no plan for dealing with Iraq after President Bush declared 'Mission Accomplished' on 1 May 2003. Yet both the US and the UK had

plans that dealt with many of the issues the occupying forces would face. Such plans were undermined by political pressures and institutional rivalry, most notably in the US where the State Department's 'Future of Iraq Project' was undermined by the Pentagon which was put in charge of postwar reconstruction as the war began (see Phillips, 2005). As a result the US and UK went to war with inappropriate plans which reflected political and institutional bargaining than on the ground realities. As if to demonstrate this in the early post-war stages Donald Rumsfeld belittled and summarized the chaos and looting by saying 'we all know what happens at a soccer game in England', an attitude that perhaps better summarized a flawed approach that led to deadly consequences.

Painful questions have been raised about the waste of lives, and especially British lives (111 to May 2006). Indeed arguments continue to rage regarding what exactly the UK gained from involvement in the Iraq war. For some the conflict wrecked British commitments to multilateralism, to the UN and international law, and cooperation with her European partners. Relations with Germany and France reached a low point and any attention the Prime Minister hoped to give to European affairs such as committing Britain to the Euro seemed dashed (see Riddell, 2005; Smith, 2005).

At the same time the terrorist attacks in Madrid in March 2004 and London in July 2005 sent a strong reminder that the wider war on terror was still very much a going concern with the UK's close association with the US making it a more prominent Western target (see Chatham House, 2005). And while by late 2005 progress had been made in Iraq, most notably the elections of January 2005 where millions of Iraqis bravely turned out to vote for a transitional assembly, the situation of lawlessness verging on civil war is for many a more genuine threat to Western and indeed global security than was posed by Saddam Hussein. British troops remain committed to a situation which rumours report the military had been deeply uneasy with from the very start due to the lack of public support, overstretch, and a fear that the wider 'war on terror' being left to drift due to the concentration given to Iraq.

For the Prime Minister many pointed to how in the run up to war he had sought three assurances from President Bush: that the reconstruction of Iraq would be handled in an effective way that

post-war Iraq would involve the UN; and finally that Bush would address the Israel-Palestine problem (see Stothard, 2004: 218; Wallace; Oliver, 2005: 173). None of these three aims were met with the chaos that engulfed Iraq driving out the small UN presence. While President Bush committed the US to the creation of a viable Palestinian state, his approval in April 2004 of the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza effectively discarded the Middle East peace roadmap that Blair thought he had helped commit Bush to. It was this change that prompted fifty-two retired prominent British diplomats to sign an open letter to the Prime Minister, stating their frustration at the approach he was taking (*Independent*, 2004). The letter which many took to reflect the silent opinions of the British diplomatic community urged the Prime Minister to take a more determined approach in dealing with the United States, concluding:

"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".

#### 4. TRANSATLANTIC TENSIONS

Like so many other British Prime Ministers since the Second World War, Tony Blair has become impaled on the horns of a Europe-America diplomatic dilemma. On the one hand the historical relationship with the US has brought significant gains, but the experience since 2001 and in particular 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 (see Forster, 2002; Wallace, 2005). Like many prime ministers before him Blair has tried to overcome these differences by playing the role of a bridge; but with both sides appearing to grow increasingly apart in the way they view the post-cold war world it seems likely that Blair's bridge may be a 'bridge too far' (Wallace; Oliver, 2005).

#### 4.1. American Martians

For many Britons and other Europeans there could be no bigger indicator of the widening of the Atlantic than the very figure of President Bush himself. With his Texan drawl, moral absolutes, religiosity and cowboy appearance he provokes deep feelings of unease and hostility amongst most Europeans, especially when compared to the previous presidency of Bill Clinton. Yet Clinton was not all Europeans hoped for either; his presidency saw tensions over issues which would come to characterize the rifts between Bush's America and Europe. For example, the Kyoto Treaty, signed in December 1997, was pre-emptively rejected by a unanimous 95-0 Senate vote in July 1997 and it was under Clinton that America discovered that European multilateralism in the form of the EU and then NATO could not deal with the former Yugoslavia.

That said Bush's approach has been particularly assertive. His administration has fought against the International Criminal Court, refused to support the Ottawa Land Mine Convention, rejected parts of the Biological Weapons Convention, and withdrawn from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in order to develop a missile defence system. Bush's 'War on Terror' is not seen in Europe as a simple good versus evil dichotomy as some in America might view it. Talk in the Bush White House of space based warfare and the need to avoid a 'Space Pearl Harbour' shows only too dramatically the differences in how the Europeans and Americans view the world.

Robert Kagan, an American academic, noted that, 'Americans are from Mars, Europeans are from Venus' and neatly summarised what for many is the essential difference in how Europe and American view the issue of power (Kagan, 2003). While America –as Mars, the God of War– develops a missile defence system to ward off a possible North Korean (or Chinese) nuclear attack the Europeans are barely able to transport troops to areas neighbouring the EU. America currently spends 40% of the world's total military expenditure; Europe barely matches this. And while military power isn't everything, America's overwhelming fire-power means that for the foreseeable future she will be called upon to deal with failing states, organised terrorist networks, be the guarantor of peace deals and handle the worst international humanitarian crises. To America, European efforts to survive with

only economic and diplomatic incentives seem almost quaint when faced with international threats in the form of an al Qaeda seeking WMD.

#### 4.2. European Venusians

Europe, it would seem is a 'freeloader' on American power in a dangerous world. In recognition of this there have been moves by the EU to close the gap, or at least offer some form of alternative capability to the US. In April 2003 the crisis over Iraq prompted a meeting between France, Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg to discuss defence cooperation in a way that to some threatened the future of NATO. However, the summit showed how hollow EU foreign, security and defence policy would be without the participation of Britain. It was therefore of no surprise that throughout the Iraq crisis Britain, France and Germany continued to engage in a trilateral relationship over defence and foreign policy issues.

In the same year the European Union published its own security strategy entitled 'A Secure Europe in a Better World' (EU, 2003) written in large part by the aforementioned Robert Cooper and based in large part upon British and French thinking. Its positive reception in Washington delighted London, again demonstrating the British desire for Britain and Europe to seek to support and not counter the US. The strategy was a response to both the changing international situation and a response to the US 'National Security Strategy' set out by President Bush in September 2002. In military terms the EU –and the UK– was attempting to create a European Security and Defence Policy which widened and embraced the 'Petersburg tasks' that deal with crisis management and supporting this with a larger military capability. Indeed, by late 2003 the member states of the EU achieved their 1999 agreement to be able to deploy rapidly and sustain forces of up to 50,000 – 60,000 persons capable of the full range of Petersburg tasks (see Giegerich; Wallace, 2004).

Questions remain as to how realistic these aspirations are and how the strategy document, which places great importance in multilateralism, fails to explain how to deal with defective multilateral institutions. Nevertheless it constitutes part of the slow process started in the 1970s of building a European defence and foreign policy, something which has long commanded strong British support. From such developments we can discern a

growing British reflex towards working more with European allies, something we might term a 'Europeanisation' of British foreign, security and defence policy. However, when required this is easily sidelined by London (see Allen; Oliver, 2006).

#### 4.3. British Earthlings?

If Europeans are from Venus and Americans from Mars then the idea of Britain as a 'transatlantic bridge' would seem to accord it the place of Earth! Indeed, the UK has long been subject to the strong but varying gravitational pulls of Washington and Brussels. It remains to be seen how Britain will deal with the momentum towards a stronger European capability in defence and foreign policy. As with Germany and France –the other key players in developing Europe's foreign, security and defence policies– Britain looks set to continue to work with Europe (in particular Paris and Berlin) where the situation will benefit them all but retain the ability to remain aloof or work with other countries in areas where either a European or a German-French-British relationship will not be feasible (Smith, 2005: 721). Britain has made it clear that she will retain (as has France and as sought by Germany) a Permanent Seat in the UN Security Council irrespective of moves such as those to create a European Foreign Minister. The replacement of Trident –Britain's nuclear deterrent– seems set to be developed with the Americans and not the Europeans (Clark, 2004), although new Royal Navy aircraft carriers are being developed with France and Eurofighter is set to become a key part of the Royal Air Force. The British military and intelligence community continue to work closely with the Americans, but the disparity in power and keeping up with the Americans is becoming increasingly expensive. British ambivalence over the future of the EU in the world is matched only by her unease at whether or not Washington will continue to listen to London's concerns.

Britain will also have to come to terms with the increased attention the US directs towards the role performed by the EU in international relations; President Bush's 2004 visit to the European Commission and Council buildings in Brussels reflected the important role the EU plays not only in economic terms but also in the quieter areas of homeland security, intelligence, immigration and money laundering. With the transatlantic economy now more deeply integrated than any other

areas of the world and relations touching upon domestic issues as much as foreign policy and trade, differences will need to be overcome in a wider European-American context (see Hamilton; Quinlan, 2005). However, the wider US political elite remains largely indifferent to the power of Europe; as Micklethwait and Wooldridge point out (2005: 299) for the Americans Brussels is generally somewhere you go to discuss trade, not foreign policy; thus the difficulty in understanding why Turkish membership of the EU is not akin to Mexico being admitted to NAFTA.

## 5. THE BLAIR AND BUSH DOCTRINES

We noted earlier that Tony Blair has taken a very particular approach to foreign policy which we might term a 'Blair Doctrine'. First set out at the height of the Kosovo War as the 'Doctrine of the International Community' he returned to many of the ideas after 11 September and in particular during the run-up to the war in Iraq. It shared many similarities with the doctrine set out by President Bush in the aftermath of 11 September; both were a response to the changing nature of international relations, supporting the necessity of pre-emptive strikes in a world where failing states posed a serious threat to all nations. The two doctrines have also fared badly in light of developments in Iraq. Examining these two doctrines allows us to highlight some of the key differences which have emerged over the past few years in the way America and Britain view the world.

### 5.1. Blair's World

When elected in 1997 the new, young Prime Minister has said little on foreign affairs. He had never outlined or discussed a particular approach to foreign policy, or indeed shown much interest in the area save for discussions about Europe which were more of a domestic nature than foreign. That said his speeches were littered with talk about globalisation, an interconnected world, a network economy, the end of national sovereignty as understood in the Cold War era, the importance of Britain cooperating with her partners instead of being isolated as he accused the Conservative government of achieving. Once in power he developed a close interest in foreign affairs, seeing in it not only a chance to escape the confines of domestic government (where he was constrained by the power of his Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon

Brown) but also a chance to engage more directly with the issues he'd previously outlined (Seldon, 2004).

Kosovo saw Blair set out these feelings in the aforementioned 'Doctrine of the International Community'. Arguing that humanitarian intervention was justified in the internal affairs of another country he set out a series of criteria for such an intervention:

Are we sure of our case?

Have all diplomatic options been exhausted?

Can the military option be prudently undertaken?

Is there a will to see it through to the end?

Are national interests involved?

The Prime Minister returned to these issues in his Labour conference speech following the attacks of September 11; seeing in the disaster a chance to bring about real change he said, 'this is a moment to seize. The kaleidoscope has been shaken. The pieces are in flux. Soon they will settle again. Before they do, let us reorder the world around us.' Such an approach had already paved the way for military intervention in Kosovo, Sierra Leone and East Timor and would now ease the way to intervention in Afghanistan and in turn the war in Iraq. It ingrained in Blair the idea that Britain must play the role of a bridge between the United States and Europe; essential if the Atlantic alliance was to remain the fundamental axis for the preservation and advancement of a liberal world order (Seldon, 2004: 407).

## 5.2. Bush's World

Born of the experiences of September 11 the Bush Doctrine –most clearly set out in the 2002 US National Security Strategy– asserted the right of the US to take pre-emptive action to assert American power in a more unilateral way, without the constraints of multilateralism, and in a way designed to reorder the world and spread liberal democracy. In setting out his doctrine to Congress on 20 September 2001 Bush made it clear that those who harboured terrorists would be targeted as well: 'Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists.' In doing so it attempted to re-interpret many of the ideas surrounding 'Just War Theory' –that the only acceptable war is one of a defensive nature– by arguing that a threat does not need to

be imminent before self-defensive actions can be taken.

This approach was an exceptionally ambitious one, and one which drew heavily upon neoconservative thinking (see Micklethwait; Wooldridge, 2004). The 'neo-cons', born in part by frustration with the Clinton Administrations foreign policy, were a politically active group that had long argued that the world was a dangerous place where America's security would depend on it asserting its interests to remain an unchallenged hegemon. Most clearly encapsulated in their 'project for the New American Century', the agenda they set out saw regime change in many places such as Iraq as not simply desirable but in the long term security interests of the US. In such an American uni-polar world competition in the international arena would be relegated to trade and lesser issues in return allowing the US to avoid playing by the rules or being bound by commitments to allies or multilateral institutions.

## 5.3. Worlds collide?

So is, as one commentator asked, Blair the original neo-con (Rawlence, 2004)? Had Blair and Bush embraced essentially the same agenda in trying to advance democracy and liberal humanitarian intervention? If so then choosing to be close to Bush, who could command more force than even Britain could muster at the height of her imperial power, offered Blair a chance to realise his doctrine of removing dictators, upholding human rights, confronting states with WMD, bringing international terrorists to justice and bringing peace to the Middle East. But as we saw above, the Americans seemed to listen to Blair 'only when his suit matched what they wanted to wear anyway' (Seldon, 2004: 624). The doctrines were not compatible as they were based on opposite experiences of power; the US as the global hegemon, the UK as a post-imperial power with a willingness to wage war but bound by commitments to institutions and treaties the British people and Parliament were uneasy at breaking.

That said, Britain, the US and the EU have all developed an increasing interest in state intervention in the face of state failures, or what Cooper would call the pre-modern world (Cooper, 2003). The UK's engagements in Sierra Leone matches similar French led interventions in the Great Lakes region of Africa and Ivory Coast (see Baddie, 2003)

and similar American interventions in central America. Talk of EU 'Battle Groups' operating in Northern Africa not only signal the EU's progression from the 1990s situation in the former Yugoslavia, but also symbolise Britain's own interests in Africa and Blair's own personal approach to foreign affairs. It also reflects the growing military capabilities of the EU with forces today operating in Bosnia, Macedonia and Central Africa. Increased intervention –especially humanitarian– has become a norm of the post Cold War era, although the European and British approach lack the almost nationalistic approach to international affairs that the US seems to be driven by.

However, experiences in post-war Iraq and Afghanistan have taught both Washington and London that while America has more than enough military power to wipe away its enemies, rebuilding and policing are different matters entirely. Such work requires the assistance of foreign powers, NGOs and international organisations, many of whom are still smarting from the rows over Iraq. Indeed, America and Britain's failings in Iraq – to locate or explain the lack of WMD and to provide for a more stable post-war Iraq only serves to move mutual allies into distancing themselves from the policies. Progress in the form of elections has been marred by bloody violence on a daily basis which shows no signs of ending anytime soon. Even the elections have led to reduced expectations with the realisation that democratic Iraqi governments will contain a strong Islamic tone and distinctly anti-American stance. In facing such a context the Bush Administrations aims for Iraq have been continually downgraded.

The agreement of Libya to renounce its WMD programmes –something seen as a result of Iraq– was also set within a wider system of economic and political pressure from the EU. The belief that unilateralism could achieve American aims was dealt a further blow when the 'axis-of-evil' state of Syria was forced to withdraw from Lebanon by demonstrations by the local population combined with American and French pressure. On a wider level both the US and the UK have suffered losses to their 'soft power' with surveys regularly showing both held in lower regard than ever before. As a result the Bush Doctrine and Blair Doctrine seem to be in tatters; attempting to reorder the Middle East has proved exceptionally difficult, not to mention even starting on the rest of the world.

When considering how long the mess and trauma of Vietnam took to pass it seems clear that it will be sometime before the US and UK go to war in the same way as they did with Iraq. The approach of linking rogue states and terrorism, as happened with Iraq, was very much a strategy belonging to the Middle East, albeit one that also includes to a certain extent North Korea. The belief that a magic military formula –born of the Revolution in Military Affairs– existed allowing the US to act unilaterally is now gone as a means to bring about transformation without the necessary multilateral institutions or agreements. Iraq may work out fine, stability could return and Baghdad could become the home of a flourishing democracy. In such a context the Bush and Blair doctrines would be seen as a success, but even optimists would now admit that this seems a long time away.

This is not, however, to argue that the US or UK will avoid further conflict. Despite the experiences of Iraq America remains –and is set to remain– not only the greatest power in human history but one driven by a strong belief that it is a benign hegemon. Britain while not wielding such power or self-confidence remains –and is set to remain– a power committed to engagement around the world in support of its ideals with a penchant for supporting the US.

## CONCLUSION

The travails of British foreign policy since the turn of the century provide a good means to understanding how a European state has come to terms with the new foreign policy approaches taken by the United States. British security policy has long placed a close relationship with the United States as a central guiding principal for Britain's place in the world and its relations with Europe. Although the experiences since 2001 have not completely changed this, the problems the UK has faced in continuing this policy help to highlight three sets of continuing tensions which have characterised British, American and European foreign, security and defence policy at the start of the twenty first century:

In both the Cold War and the post Cold War world the UK's security interests have been advanced through a close relationship with the United States characterised by offering private counsel and

support in the hope that the power of the US could be harnessed and steered. Peter Riddell summed up this approach as one of 'hug them close' (Riddell, 2003). Blair's Premiership seems set to be defined by his following such a policy, particularly with regard to Iraq.

While hugging the Americans has had its associated problems being close to Europe provokes serious domestic problems along with questions about the future of Britain's international position. In an EU of 25 member states the UK is no longer seen as quite the 'awkward partner' it once was (George, 1990), although it can be argued that under Blair Britain's relations with the EU have been one of 'missed opportunities' ranging from the euro or institutional reform to garnering stronger public support for Europe (Smith, 2005). As a leading international player Britain brings to the development of European foreign and security policy qualities it fails to bring to economic or social discussions. Yet, here too there remain key tensions most notably over the future of NATO. While determined to see a more developed role for Europe in the world backed up by a genui-

ne defence capability, the UK, as with France and to a lesser extent Germany, would be loathe to be bound by the EU on issues where it feels a strong national interest. In this sense the UK's commitment to European foreign and defence policy remains 'Janus faced'.

As we saw, the Blair and Bush doctrines have much in common and indeed the US, UK and EU have all adapted to meet some of the new challenges of post-Cold War security threats. Profound differences exist, however, in how the three view the issue of power and its application as demonstrated most potently in the works of Cooper (2003) and Kagan (2003) (see Cox, 2005). That these differences also extend to a whole array of issues ranging from the social to military spheres bodes ill for the idea that Britain can continue to provide a stable bridge across the Atlantic, or some might add across the English Channel. Europe's inclinations towards softer power versus the Bush Administrations preference for hard power and Blair's attempt to mix the two have posed serious strains to British foreign policy, symbolic of wider tensions across the Atlantic.

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