

A HISTORY OF THE ANGLO-AMERICAN SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP

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INTRODUCTION

“It is always difficult for free democracies, governed in the main by public opinion from day to day, to cope with the designs of dictator States and totalitarian systems. But hitherto we have held our own.”¹
—Winston Churchill

As Winston Churchill stood in London delivering this speech, British and American troops were half a world away, attempting to halt an invasion. Only five years after the end of World War II, the most destructive conflict the globe had yet encountered, the Anglo-American alliance fought on to forestall the conquest of South Korea, first by its northern neighbors, and ultimately by Communist China. With the Korean War escalating and rumors of atomic technologies being developed by the Kremlin, the United States and the United Kingdom, as well as their allies, faced a terrifying new conflict. The Cold War was born. Yet, Churchill defined the new contest as “exactly the same” as the one from which the world had so recently emerged. He wrote, “tyranny, external or internal, is our foe,

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¹ Winston S. Churchill, “This Century of Tragedy and Storm,” in *Never Give In! The Best of Winston Churchill's Speeches*, ed. Winston S. Churchill (New York: Hyperion, 2003), 462-465.

whatever trappings or disguises it wears, whatever language it speaks, or perverts.”² In this fight against despotism, it would be imperative for the bonds uniting the alliance of freedom to be firm and capable of answering in one voice the relentless demands of a purist ideology like Communism. Churchill believed that the inauguration of a close alliance between his country and the United States was crucial in the attempt to retain the liberty and security of the West, as well as to encourage the gradual extension of those rights to the rest of the world—he called for a “special relationship” between the British and the Americans.

Churchill first coined the phrase “special relationship,” in a speech at Fulton, Missouri, on March 5, 1946. As he exhorted the Americans to avoid isolationism, he inaugurated a term that has been used to characterize Anglo-American affairs ever since. Churchill initially cited this relationship as a common duty to cultivate a military cooperation based in their “kindred systems of society.”³ Since then, the twentieth century Anglo-American special relationship has been subject to near-constant disputes over its meaning and purpose. It has alternately been cast as a tool of geopolitical utility for maintaining balance in Europe, as an economic love-hate relationship, or, most commonly, as the largely futile efforts of the United Kingdom to retain a measure of the

² Ibid.

³ Winston S. Churchill, “Sinews of Peace,” in *Never Give In! The Best of Winston Churchill's Speeches*, ed. Winston S. Churchill, (New York: Hyperion, 2003), 413-424.

influence it had enjoyed during the British Empire. In sum, the special relationship is generally categorized as a transitory institution defined by the contemporary global balance of power. These definitions all contain partial but incomplete truth; however, the political basis upon which alliances are formed is often overlooked in analyses of this connection. The Anglo-American special relationship is frequently characterized as simply the arrangement which allows the two nations to navigate power disparities and fluctuations between the two, but, in fact, the domestic politics of each country helped to create the special relationship as it was experienced in the twentieth century.

In order to establish an alliance of freedom such as Churchill prescribed, it would be necessary to define what united the free nations and set them apart from their rivals or neutral parties. As the Western entente of free nations in the twentieth century sought to articulate a strong moral basis for their resistance to the Soviet Union and its doctrines of dominion, they needed to meet it with an equally strong moral consensus. One difficulty to the alliance policy of the Cold War was the diversity of political traditions, each with its own particular definition of freedom and opinion concerning the purpose of government, that were attempting to ally within the loosely united coalition. The Communist bloc had its doctrine of the universal triumph of the proletariat to unite it, but the difficulty in an alliance of free nations came when they exercised their rights to adopt differing political systems, which consequently led to conflicts between opposing member nations. Under this system, the closely tied political inheritance of the British and the Americans seemed to hold promise for a close agreement on the meaning of freedom—the very ideal the Western alliance was attempting to protect.

The origins of the Anglo-American special relationship, then, lie not in a single speech given by Winston Churchill, but instead in the history of their political development that led to the inheritance of such a similar conception of freedom. The study of this relationship is begun in the political factors leading to the original separation between the two nations and the consequent development of political thought in each. The relative similarity of regime between the two led to a friendly connection throughout most of the nineteenth century, but hardly the “fraternal association” Churchill would later call for at Fulton. Drawn together by mutual interests in the World Wars, the latent political connection between the two nations was deepened into a substantive military and diplomatic alliance that endured through the rest of the century. The post-war era was a critical stage in the political development of both the United States and Great Britain, and the influence of competing ideas in the sphere of political thought strongly influenced both nations. If it could be determined what internal political factors helped to shape the Anglo-American special relationship, it could then be better understood how alliances between free nations are formed and maintained and what constitutes a threat to those alliances.

The rise of Progressivism in the United States and Socialism in Great Britain in the early twentieth century caused a wholesale redefinition of the political principles underlying each nation. Consequently, this led to a changing conception of freedom and understanding of the nature of government, redefining the very regime of the country. The most lucid resistance to this gradual regime change came in the form of constitutional conservatism, which developed into a sizable political movement in the post-war era. The internal political contests between collectivist and conservative thought in the U.K. and U.S. of the twentieth century shaped the special relationship by

producing a cogent explanation of the political similarities rooted in the same legal tradition that united them and differentiated them, not only from their communist or totalitarian foes, but even from socialist Europe.

Through the parallel development of conservatism in these two nations, the United Kingdom and the United States were finally able to articulate the concept of constitutionalism upon which their regimes, and therefore their alliance, rested. The clearest example of foreign policy cooperation stemming from a shared ideal of freedom was revealed in the Anglo-American special relationship under Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan. These two leaders were able to draw upon the shared constitutional basis of politics, which was accessible through the conservative movements each had inherited, in order to perpetuate the friendship of their nations.

To examine the development of the Anglo-American special relationship, I will consider both the historical examples of cooperation between the two nations and the development of the political similarities which formed the foundation of the relationship. In Chapter One, I will examine the course of Anglo-American relations from the early twentieth century through 1945 and the nativity of the Cold War. This will reveal the events culminating in the emergence of an overtly acknowledge special relationship and how it was defined immediately following the World Wars. Chapter Two will examine the history of the Anglo-American special relationship from 1945 to 1975. This will reveal not only the adaptation and reinterpretation of the special relationship to meet the varied challenges of the Cold War, but also its significant role in helping the United States and Great Britain determine their new post-War international roles. Chapter Three will discuss the political institutions and beliefs common to both

nations and explain how the conservative movements in both nations were crucial to a well-articulated alliance of freedom in foreign affairs. Finally, Chapter Four will unite the two themes of this paper: the historical, foreign policy basis for the special relationship and the philosophical basis allowing for the creation of an alliance founded upon shared political ideals. Chapter Four will consider the administration of U.S. President Ronald Reagan and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher as the specific example of these two themes—international practically and ideological agreement—in practice.

Cooperating through their diplomacy, military efforts, technology sharing, and intelligence efforts, the Anglo-American alliance has been one of the most successful and stable international cooperative efforts in modern history. Though the primary goal of this partnership in the twentieth century was to meet the threats posed first by the World Wars and later the Cold War, the political developments which made this cooperation possible bear further exploration. The common heritage of a constitutionalism based upon the rule of law and political liberty molded the United Kingdom and the United States into a partnership capable of defending and transmitting those ideas. The twentieth century development of the constitutional conservative movement drew these two allies closer together and supplied the ideological basis for agreement that had previously been lacking in the Western entente. If not for this union of political ideals, the eventual Cold War victory under Thatcher and Reagan would have been in question. The advancement of conservatism in the twentieth century was a critical factor in the Anglo-American special relationship and defined the basis upon which this alliance was a necessary cornerstone in the Cold War effort.

CHAPTER ONE

Early Anglo-American Relations

The early history of Anglo-American relations was fraught with disagreements and marked by surprising moments of cooperation. Obscured by conflict and war for the first half-century of their relationship, a connection in foreign policy between the British and the Americans can be discovered as early as the 1820s, when the interests of the British Empire and the growing United States began to gradually align. Later, the ascendancy of the U.S. would lead to strife with its former parent as America attempted to find its international role amidst worldwide changes. Through the Great War, which altered all previous foreign policy assumptions, to the interwar period of icy competition and mistrust, and the staggering military alliance of the Second World War, the Anglo-American special relationship was finally able to draw upon its long and complex history during the Cold War period.

As the United States expended its strength through a westward march, the unparalleled naval superiority of the British Empire known as *Pax Britannica* ruled the nineteenth century. Though the independence of the United States was now two generations old, the struggle over New World resources still raged amongst European powers seeking preeminence on the world stage. Despite an insipid military, the United States issued the Monroe Doctrine to delegitimize these expansionary ambitions. The Monroe Doctrine, developed by John Quincy Adams and issued by President James Monroe in 1823, sought to prohibit the powerful European empires from extending their territorial conflicts into the United States' sphere of influence. America was unable to accomplish this task with a comparatively weak navy, but, luckily for the Americans, the British wished to prevent

European expansion into the Americas as well. As part of their larger policy to maintain naval superiority, British ships policed the Atlantic and protected the Americas from further settlement by European empires, thereby uniting the foreign policy interests of the two. As each of these nations pursued their own individual interests in their own particular hemispheres, British interests were largely served by enforcing the Monroe doctrine. Although there was occasional tension over the Canadian border, Britain no more wanted the involvement of its French and Spanish rivals in the Americas than the United States did.

Without a formal alliance, both the United States and the British Empire attempted to guarantee the security of their constitutional regimes against the threat of French or Spanish absolutism. As a result of these mutual interests, President Monroe contemplated accepting England's offer to issue a joint declaration condemning European influence in the former South American colonies as early as 1823. To do so would have signified an official connection that placed the United States on the side of the British in the larger scheme of the Napoleonic Wars and fostered a close international relationship distinct from their previously informal ties. Though public sentiment was still very much against the British, due to the recently concluded war of 1812, Monroe considered the proposition and asked the advice of Thomas Jefferson. The former president was sorely tempted by the opportunity to align England closer to the republican United States and against the authoritarian powers of the Holy Alliance in Europe. The potential association was seen as so advantageous to the cause of liberty that Jefferson called the question of a joint Anglo-American statement "the most 'momentous' question offered for his 'contem-

plation since independence.”⁴ The English proposition was eventually shelved, partially because of a strong anti-British bias in the American public, but also because the two powers were able to accomplish their goal of keeping the Spanish and French at bay without the formality of a joint declaration. In this instance, the interests of the United States to prevent European colonization within their sphere of influence joined with the British desire to forestall excessive growth of the absolutist regimes opposed to their Empire. Although these two nations were pursuing this policy for fundamentally self-interested reasons, it does not reveal a flaw in their relationship. The shared self-interest of the U.S. and Britain arose largely out of the ambition to keep down absolutism, the looming threat to a constitutional political tradition at the time. Britain supported the establishment of American hegemony over the New World and used the growing strength of the United States to fill the vacuum of frustrated European ambitions in North and South America.

This foreign policy decision pointed to the carefully maintained balance of power system that was now, with the United States emerges as a world power in the mid-nineteenth century, when? being gradually extended into the western hemisphere. This foreign policy structure had kept European nations in a fluctuating but relatively stable relation to each other for decades. The balance of power strategy was the ruling international order of the nineteenth century and maintained a careful state of equilibrium through a network of counterbalancing and changeable alliances. This established an effective deterrent to the aggression of any nation that grew to be significantly more powerful than its neighbors. Anytime a regional power gathered strength, surround-

ing nations who felt threatened would form mutual defense agreements as a counterweight to their enemy. This strategy assured that the task of taking even one weak or isolated nation would incur a great a cost to the aggressor because it would activate the opposing alliance. Occasional, contained warfare was not cataclysmic because it would merely correct imbalances of power as the alliances re-adjusted to the shifts in the power on the foreign policy landscape and prevented aggressors from accruing large gains. The benefits of autonomy in separate hemispheres had not yet been destroyed by the advent of world war, and the United States, since its founding, remained mostly aloof from the European balance of power system and disdained taking sides in overseas conflicts. As the nineteenth century drew to a close, however, America became gradually more involved in the affairs of other continents. Britain and America each granted the support of favorable neutrality to the other in otherwise unpopular decisions. British support for the U.S. in the Spanish-American war inaugurated the opening of a closer connection to the United States. The U.S. lent similar moral backing to the British in their 1880 conflict with the Boers in South African territories. Similar backing for the British after the Boers declared war against British holdings in South Africa⁵ was notable for the moral support the U.S. was able to lend the overseas empire. Careful diplomatic maneuvering in these two foreign policy crises led them away from the antipathy marked by the early conflicts of the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812.

Though the nineteenth century relationship between the British and the United States functioned with increasing depth, the rules of the game were changed by World

⁴Harry Ammon, *James Monroe: The Quest for National Identity*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971), 479.

⁵ John Moser, *Twisting the Lion's Tail: American Anglophobia Between the World Wars*, (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 3.

War I, which would radically alter not only Europe, but also the connection England held with her former colony. Theoretically, an alliance of two nations as powerful as the United States and Great Britain would have provided an effective deterrent to any nineteenth-century aggressor. No such formal alliance existed by the close of the century, and the balance of power system would crumble when the German and Austro-Hungarian Empires became aligned against their European neighbors. This conflict refused to obey the logic of balance of power as antagonists bent on total victory continued to fight a battle deadlocked by equally matched might and the implications of devastating new technologies. The advent of the First World War, therefore, radically altered the functioning of the international system and forced every Western nation to reevaluate its response to threats in the face of potentially ruinous warfare.

The pivotal event of the first modern war in 1914 altered much of the assumed political and diplomatic relations of the previous century and led the United States to exert an increased role in the international framework. This Anglo-American special relationship would be partially predicated upon America's expanding role. As Henry Kissinger wrote, the Great War

produced this paradox: that the balance of power, which most Americans disdained, in fact assured American security as long as it functioned as it was designed, and that it was its breakdown that drew America into international politics.⁶

After World War II, The United States would play a central role in maintaining the international structure from this point on-

wards and exert influence in regions that had previously been maintained by local alliances. The complex web of alliances that erupted into the carnage of the Great War also tested the recently warm relations between the Americans and British. The follies of the Versailles Treaty with its perverse reparations cycle, the crippling amount of European war debt held by the Americans, and Wilson's insistence upon the observance of his utopian Fourteen Points, which sought to found anew the basis of centuries of European foreign relations, all resulted in a mood of iciness in the previously amicable relations of the two governments. These policies all attempted to avert another war of the same kind by restricting the actions of the European great powers, but were unsuccessful. While the nations participating in the traditional balance of power system had observed a roughly similar law of nations, the end of World War I saw the new attempt at a wholesale rewrite of that law. This shifted the international order onto a formalized basis of rules that claimed to ensure peace.

The interwar period granted only a short reprieve from the battle. The former network of interrelated trading partners had been shredded by the war, leaving behind rampant inflation and accompanying diplomatic difficulties. England and France left the gold standard in 1931 and 1936 respectively, weakening even further the integrated currency based upon an absolute standard of value that had aided in the ease of trade between European nations.⁷ The financial pressure of reparations payments kept Germany and her neighbors locked in a cycle of crippling debt and ill-conceived borrowing. This helped prevent a return to the previous balance of power system that depended so much on a reliable structure of currency and

⁶Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), 20.

⁷ Martin Horn, *Britain, France, and the Financing of the First World War* (Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 183-185.

trade.⁸ These financial woes added even more tension to the international situation as nations sought various forms of autarky at the cost of the multinational stability. Despite the token contributions Britain had sent in faithfully over the years, by 1934 Americans no longer believed that Britain would ever repay all its debt from the previous war. The Johnson Act prevented any further loans from being extended to nations in default of previous loans, including former wartime allies.⁹ This undermined the previously established trust between these trans-Atlantic partners.

Furthermore, an energetic naval competition with Britain took place under Warren G. Harding as the United States sought to achieve the new internationalist aspirations through an increased presence on the seas. With their long-held position as the ruling power of the oceans and pride in the British navy, few things could have piqued Britain more than the determined attempt to surpass them in their traditional field of military excellence. Economic competition for coveted raw resources, some of which resided inside British mandate territory, heightened tensions between the two nations to the point where the British ambassador to Washington declared that American policy was aimed at becoming the sole “leader among the English-speaking peoples” and that American politicians wanted to turn the indebted England into “a vassal state.”¹⁰ Finally, increasing numbers of Irish- and German-Americans harbored anti-British sentiments which dovetailed perfectly with the anti-imperialist feelings of many Progressives. This created pressures from both the electorate and the governing elite to distance the country from a deep interwar

friendship with Great Britain.¹¹ All of these tensions highlighted the transitions being felt at the time—Britain was struggling to retain hold of its empire as America was engaged in its brief failed experiment of isolationism in the 1930s. During the interwar years, the special relationship looked more like a siblings’ feud for pre-eminence than the cooperation of close cousins Churchill would extol a decade later.

This was the state of Anglo-American relations at the doorstep of World War II. As war engulfed Europe, nations on that continent were finally forced to recognize the threat of fascism as a different variety of tyranny than the petty, regional ambitions they had battled before. England was one nation which attempted to avoid further bloodshed through earnest but misguided diplomacy under the premiership of Neville Chamberlain, who was eventually forced to recognize the need for military victory in the contest for Western civilization. Britain’s American cousins, still sheltered by an ocean, faced a similar choice between short-sighted isolationism and judicious foreign action. Winston Churchill, the new Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and long-time predictor of the conflict, immediately began to campaign assiduously for U.S. assistance with the war effort and, soon afterwards, involvement in the battles themselves. Getting President Roosevelt to commit America to involvement in another European war, however, was a notoriously difficult task. Most Britons were convinced that “America would fight to the last Briton or the last cache of British gold,” allowing England and France to defend their own borders against German attacks while America encouraged Allied efforts from the sidelines.¹²

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Moser, 88.

¹⁰ Frank C. Costigliola, “Anglo-American Financial Rivalry in the 1920s,” *The Journal of Economic History*, 37, no. 4 (1977): 911-934.

¹¹ Moser, 11.

¹² John Charmley, *Churchill’s Grand Alliance: The Anglo-American Special Relationship 1940-57*, (Orlando: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1995), 5.

While Churchill was attempting to get the United States involved in the war, he faced the unalterable challenge of dealing with the American system of divided power. A Republican Congress balked at entering another world war, while the sitting president, FDR, delicately hedged around the question of American entry during the 1940 presidential campaign.¹³ These political machinations were decidedly different from the broad authority the English system granted a wartime Prime Minister. Churchill was thus required to court a Democratic president for assistance, although the Progressivism of the current administration was directly opposed to Churchill's political beliefs. Its foreign policy bore little resemblance to the British imperial structure, and even less to Churchill's staunch Toryism—a problem that would later hinder the working relationship of the two leaders.

The close alliance between the Americans and the British in World War II is often considered the nativity of the special relationship. Though the similarities of a stable constitutional regime characterized by the same political mores and approach to political problems had been in place for a century, the alliance brought the nations into the closest, practical alignment they had ever shared. The cooperation within the Anglo-American alliance was a decisive factor in winning the war. Roosevelt and Churchill began their lengthy correspondence—over 1,700 letters—at the war's earliest stage to keep each other apprised of the inner workings of their national efforts.¹⁴ Significantly, strategic talks were held between these two leaders while the United

States was still neutral. This was an extremely dangerous political move for Roosevelt, who campaigned in 1940 on the promise not to send more American boys to Europe.¹⁵ Roosevelt and Churchill set a pattern of a close trust and cooperation which would become iconic of the constant working relationship between two world leaders that forms an intrinsic part of the special relationship.

Rather than dispatching diplomats after a crisis arose, there was a sense that the two nations ought to be consistently informed of the other's situation, thoughts, and advice. In a letter of 15 May 1940, Churchill first floated the idea of borrowing “forty or fifty of your older destroyers.”¹⁶ Roosevelt reminded his correspondent that as President he did not have the authority to loan war materials at his pleasure, stating “I am not certain that it would be wise for that suggestion to be made to Congress at this moment.”¹⁷ Roosevelt did, however, campaign for the arrangement with great success. This plan would eventually become the famous Lend-Lease Act and shows the value of this secret correspondence. It provided a means for the two heads of government to work out their plans for the war while avoiding some of the political maneuvering required of traditional diplomacy. This strategic wartime cooperation represents the strongest element of the special relationship present during World War II. Though the two nations were dissimilar in many domestic and foreign policy goals, they were capable of carefully orchestrating a war to preserve liberty and established a close degree of trust that took them from the verge of defeat in 1940 to victory in 1945.

Though the president defended American involvement in the war, a shift in American political thought was noticeable.

¹³ Keith Sainsbury, *Churchill and Roosevelt at War: The War they Fought and the Peace they Hoped to Make*, (Washington Square: New York University Press, 1994), 8-9.

¹⁴ Francis L. Lowenheim, Harold D. Langley, and Manfred Jonas, *Roosevelt and Churchill: Their Secret Wartime Correspondence*, (New York: Saturday Review Press, 1975), 4.

¹⁵ Sainsbury, 18.

¹⁶ Lowenheim, Langley, and Jonas, 94.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 95.

In Roosevelt's Four Freedom's speech, one can observe both the belief in a trans-Atlantic relationship that was "special" on the basis of its shared understanding of freedom and indications that the conception of freedom was beginning to change. Roosevelt wrote:

Let us say to the democracies: "We Americans are vitally concerned in your defense of freedom. We are putting forth our energies, our resources, and our organizing powers to give you the strength to regain and maintain a free world. We shall send you, in ever-increasing numbers, ships, planes, tanks, guns. This is our purpose and our pledge."

The rhetoric employed here by Roosevelt matched that of Churchill, who had exhorted the Americans to enter the war effort on the basis of loyalty to allies, regardless of the level of threat to the United States. The rest of Roosevelt's speech, however, revealed the redefinition of the political terms under which Americans were slowly readjusting their posture towards foreign affairs. The freedom from want and fear—the third and fourth of Roosevelt's Four Freedoms—indicated an ambiguity about the role of government that had been recently introduced by the Progressives and hinted at the inauguration of a new world system that attempted to secure the rights of all the world's nations through cooperative supranational organizations. Foreign policy is the extension of a nation's domestic foundations, and the Progressive philosophy attempted to extend the protection of the Four Freedoms out into the international sphere. The certainty that the victory against despotism was the inevitable outcome of history clearly reveals the transition in international relations that distinguished the twentieth century from the previous one.

Churchill later professed a desire to project the liberties enjoyed under the British constitution, stating that "what we have to consider here today while time remains is the permanent prevention of war and the establishment of conditions of freedom and democracy as rapidly as possible in all countries."¹⁸ What Churchill lacked was the utopian vision of collective security, believing that the battle for freedom and democracy will always have to be fought. Although FDR and Churchill disagreed on major elements of practical foreign and domestic policy, the new assumption that all free nations were inherently at war against all despotic governments was gaining wide currency on both sides of the Atlantic.

Though the strategic partnership within the allied nation base was crucial to the war effort, various political goals could be seen to fray the Anglo-American relationship. Roosevelt, in particular, was in the middle of a wholesale project to transform the American government into a more Progressive system in both domestic and foreign spheres, and used the unique historic opportunities of the time to advance his goal. During the war, FDR used the connection with Britain to advance a post-war agenda that would limit British influence in the world, a goal of the progressive, anti-imperialist American sentiments of the time. Article VII of the Lend-Lease Agreement, where the United States agreed to lend Britain and other allied nations materials necessary to sustain the war effort, required that Britain eliminate imperial preference, which was a policy of trade discrimination against non-Imperial nations. This clause promised to prevent Britain from receiving the primary benefit from their carefully-constructed trading system with their colonies at all and hastened the dissolution

¹⁸ Churchill, "Sinews of Peace," 413-424.

of the British Empire.¹⁹ American support ultimately came through for the besieged island, responding to pleas from Churchill that the British situation was becoming desperate, saying it was difficult to “feed this island.”²⁰ The differing visions for the post-war world would continue to drive a wedge between the Churchill and Eden governments and the Truman administration.

The special relationship is often considered to be driven largely by the presidents and prime ministers who choose to appeal to the connection or to allow it to lapse through neglect. Though the popular nature of liberal democracies precludes any arrangement that rests solely upon the opinion of its leaders, they can aid it by articulating well the reasons for the alliance. Churchill tried to perpetuate this view out of the belief that reasonable heads of government would be able to achieve a mutual understanding in foreign policy. The trouble with this theory arose when the different leaders had opposing ideas of what was reasonable, such as in the case of Churchill’s desire for a system that still involved Britain as a major power conflicted with Roosevelt’s vision for a new international order. Because of the transitory nature of political leadership, it is dangerous to classify an alliance as “special” based primarily upon the politics or even the personal relationship between two leaders. Though their collaboration can symbolize or characterize the condition of the special relationship, it does not constitute the basis for it.

The element of a personal relationship retained a vestige of the balance of

power system, which had been orchestrated primarily through the negotiations amongst the European leaders. The goal of those partnerships had been to achieve temporary strategic goals, and the test of the special relationship would be whether or not they could retain the unity of purpose to preserve the alliance over the next few decades. The difficulty of maintaining an alliance of democracies was revealed in the turmoil over post-war settlements. Disagreements about what form of democracy should be established and how that titanic task should be accomplished brought out differences between the U.S. and the U.K. once they had set themselves this task. Several examples of this challenge were provided during the post-war negotiations held between the Big Three: the U.S., the U.K., and the Soviet Union.

These differences of opinion concerned relations within the Big Three as well as dealings with Europe as a whole and with former colonies. Churchill presciently viewed Russia as a looming threat; while Roosevelt believed that a viable relationship with Stalin could be established, possibly enlisting the Soviets into the concept of collective security as a regional police power.²¹ This attention the United States paid to Russia helped distance America from England during the later years of the war. Before the first formal meeting with Stalin in 1943, Churchill attempted to arrange a private meeting with Roosevelt ahead of time in order to coordinate strategy and present a united front to the newest player in the alliance. Characteristic of Churchill, he wanted the Anglo-American alliance to speak with one voice when dealing with potential threats. Roosevelt, however, attended the meeting at Cairo but brought along Chiang Kai-shek of China as well as some Russian staff.²² The president prefer-

¹⁹“Preliminary Agreement Between the United States and the United Kingdom, Art. VII.” 1942. Accessed June 14, 2011. http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/decade04.asp.

²⁰ Winston Churchill, “FDR Letter Regarding British and American Efforts for the War,” The Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum. Accessed June 14, 2011. <http://docs.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/psf/box34/t311s06.html>.

²¹ Lowenheim, Langley, and Jonas, 48.

²² *Ibid.*, 11-12.

red multilateralism, the cooperative attempts of multiple nations in pursuit of the same goal, to anything reminiscent of the “secret deals” of the First World War. He was sending a signal that he was willing to consider America’s relationships with other nations equally “special.” Roosevelt’s choice, however, did not result in a more cooperative and harmonious relationship between the Big Three. It instead left the U.S. and the U.K. open to the demands of the U.S.S.R., which would quickly become their primary adversary in the 20th century.

Furthermore, unity of purpose was even more difficult to achieve because of American ideological resentment towards any imperial systems, which were seen as the cause of many of Europe’s problems. The post-war power play for territory and influence dredged up bad feelings against the former empires of Europe, who were often seen by Americans as responsible for the war in the first place. The European imperial powers were seen as the culprits, and Roosevelt even stated after the war that, “It almost seems that the Japs were a necessary evil in order to break down the old colonial system.”²³ The international situation of the nineteenth century was certainly not idyllic, but the collapse of centuries-old empires, which occurred after the war as the bold attempts to ensure self-determination for every loosely-defined people group collided with the hard facts of Russian occupation of Eastern Germany and Poland, was not much better.

After World War II, Roosevelt became committed to the concept of the United States as a police power in conjunction with the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, and China. In earlier years, he had rejected the balance-of-power structure that

had broken down completely in the world wars and supported collective security as a means to avert war through the League of Nations, but the United States had rejected this plan. As President and the leader of the strongest victorious nation, Roosevelt wished to exclude “smaller” powers that would be incapable of maintaining the peace after the war.²⁴ He thought this would prevent unreasonable arms buildup amongst nations that were not strong enough to keep the peace. This was distinct from the old balance of power situation because weaker European powers would not be allowed to rearm. The trouble with this plan was that it assumed a fundamentally cooperative spirit between the so-called “Big Powers” in the interest of securing human rights and freedoms to the peoples of other nations, an enormous task for even the most powerful nations to undertake and completely dependent upon their altruism. This mutual trust and cooperation did not exist after the immediate threat of fascism had been removed and the U.S.S.R. and China became incapable of aiding the U.S. and the U.K. on their mission of democracy; Russia because of its turn to a despotic regime and China because of its descent into civil war. Neither country would be able to achieve the narrow definition of freedom required for the ideological alliance that was now expected. Roosevelt’s plan for restructuring the post-war international system incorporated a strong role for the Anglo-American special relationship, but a fundamentally impracticable one.

Churchill sought a very different answer to the problem, one which positioned the special relationship in a place of prominence. The prime minister saw the Anglo-American relationship as a stabilizing force

²³ David M. Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 428.

²⁴ Willard Range, *Franklin D. Roosevelt's World Order*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1959), 162-189.

that could remedy some of the unpredictability caused by the balance-of power system that he wanted to modify after the war.²⁵ He expected France and Germany to regain their pre-war status and for the colonies to remain under the stabilizing hand of empire, but wanted the help of the United States in balancing the often-volatile relations amongst the Great Powers. Churchill envisioned an America that would help England perform its traditional role as the Atlantic counterweight to international and Continental imbalances. His plan was to bring the European nations into an unprecedentedly close relationship, aligned with the U.S.A., to resist the influence of the Soviet Union. America had other ideas, however, and, while the international results of the post-war settlements would please neither Churchill nor Roosevelt completely, the special relationship would remain at the heart of the bilateral and multilateral relations attempting to restructure the postwar world.

While the cooperation of the entire Allied nation base was vital to their success in the war, rhetoric appealing to a particular Anglo-American connection was particularly noticeable. Winston Churchill appealed to a variety of shared characteristics and concerns in an attempt to draw the U.S. into a closer cooperation with the war effort, but the phrase “special relationship” was not coined until the famous “Sinews of Peace” speech in 1946. Since then, this relationship has been the subject of analysis, debate, and ridicule. In this speech, considered the unofficial birth of the Cold War, Churchill emphasizes the need for unity amongst the “English-speaking peoples” of the world on the basis of

the great principles of freedom and the rights of man which are the joint inheritance of the English-speaking world and which through Magna

Carta, the Bill of Rights, the Habeas Corpus, trial by jury, and the English common law find their most famous expression in the American Declaration of Independence.²⁶

This reveals Churchill’s conception of the basis upon which the relationship between the United States and Great Britain was a possible and positive good. While the character of the United States is inextricably defined by its founding documents and answerable to the design for government contained within them, the United Kingdom has no written constitution. The Magna Charta can be considered the progenitor of the American Declaration of Independence and Constitution and the similarity of political principle was retained in both British Common Law and the American founding. The appeal to a special relationship made by Churchill infers that these same principles are also enshrined in institutions critical to the British character, though they do not find expression in a written constitution. As a result, consistent accountability to closely-related constitutional principles will ensure that neither nation deviates radically from its foundations and, therefore, from the political character of its close relative.

This speech was the birth certificate of the twentieth century Anglo-American special relationship. Nevertheless, Churchill clearly considered the historical tie still active and effective. There is also a degree of exclusivity in this claim, typified by the reference to the English-speaking world, a conception of almost national identity which prompted Churchill to author a voluminous study on the topic in *The History of the English-Speaking Peoples*. Does the special relationship derive its meaning from merely the convenience of a shared language? Churchill believed otherwise. He scrutinized the shared past and future of the English-

²⁵ Sainsbury, 183.

²⁶ Churchill, “Sinews of Peace.”

speaking peoples and their tendencies to choose a similar way of life based upon these historically shared principles and the potential for further cooperation. The Anglo-American alliance was intended to be special, but not exclusive; logically, any nation that conformed to a natural rights understanding of politics could join themselves to this “specialness” of the relationship. Churchill referred to the Permanent Defense Agreement between America and Canada, as well as the connection that had existed between the United States and the South American Republics.²⁷ The characteristics lauded by Churchill, such as trial by jury, are the natural extensions of a regime that possesses a fundamental understanding of natural law.

The *Sinews of Peace* speech not only laid out the basis upon which the special relationship is possible; it also asserted why it was necessary for the twentieth century. There were several vital international goals to be accomplished through this alliance. As Churchill wrote:

This is no time for generalities, and I will venture to be precise. Fraternal association requires not only the growing friendship and mutual understanding between our two vast but kindred systems of society, but the continuance of the intimate relationship between our military advisers, leading to common study of potential dangers, the similarity of weapons and manuals of instructions, and to the interchange of officers.

The Anglo-American special relationship, then, was not a mutually congratulatory association where the English-Speaking powers could enjoy their similar political

theories in isolation. Instead, this closeness of regime had the very real and practical purpose of meeting new military threats, specifically those posed by communist Russia. It was an attempt to translate power into the spread of freedom, rather than conquest or domination. Churchill went on to assert that a close cooperation between the United States and Great Britain would assist in forming strong bonds with the European neighbors, which in turn would allow the larger association of Western nations to resist the subversive expansion of the Soviet Empire. Churchill thus lent a clear mission to the special relationship as a stabilizing feature in the international power structure.

As the Cold War began, the two most important elements of the nascent special relationship of 1945 were the underlying similarity in political character, appealed to by Churchill, and the close level of strategic and military cooperation that was the product of the war and would continue throughout the twentieth century. The World Wars had crystallized the difference between free and authoritarian regimes. Conflicts over which principles should underlie the new world order proved a handicap to the trans-Atlantic alliance.

The special relationship would be reinterpreted over the ensuing decades as each nation attempted to define their governing foundations and discover some basis for agreement in an age of international, political dichotomy. In the brief span of only thirty-two years, the international order had travelled from the predictable structure of alliances ensured by the balance of power system, through the convulsions of two horrific world wars and a worldwide depression, and was now standing on the threshold of a new global conflict cast in terms of both might and ideological conflict. The United States and the United Kingdom, the two nations with the closest strategic relationship after the war, also

²⁷ Ibid.

shared the bond of a close political history that led to a similar definition of freedom. The consequent decades would be a test of whether or not those allies could maintain their connection despite escalating arguments over what they meant by the term “free nation.”

CHAPTER TWO

Alliance of Freedom

As the nations of the world attempted to find new means to govern foreign policy, they were confronted with the strength and aggression of the Soviet Union. This new challenger to the European power structure presented a threat on two levels: sheer militaristic power and an overtly hostile ruling political principle. Not only did this new empire possess military might, but the principles of communism also asserted that theirs was the only pure form of government and claimed the right to spread their political system by means of force. In fact, “the Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims; they openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions.”²⁸ Against such an ideologically intemperate opponent, devoid of any of the sense of a moderating influence and certain that history was on its side, the United States and the United Kingdom were compelled to defend themselves with an equally strong moral absolute. Churchill characterized the struggle against the Soviet Union by emphasizing a coalition of free nations. He prized the trans-Atlantic alliance, stating: “In the increasing unity of the Anglo-American thought and action resides the main foundation of the freedom and progress of all men

in all lands...we have only to be morally united and fearless, to give mankind the best hope of avoiding another supreme catastrophe.”²⁹

This ideological argument of natural rights-based constitutionalism versus collectivist nihilism summarized the conflict of the Cold War. The foreign policy that arose to interpret the conflict incorporated a kind of moral language that had arisen during the World Wars. It was a conflict of freedom versus despotism: a global struggle in which the aggressive power must be, not only counteracted by balancing alliances, but also defeated to ensure the survival of civilization. This necessitated a binding moral agreement amongst the nations challenging the despotic regime. This consensus was difficult to achieve, however, as differences quickly arose amongst the allied nations of the Western world.

Although countries accustomed to similar political habits tend to exhibit the same interests, a call to unite on the basis of freedom requires stable agreement about what freedom is; in other words, they needed an agreement on the definition of the best regime. For this reason, the Anglo-American special relationship was able to maintain a consistent and thorough cooperation during the next four decades, despite the many circumstantial challenges that arose during that time. The U.K. and the U.S. were able to draw upon a natural basis for alliance. Alliances claim their usefulness on the basis of shared goals or interests. These can be transitory, like the necessity to win a battle, or enduring, like the drive to preserve a particular form of government. The Anglo-American special relationship is among the latter. Constitutional governments require, first, stability to enable the practice of their political principles, and are naturally suspicious of regimes that scorn their liberal practices. The interests of the U.K. and of

²⁸Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*. Accessed October 10, 2011. <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/index.html>.

²⁹ Churchill, “This Century of Tragedy,” 464.

the U.S. are habitually aligned because their foreign policy is the natural outworking of their domestic political principles. Because they are built upon rights-based legal systems which place a high value upon consent, they naturally favor other regimes of like character. It can thus be said that the Anglo-American alliance was one based upon mutual self-interest. The interest of securing their constitutional governments is an enduring pursuit that may manifest itself in a variety of policies over time. Nor is an alliance of interest a base foundation of agreement, for “interest is not necessarily amoral; moral consequences can spring from interested acts.”³⁰ Thus any alliance based upon the freedom of their regimes is fundamentally concerned with both the practicality and morality of its actions. This would be epitomized by the partnership of the British and the Americans: two respectively fundamentally pragmatic and confirmedly idealistic peoples.

Despite the firm basis for a close Anglo-American relationship, the period of 1946-1980 would prove a time of constant confusion over the role the alliance ought to play. Americans were caught between the tension of idealism and realism and supported growing novel supranational institutions through the UN while bowing to the realities of global conflict through participation in NATO—an orthodox mutual defense pact. The United States grasped for a balance between the two models in its new role as global superpower. The United Kingdom was faced with a similar choice: when the ties of commonwealth grew thin, the two economic and political models open to the island kingdom were the European Community and a closer relationship with its trans-Atlantic partner, the U.S.A. These conflicts would test the special relationship. Its great

weakness would be the failure to articulate effectively which shared principles animated the relationship, leading to many redefinitions of the Anglo-American alliance throughout three decades. Although the strategic, practical relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom remained fairly stable, there was something missing. A close synchronization of the domestic policies that logically led to similarities in foreign policy could not occur until each nation had experienced three decades of political experimentation, which finally resulted in the ability to clearly articulate what differentiated their governments from those they opposed. The story that followed Churchill’s 1946 speech would be incomplete until 1988, when Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan surveyed the product of their coalition based upon shrewd political decisions and a strong ideological agreement. The tale of the intervening years was one of imbalance: when the strategic goals existed, the moral agreement was lacking, or a rhetorical agreement disguised a fundamental uncertainty about how mutual foreign policy goals should be accomplished.

The post-war context of financial upheaval and lack of world economic leadership placed Anglo-American relations in the position of navigating their duty towards the international economic framework in a logical and concerted manner. An immediate challenge that would meet the Anglo-American partnership was the economic disaster left in the wake of two all-encompassing World Wars and the intermediate period of depression in Europe and readjustment in America. America’s economy was expanding, along with her government, at an unprecedented rate, and her new position as the leading international power would present her with innumerable urgent concerns from all over the globe. Britain conversely suffered along with her

³⁰ Henry Kissinger, *American Foreign Policy*, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1977), 93.

European neighbors from the ravages of the war. By 1945, the United Kingdom's postwar, overseas debt totaled almost 10 percent of prewar wealth, net income from foreign investment was worth less than 40 percent of prewar value, and England had debt liabilities of nearly 2 billion pounds.³¹ The former ruling economic power of the world was now a debtor nation. This presented a deep psychological blow that would influence the attempts to align closer with the United States' economic might or to pursue further integration into the European Economic Community. In addition to these economic woes, Britain had ceded control of a large share of her former colonies, which had served as lucrative markets in the now-gone nineteenth century trading system. Consequently, the U.K. needed to rework its entire economic structure to define its postwar role in the world.

It was truly a different world than the one in which the British Empire had set the rule for international trade. The U.S. and the U.K. sought close economic cooperation in an attempt to stave off a relapse into depression and to return the international commercial system to some semblance of stability. Under the Bretton Woods system, devised in 1944, the currency of the U.K. was now pegged to the United States' dollar. The basis for international economic trust was now the faith that the American dollar could redeem international holdings for a fixed rate of gold. This established a "dollar standard" of sorts that would keep exchange rates stable and would supposedly prevent nations from unreasonably inflating their currency for temporary commercial benefit.³² This would help to maintain a close

relationship between America and her allies until the Bretton Woods system was dissolved in 1971 due to fundamental changes in the convertibility of the dollar.³³ The reintegration of world finances at the Bretton Woods Conference was one of the earliest signals that the allies were dedicated to maintaining a close connection rather than repeating their mistake of navel-gazing autarky during the interwar period.

The first element that comes to mind with mention of the special relationship is the strategic partnership of the Cold War. Churchill hoped that the Anglo-American alliance would be capable of taking the lead in resisting Russian influence and, with several notable glitches, it did just that. Regardless of competing aims over war outcomes, the Anglo-American strategic culture that emerged from World War II continued the close coordination of scientific innovation, technology sharing, and troop movements into the succeeding decades. In simplest terms, any stable alliance must be based on the pursuit of a mutual goal. In international affairs, this usually takes the form of resistance to a common threat. It seems natural that from a temporary military alliance an ongoing, ad hoc institution to resist the new threat of the Soviet Union would develop. Many nations were affected by the Cold War and operated in a loose entente of resistance to Soviet influence. None, however, were as closely affiliated in the intent of their alliance as the United States and the United Kingdom. Though the general goal of the coalition facing the Soviet Union was "freedom from Soviet control and a desire to work out a

³¹ Robert M. Hathaway, *Great Britain and the United States: Special Relations since World War II* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1990), 10.

³² The International Monetary Fund, "Cooperation and Reconstruction (1944-71)." Accessed October 18, 2011.

<http://www.imf.org/external/about/histcoop.htm> (accessed October 18, 2011).

³³ Michael D. Bordo, "The Concise Encyclopedia of Economics: Gold Standard," *The Library of Economics and Liberty*. Accessed October 11, 2011. <http://www.econlib.org/library/Enc/GoldStandard.html#>.

political future in some other way than subject to Soviet hegemony,” the United States and a handful of its close allies, most prominently the British, sought an additional accomplishment. These allies desired a “world order” resting on a spreading adherence to liberal political institutions, principles of common law, and stable economic and monetary policy as promulgated by constitutional regimes.³⁴ Thus, the general good was to defend against USSR aggression, while the specific goal shared by the Anglo-American alliance was to project freedom and democracy through constitutional forms.

In the Cold War, the fighting did not immediately take the form of troop deployments and battle strategy; instead, this war was about balancing power against power and influence against threats and, most of all, preventing a nuclear war. Britain was practiced in this sort of stabilizing role, having emerged from the balance of power of the previous century. This experience augmented the bond of the special relationship. The natural reversion to a balancing system appeared in the decades after the World Wars as military buildups attempted to resist the threat of one disproportionately large and hostile world power. The mutual defense pact embodied in NATO revealed the inevitable drive toward equilibrium that rules international affairs by preventing any one nation from holding too much power. The allies were wary of the USSR exerting its influence over too many dependent nations and therefore took an interest in otherwise vulnerable nations. This time the threat could not be balanced by a direct attack of the aggressor, however, and the challenge for the Anglo-American alliance

was to combine their power in order to match that of the Soviet Union while avoiding escalation.

Alliances were central to Cold War strategy. Though these complex diplomatic networks reveal the necessity for the U.S. to cultivate allies, the belief persisted that the special relationship was merely a last, desperate attempt for the U.K. to retain a measure of influence by riding the coattails of its trans-Atlantic partners and accepting a limited role in a “formalized privileged position with the U.S.”³⁵ Harold McMillan made famous this attitude in 1943 by creating the analogy that the British were to the Americans as the Greeks were to the Romans—an intellectual guiding influence upon a young superpower. This rhetoric placed the U.K. in a decidedly inferior position, but also implied that the U.S. and the U.K. were somehow not moral equals. This opinion of the special relationship has gained widespread currency, however, and historians often classify the alliance as little more than an arrangement where it is accepted that the British Prime Minister and ambassador will have a more or less complete account of the United States’ policies and actions, but will have little real voice against the influence of the U.S.³⁶

It is obvious that the United States dominated the twentieth century in terms of military superiority and economic growth. Its main competitor, the Soviet Union, was bankrupt by the end of the 1980s, the decade that saw an explosion in America’s prosperity. The emergence of American hegemony, however, does not relegate every

³⁴ Paul H. Nitze, “Coalition Policy and the Concept of World Order.” In *Alliance Policy in the Cold War*, ed. Arnold Wolfers, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1959), 15-30.

³⁵ David Reynolds, “Rethinking Anglo-American Relations,” *International Affairs*, 65, no. 1 (1988): 89-111.

³⁶ Nathan M. Macek, “Britain, the United States, and the ‘Special Relationship’ during the Eden and Macmillan Administrations.” Accessed July 2, 2011. <https://www.msu.edu/user/maceknat/resource/mc390ir.htm>.

other nation to irrelevance. The United States exhibited the peculiar tendency to limit her own influence by assisting in the creation of international organizations and adhering to their opinions. Because of her position as a coalition leader, “the United States is not granted the relative simplification that comes either with unambiguous power over others, or with unambiguous delimitation of the responsibility sole to one’s own national interest.”³⁷ It is in the American character to listen to allied voices. Additionally, Britain would show herself quite willing to abstain from Americans initiatives in which she did not believe, most notably the Vietnam War. Finally, Britain’s history is not one of total and final decline. Both the United Kingdom and the United States experienced periods of growth and tremendous setbacks during the twentieth century, each handled with varying degrees of success and none of them the final word on the country’s influence or greatness.

Pursuing the close alliance of the special relationship would prove a difficult task through the consequent decades. Each significant premiership of the postwar era characterized the special relationship differently and found varying degrees of success in working with its American counterparts. As the first postwar Prime Minister, Clement Atlee faced the many challenges of reconstruction, not the least of which was determining how the relationship with the United States would continue to function. Atlee was immediately confronted with the problem of Britain’s strategic position, which was weakened after the war, and how to maintain an independent force of conventional and nuclear weapons. The strategic element of the special relationship was evident throughout Atlee’s tenure of 1945-1951

and ushered the allies out of World War and into a new conflict.

Clement Atlee and President Harry Truman held the dubious honor of holding the highest office in the most influential free nations during the infancy of the nuclear bomb. Although the modern imagination has become largely used to the idea of a wide proliferation of nuclear technologies, the quantity and deployment of atomic weapons was the way of keeping score during the war. Just as naval power had been the measure of strength for centuries, nuclear might bestowed upon its owners the frightful weight of being able to annihilate an entire city of enemies. Escalation of conflict, driven by the inconceivable scale of nuclear destructiveness, was the fear that haunted all Cold War governments. The thought that a diplomatic misstep or a soldier in the wrong village could potentially launch a conflict exponentially more devastating than the World Wars was a solemn warning against international folly. Though there was no one conventional conflict between the major powers, various proxy wars corrected for imbalances of power between the USSR and the USA. With the new and growing influence of nuclear power, the Anglo-American nuclear partnership would therefore act as an indicator of the alliance’s overall health. These were the thoughts of governments as Clement Atlee decided whether or not Britain should pursue nuclear independence.

Atlee’s policies showed that the special relationship was still alive and well when he allowed American bomber bases to be placed on British soil in 1948 without any written agreement—an unusual arrangement for two significant international powers. The mood of the time was that of an informal invitation, not a careful delineation of mutual responsibilities as with most pur-

³⁷ William Lee Miller, “The American Ethos and the Alliance System,” in *Alliance Policy in the Cold War*, ed. Arnold Wolfers, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1959), 31-48.

poseful bilateral treaties.³⁸ Additionally, several B-29 bombers were transferred to England after the war, enabling them to maintain an independent defense despite the expenses of a strong air force. Through this crucial aid, the U.S. helped the U.K. become independent, rather than encouraging dependence upon unilateral enforcement of international law by the Americans. Great Britain assisted the United States in some of its efforts as well, sending troops to the action in Korea, in hopes that a contribution to Asian collective security would stimulate American efforts to assist in European collective security.³⁹ All of these factors contributed to the continuation of an Anglo-American strategic partnership, though the emphasis upon collective security would prove hazardous as the British and the Americans continued to view different regions, in this case Europe and East Asia, as primary, and could not understand why their trans-Atlantic partners often had a different opinion.⁴⁰

The conflict in North Korea was the first shot of a long war. As the Americans struggled to stem the tide of Communist influence, Britain again played an important role in world affairs. Even before becoming a full-fledged nuclear power, Britain closely monitored one of the first manifestations of the Cold War, as aggression erupted on the Korean peninsula. After the addition of Chinese troops to the North Korean forces, confirming fears that this was not an isolated conflict, discussion began in Washington surrounding the use of nuclear weapons. There were, as of yet, no firm precedents for

interacting with nuclear powers and the judicious use of atomic weapons was still conceivable. In this particular disagreement, the U.K. fulfilled one of the roles that some proponents of the special relationship, including Churchill, hoped she would: she acted as a reasonable intermediary voice for the opinion of a majority of other European nations.

The intervention of the Chinese in Korea shocked the Americans and seemed to indicate a rapid spread of Communism that could only be combated with drastic measures. With the new technology available, some in London feared that the nuclear bomb would be considered an option in the conflict. The British Foreign Office informed its Washington embassy "It must be a major and indeed the primary object of our policy to contain situations such as the Korean and to prevent a world war. For this purpose it seems to us essential to give Russians the opportunity of beating a retreat."⁴¹ The U.K. wanted to maintain a level of caution when dealing with nuclear usage, but still supported America's Asian policy, as necessary in light of Chinese aggression. Atlee advised Washington that the United Nations would not support any use of the bomb in Korea. A brief meeting between the heads of government corrected the alarmist European fears of reflexive use of the bomb, and the Prime Minister went home assured that the Americans were not contemplating any gigantic international incident. Furthermore, Atlee encouraged the United States to host bilateral talks on Cold War defense policy: a critical step that used the experiences of Korea to help solidify strategy for the coming conflicts.⁴²

The United States had to leave a certain ambiguity about which weapons it was willing and capable of using in order to

³⁸ Jay M. Shafritz, *International Encyclopedia of Public Policy and Administration*, Vol. IV, (Pittsburgh: Westview Press, 1998), 2110.

³⁹ Hathaway, 35.

⁴⁰ William Stuek, "The Limits of Influence: British Policy and American Expansion of the War in Korea," *Pacific Historical Review*, 55, no. 1 (1986): 65-95.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

avoid informing its enemies. The forceful resistance to aggression was the standing policy of the United States and it behooved the U.S. to leave open as many options as possible. The constant communication between the United States and Great Britain, however, made it easier to prevent the alarm of an unpredictable nuclear action from spreading to the point where the United States was constantly suspected of wielding that power. Especially in the light of new and potentially catastrophic technologies, it was vital to the special relationship that there existed some basis of trust. An assurance of restraint would only be granted through time and experience, but the shared history and governing habits of the Anglo-American alliance allowed that trust to grow to a degree unmatched by other nations in the anti-Soviet coalition. Though the alliances based upon a desire to defend liberty worldwide would experience many problems of practical application, such as when, where, and to what degree force should be exercised in the Cold War battles, it is to their credit that the United States and the United Kingdom could establish the trust that led to their mutual possession of the atomic bomb.

During his second premiership, which lasted from 1951-1955 and encompassed critical events like the Korean War, Winston Churchill pondered how to restructure the U.K.'s dealings with the world. With the help of his foreign minister and later Prime Minister Anthony Eden, Churchill developed the theory of the "three circles." This idea referred to the separate but connected spheres Britain could influence in her post-imperial role. Britain was viewed as the center of the overlapping rings of the Commonwealth, Europe, and America. The British hoped to influence and bring balance to all three, which would effectively give them clout on a near-global scale. The interaction between the American connection and the European sphere would be a

difficult balancing act as the power of the European Community grew steadily over the decades and the proposed extension of the commonwealth fell through.

Though Eden helped develop the theory of the three circles, his premiership was occupied with alliances of quite a different kind. The characterizing event of Eden's government, and the crippling failure which restricted his tenure to a brief two years between 1955 and 1957, was the British conflict with Egypt known as the Suez Crisis. In 1956, the United States and Britain withdrew their promise to construct the Aswan Dam, a lucrative investment project built across the Nile River, in light of Egypt's formal diplomatic recognition of Communist China and the USSR. In retaliation, the President of Egypt Gamal Abdel Nasser decided to nationalize the Suez Canal. Though the canal was within Egyptian territory, it was a strategic waterway to the East trading markets. More importantly, the majority of shares in the Suez Canal were owned by the British, with French interests represented as well; the nationalization of the canal thus abrogated the property international investors rightfully and legally held. With the aid of an advance strike by Israel, an Anglo-French alliance attacked Egypt with the goal of toppling Nasser, regaining control of the canal, and reasserting their power and influence in the Middle Eastern sphere. Unfortunately, the attack achieved none of these goals and had some serious consequences for Britain.

First, the British failed to consult the United States about their proposed action in Egypt. Although America's interests had also been threatened by Egypt's potential alignment with the USSR, it did not appreciate a failed attempt by Great Britain to retaliate. The United States used its economic influence to let the pound weaken until the British agreed to withdraw. This episode is widely considered to be proof positive of delusional post-imperial powers attempting

to exert an influence far beyond their means. In light of other military actions taken at the time, however, it shows that the relationship between the post-imperial powers and the United States was not as antagonistic as it is often portrayed. While the United States may have had questionable feelings towards Britain's history as a colonial power, America would take a myriad of international actions for reasons not dissimilar to that during Suez, notably through widespread CIA interventionism in unstable regions. The disagreement over the Suez Canal was more a conflict over means: the United States correctly believed the Franco-British action to be mistimed and improperly executed. Though they sometimes disagreed on the occasion and degree of influence required, their established pattern indicated they both agreed that military action was a useful tool for securing national interest. Only two years after the Suez Crisis, Britain and America mounted a joint operation in Jordan and Lebanon.⁴³ In a region where oil interests conflicted and anti-communist strategy often differed, the Anglo-American alliance was able to achieve a military goal, proving that the Suez Crisis had not seriously undermined their ability to function as a team.

Anthony Eden's two years in office, dominated by the Suez Crisis and accusations of imperialist nostalgia, were a hiatus from the pursuit of the three circles strategy advocated by himself and Churchill. Upon assuming office in 1957, Harold Macmillan began to pursue enthusiastically each sphere of influence to the frustration of all but the Anglo-American special relationship. The painful decomposition of the British Empire was still underway during Macmillan's premiership, and there was still the hope that

the "Commonwealth circle" of Britain's influence would prove the strongest link based upon similar principles. The 1960 "Africa" speech by Harold Macmillan to the Royal Commonwealth Society reveals many of the intractable problems plaguing the nations in the 1960s as well as Britain's ongoing quest for a concrete role amidst her complex attachments around the globe.

Macmillan's speech is also known as "The Winds of Change," or a turning point in British foreign policy where the country would cease its wistful remembrance of its past empire and seek more realistic connections. Macmillan appealed to the hope of a greater unity with the commonwealth nations in his speech, stating the same "doctrine of concurring minority," observed in both America and Great Britain, would provide the necessary stability to the nascent independence of postcolonial African countries to allow them to move into a successful partnership with the rest of the Commonwealth.⁴⁴ Unfortunately, the former colonies of Britain proved to be a source of ongoing instability and concern throughout the remainder of the twentieth century. The rough transition of the British-held South Rhodesia into the independent Zimbabwe would prove a sticking point through the Thatcher premiership, and many of the other commonwealth countries were no better. In Africa, the main focus of "The Winds of Change," many of the former colonies of European powers were too consumed by internal convulsions to prove any use in the functions that were useful in the Commonwealth: as trading partners, military allies, or security against the Soviet Union. As one historian notes:

It was often the over-hasty nature of decolonization, before there was a

⁴³ David Reynolds, "A 'Special Relationship'? America, Britain, and the International Order Since the Second World War," *International Affairs*, 62, no. 1 (1985): 1-20.

⁴⁴ Harold MacMillan, "Africa," *African Affairs*, 59, no. 236 (1960): 191-200.

large enough middle class, that wrecked democracy in many of these places....too often local leaders moved straight from prison cell to presidential palace without the intervening stage of administrator's office.⁴⁵

The gradual development of common law that had formed Australia, Canada, and the United States were totally absent from these fledgling states, newly emerged from millennia of empire. Macmillan was therefore attempting to enjoy the fruit of liberal democracy before its seed had been planted. The turmoil of these nations was added to the lack of British resources available to exert influence in such a wide area. The hope for an extension of the current commonwealth area would not come soon enough to assist in the Cold War.

Besides his involvement with decolonization, Harold Macmillan also presided over a critical episode in the nuclear partnership with the United States. A major test of the special relationship would come from Britain's determination to possess an independent nuclear deterrent and America's changeable opinion on the subject. Great Britain wanted to cautiously avoid overdependence upon its Atlantic neighbor, but the U.S. viewed this new technology as far too dangerous to be shared freely. The McMahon Act of 1946 had prevented the sale of any nuclear technology or information pertaining to its development.⁴⁶ Despite this disagreement over nuclear policy, Britain continued to develop her own individual deterrent and eventually developed nuclear power independently in the 1950s. A difficulty of the "fraternal association," as

Churchill had christened the alliance, was exactly how much ought to be shared between the two. After all, an alliance based fundamentally upon trust rather than short-term utility would necessitate drawing an arbitrary line at what cooperation was deemed necessary. Experience would soon dictate the ongoing nuclear policy between the U.S. and the U.K.

As the nuclear partnership developed into the 1950s, it became entwined with other diplomatic priorities. Harold Macmillan would have the opportunity to manage the course of Anglo-American nuclear policy. A major test of the alliance came from the American development of Skybolt, a ballistic missile that could be paired with British aircraft. With the historical flight of Sputnik in 1957, the Americans were made sharply aware of Russian scientific advancements and turned once again to their erstwhile allies, the British.⁴⁷ The atomic partnership was updated for the new challenge in 1960 as Macmillan and Eisenhower hammered out a deal whereby the British would receive the U.S. Skybolt missiles in exchange for a submarine base in Britain that would host Polaris, a cutting-edge missile delivered from submarines.⁴⁸

Uncertainties about the feasibility and expense of the Skybolt missile simmered and finally came to a head in the "Skybolt Crisis" of December 1962. The effectiveness of the missile relative to the Polaris submarine came into question, with the result that the Americans halted construction of the Skybolt due to cost effectiveness and the belief that air delivery systems were quickly becoming obsolete relative to submarine power. The discontinuation of this missile system, which the British had been depending upon, came as a blow to those in Parliament who were defending the necessity for the U.K. to

⁴⁵ Andrew Roberts, *History of the English-Speaking Peoples*, (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 545.

⁴⁶ *Atomic Energy Act of 1946*, Public Law 585, 79th Cong., 1946, 2d sess. (August 1, 1946). Accessed July 3, 2011. <http://www.cfr.org/energy/atomic-energy-act-1946-mcmahon-act-pl-585/p21415>,

⁴⁷ Reynolds, "A 'Special Relationship'?" 1-20.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 12.

remain a nuclear power. The Royal Air Force was also strongly lobbying Parliament to retain its funding at the time, determinedly trying to secure a government backing regardless of its future profitability. In the face of all these pressures, Prime Minister Macmillan was able to convince President Kennedy to substitute the Polaris missile for the promised Skybolt as an equivalent measure. The difficulty was not that the U.K. received an inferior missile; on the contrary, technology was developing so rapidly that to remain fixated only on air delivery systems was to be shortsighted. Yet, the British government had invested much into the promise that they would receive Skybolt and its sudden termination seemed to indicate an element of untrustworthiness on the part of the Americans. This stoked fears of Kennedy's unilateralism, raised by his October 1962 handling of the Cuban Missile Crisis and his anti-nuclear rhetoric. Though the crisis was not a tangible threat to Anglo-American nuclear cooperation, it was an example of miscommunication and, therefore, a psychological blow to short-term relations.⁴⁹ Perception is crucial in international relations, where the dependability of an ally could be called into doubt by a simple confusion between ambassadors.

The Skybolt incident was indicative of the many fears present in the Cold War world. The trustworthiness of allies, the search for security and self-defense, and the ever-present importance of perception caused a largely avoidable tiff between allies who generally agreed upon their respective roles in the Cold War. More substantial disagreements, however, emerged amongst the nations composing the postwar alliance

and the tensions between the memory of nineteenth century imperial rule and the newfound strength of the United States often led to an ambiguity about what authority the nations ought to be allowed to exercise on the international stage.

The third task Harold Macmillan took upon himself was to begin the arduous process of European integration, presenting Britain's first application to join the European Economic Community, the forerunner to the European Union. Though the first effort was rejected, this gesture would launch the chain of events culminating in official European membership. Though the American opinion upon Britain's European integration changed frequently, the choice between integration and a closer relationship with the United States would become stark as the two negotiated their roles within international organizations.

Britain's nebulous connection with Europe was only part of the twentieth century drive for international cooperation, and the United States also struggled with these establishments. The end of World War II brought about the age of international institutions in an attempt to bring foreign relations under a new rule of law rather than a contest of power. The initial experiment in international governance began on a summer day in San Francisco in 1945. The signing of the United Nations Charter set forth three goals: to collectively manage threats to peace and acts of aggression, to secure the principles of equal rights and national self-determination, and to act as a forum for solving economic, social, and humanitarian questions.⁵⁰ Here was a clear statement of a moral cause which signatories believed the free nations of the world ought to unite

⁴⁹ Ian Clark, *Nuclear Diplomacy and the Special Relationship: Britain's Deterrent and America, 1957-1962* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1994), 338-373.

⁵⁰ The United Nations, Charter of the United Nations: Article I, June 26 1945. Accessed July 3, 2011. <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/chapter1.shtml>.

behind, but the tangible threats from the East quickly obscured these utopian ambitions.

As Harold Macmillan attempted to maintain all three circles of British policy, the United States was adjusting to its new position at the center of a massive anti-Soviet coalition. The new concept of a so-called security community attempted to reconcile the idea of international cooperation amongst a variety of nations with the pursuit of individual nations' security. If successful, the nations which comprised these supranational bodies would be able to count upon collective security to defend their own national security and thus be freed to pursue the higher goals prescribed by the international order. In spite of the cooperative ideals espoused by the United Nations, a litany of other security pacts, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Australia, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty (ANZUS), formalized alliances between free nations to keep the peace. These were organizations of a different kind: defense alliances designed to align nations based upon similar interests rather than cooperation towards goals. This distinction is critical to understanding the special relationship. Though the defensive element formed a sizable portion of the alliance, the shared political inheritance lent it the morality of an alliance based upon ideology. The Anglo-American special relationship was fundamentally practical, as with any establishment involving the British, and the cooperative basis for international affairs was never wholly adopted. The special relationship was not cast entirely in the mold of UN, nor of the NATO; it was the mean between the two, in that it was based upon philosophical goals and served the ends of security.

The basic hope of liberal internationalism was that the UN and its fellow organizations would function as a forum to govern tricky international questions. The complexities of the national interests in-

involved, however, were often intractable in a room of too many voices. The indestructible realities of human nature caused each nation to pursue the interests of its own people first, regardless of the fellow-feeling they may have had for the other countries in the collective security system. A bi-polar situation also made the friendship of other liberal democratic nations seem more valuable. The oldest concept of foreign relations, the definition of "we" as a group with particular principles and a way of life, against "them," those who bear enmity to our way of life, was therefore extended over a larger area to embrace the wider community of liberal democracies.⁵¹ Traditionally, the distinction between a group identified as a politically separated and coherent entity had been limited to the border of a city, a tribe, or a nation-state. The principles of collective security demanded that the anti-Soviet allies draw closely together, but the diversity of the states involved in the coalition made such concord near-impossible. The United States stood at the center of a loose alliance system that included colonial powers and colonies, former WWII antagonists, democratic states and non-communist dictatorships, as well as relatively secure states along with those facing imminent danger from Soviet encroachments.⁵² The dizzying complexity of the connections ensured that this alliance would spend as much time sorting out disputed relations amongst its neighbors as it did opposing the professed enemy. The sheer number of the nations involved ensured that the United States would inevitably be blamed by one party for its connection to another nation. It is a small

⁵¹ Thomas Risse-Kappen, "Collective Identity in a Democratic Community: The Case of NATO." In *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, Peter J. Katzenstein, n.d. Accessed July 2, 2011.

⁵² Miller, "The American Ethos and the Alliance System," 31-48.

wonder, then, that the United Kingdom, with its predictably constitutional political system, seemed a natural ally to the U.S. as it juggled foreign relations at the center of a massive coalition.

One of the peculiarities of the Anglo-American special relationship is the effect it had upon Great Britain's faltering attempts to join the European Union. Throughout the twentieth century, the United States generally desired Britain's European membership, displaying the overall positive feeling towards international organizations that was prevalent at the time. During the evolution of the institutions which would eventually comprise the European Union, Americans believed that Britain's membership could tilt the European community in a favorable direction. If British and American interests were truly similar, then it stood to reason that America would want that influence within one of the emerging powers. The British decision to seek membership in the European Economic Community in 1961 therefore received approbation from Washington.⁵³ In the same year, however, a poll asked the British public which they would rather join if given the choice: the United States or Europe. Though a rather extreme question, it had the surprising result of 55 percent for America and 22 percent for Europe.⁵⁴ Clearly, feelings toward European integration were still mixed.

The period of Harold Wilson's premiership was largely defined by domestic policy, but Edward Heath's rise to office in 1970 would encompass Britain's accession to the European Community. The road to European membership had been a shaky one for Britain, and their accession was often cast in terms of an either-or decision; either they could pursue the path of further con-

nection to and possibly integration with Europe, or they could continue to align themselves with the United States in the Atlantic partnership. This is certainly not how Churchill envisioned a strategic European alliance functioning; he had hoped for an England that would have one foot in each camp and exert influence in both spheres while balancing their former global possessions in the form of the Commonwealth. Although NATO theoretically held together the European powers with America, the European community often distrusted Britain's privileged strategic partnership with the United States. Furthermore, the Skybolt incident had tested Britain's relationships with both sides. The immediate turn to the British as the natural power to help shore up defenses against the advancing Soviet technologies reiterates the high level of trust shared between the two nations. It requires the assurance of a common morality to trust another sovereign nation with the most destructive technology ever invented, and that trust was present within the Anglo-American relationship. There was and is a basic understanding that the similar nature of the political life in both countries was stable enough to ward off whimsical use of this deadly weapon. This is necessary for any substantive alliance that is distinguished by its intended longevity from the arrangements based upon mere necessity. The revived nuclear partnership had an unintended consequence, however.

The European Community was suspicious of the exclusivity of Anglo-American cooperation on nuclear matters and cast Britain's choice to depend upon the United States as a slight against the theory of collective security. The acceptance of the Polaris submarine probably delayed Britain's admission into the European Community by roughly ten years. This happened largely due to French influence exerted against their admission as a protest against

⁵³ Risse-Kappen, 55.

⁵⁴ Hathaway, 55.

the exclusivity of the nuclear relationship between the U.K. and the U.S.⁵⁵ The balance between European and American influence would continue to be sought by the British, and the nature of this juggling act would change drastically with the dramatic expansion of the European federation. Eventually Britain would have to consider the close political tie she held as “a member of the European Union but simply an ally of the United States.”⁵⁶ Admission to the European Economic Community was seen as a valuable prize, and in 1973 Prime Minister Heath downgraded the special relationship to the “natural relationship” in his rhetoric, to assuage European concerns that the British valued the American alliance too highly. Britain was subsequently granted admission to the EEC.⁵⁷

The 1970s presented an unfortunate prediction of the future of the Anglo-American special relationship. England finally gained admission to the European Economic Community in 1973, which Henry Kissinger dubbed “the Year of Europe,” a hint that Britain’s connection to the United States was not as relevant as its new continental membership. Germany replaced England as NATO’s greatest monetary contributor. The decline of Britain’s economic power to roughly half of Japan’s Gross National Product also seemed to prompt the United States to cultivate other relationships that might prove to be “special.”⁵⁸

The threat of the Soviet Union remained as the Anglo-American special relationship contended with its various alliances,

and the ambiguity that permeated the Western coalition affected Cold War policy. The vital condition of victory, so clearly articulated at the beginning of the conflict, quickly lost steam as Europe began to revert to a natural balance of power. In a recently destabilized region, like Europe after the World Wars, nations tend to fall into a more or less stable division of influence and acceptance of its neighbors in order to avert further conflict—at least until one power is strong enough to successfully challenge others. The uneasy realization that the Soviet Union had become a major power whether its former allies liked it or not had led to a guarded acceptance of its role in world affairs. Macmillan wrote that “even Communist and Free countries have to learn to live in this world side by side,” which was a moderate position that accepted Soviet influence and sought to work around this unjust power as much as possible, accepting it as one would accept an immovable obstacle.⁵⁹ This policy extended into the 1970s as détente; the “relaxation” of tensions occurred as the two main powers, along with their allies and dependencies, began to understand them as a fact of life. If this logic had been carried to its conclusion, it would have resulted in the natural balance of power arrangement, remarkably similar to the nineteenth century phenomenon which the plethora of international organizations had sworn to make irrelevant. Acceptance of a dichotomous arrangement of the nations, however, was one foreign policy institution Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher would react against in the 1980s.

American foreign policy in the 1970s was largely dominated by the Vietnam War, which Britain declined to participate in. Both countries were experiencing widespread domestic problems. The governmental mistrust and scandal permeating American politics was a counterpoint to the disas-

⁵⁵ Ibid., 67.

⁵⁶ Anand Menon, “Between Faith and Reason: UK Policy Towards the US and the EU,” *The Royal Institute of International Affairs* (2010). Accessed November 18, 2011.
<http://www.chathamhouse.org/publications/papers/view/109403>.

⁵⁷ Shafritz, 2109.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 13.

⁵⁹ Macmillan, 198.

trous labor relations battles Britain was experiencing. The fall of countries like Angola and Cambodia to Communism set the West on the defensive, while Edward Heath's government in Britain faced a major terrorist attack from Leila Khaled of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.⁶⁰ The Anglo-American alliance thus faced one of the worst periods of the Cold War as well as the beginning of the terrifying new era of worldwide, as opposed to localized, terrorism. When Harold Wilson entered his second premiership in 1974 after Edward Heath's four-year stint in office, he met with a cold welcome from America's president. Lyndon B. Johnson had little use for the advice of Prime Minister Wilson, retorting: "I won't tell you how to run Malaysia [a British foreign action at time of budget stress], and you don't tell us how to run Vietnam."⁶¹ What could have been a time of increasing cooperation was instead a period of insularity and national dissatisfaction with government action both at home and abroad. Along with alliance troubles and the constant threat of the seemingly indestructible Soviet Union, internal strife in the United States and the United Kingdom sent tremors through the special relationship.

The result of 25 years of pursuing a foreign policy that attempted to bring politically similar nations into a closer cooperation with one another in the interests of collective security and the spread of liberty only highlighted the differences between nations that were, broadly speaking, free. The United Kingdom was in the predicament of being the halfway mark between the EU and the US. The idea to extend and strengthen the commonwealth, encouraged by Churchill, Eden, and Macmillan, only reemphasized the political choices that many of Britain's former colonies had embraced

and had removed them further from the understanding of freedom encouraged by the U.K. Furthermore, special relationships did not develop between the U.S. and other European nations or between the U.K. and its Continental neighbors because they disagreed so strongly about how a free regime ought to function. The role of the Anglo-American special relationship within the framework of complex international organizations involves many nations with a wide range of political habits, and reveals both the attempt to create formal alliances based upon moral principles and the problems that plagued those institutions when they failed to possess the degree of political similarity needed to make an especially close alliance function properly.

Since its inception in 1945, the Anglo-American special relationship had managed to weather the complex entanglements of new international structures, conflicts over intervention into other nations, and clashes between their respective leaders. The similar history and political traditions of the two nations helped keep the attachment intact, but their frequent disagreements about issues such as European integration, the role of national interest within multilateral organizations, and even personal disagreements between the leaders of the two nations illuminated a fundamental problem with the relationship. Though they could ally successfully to meet the threat of the Soviet Union, they failed to define coherently upon what principles this alliance of freedom was supposed to be based. They lacked a standard upon which to judge the success of the relationship because of a fundamental ideological shift occurring in both nations. The stability of a constitutional regime, the basis of the Anglo-American special relationship, was ruptured by the rise of Socialism in Britain and Progressivism in the United States, resulting in a blurred and oft-shifting definition of constitutionalism.

⁶⁰ Johnson, 488, 518.

⁶¹ Reynolds, "A 'Special Relationship'?" 14.

The influence of domestic politics upon international affairs is the untold story of the special relationship in the twentieth century. A trans-Atlantic revolution in domestic policy and political thought was occurring at the same time as all of these international machinations. The struggles between internal parties of the two nations would have a profound effect upon the special relationship and it was only when the two were able to define well their governing principles that they would be able to enter into a clear and productive relationship with one another.

CHAPTER THREE

Conservatism in England and America

Though the strategic demands of multiple foreign rivals presented a challenge worthy of the close alliance of the Anglo-American special relationship, there was another dimension to the conflict. When studying international relations, it is often overlooked that a country's foreign policy exists primarily for the sake of defending its domestic order. No nation-state is formed solely for the purpose of conducting foreign affairs; rather, relations with other nations are the tool used to protect something more significant to the people. Any redefinition of domestic principles, therefore, will fundamentally alter a nation's relation with the world. Just as politics is the search for a way of life, foreign policy is the way to defend that choice from opponents and to aid it with friendships. It is, therefore, crucial that a nation be able to understand and articulate the political principles fundamental to its regime. The vast internal changes wrought within the United States and the United Kingdom during the twentieth century cannot, then, be irrelevant to their international policy. Originally rooted in similar, rights-

based constitutional principles, the United States and Great Britain underwent a Leftist challenge to these foundations in the early twentieth century. The conservative resurgence on both sides of the Atlantic represented a fundamental realignment of both domestic and foreign policy capable of articulating the constitutional principles upon which each regime was based. In the 1980s, this movement produced two leaders who were capable of accessing the shared political inheritance between the two nations, and the special relationship was fulfilled in the joint conservative administrations of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan.

The role of conservatism in the twentieth century was prefaced by a long history of fidelity to specific political principles ensured first in British common law and later enshrined in the American Founding documents. Determining the meaning of conservatism when so many nations contain conservative parties, which stand for widely varying principles, is crucial to interpreting its meaning for foreign affairs. Conservatism is often incorrectly treated as a near-relativistic phenomenon. Samuel P. Huntington wrote that the most applicable characterization of conservatism was that it is situational, stating that:

conservatism is that system of ideas employed to justify any established social order, no matter where or when it exists, against any fundamental challenge to its nature or being, no matter from what quarter.⁶²

In this context, all nations could be said to share a similar tradition of conservatism because all have some history of preserving inherited institutions in the face of change. This definition is lacking, however, because

⁶² Samuel P. Huntington, "Conservatism as an Ideology," *The American Political Science Review*, 51, no. 2 (1957): 454-473.

it assumes neutrality towards the institutions being defended by the conservatives. It would equate French conservatives trying to retain their monarchy with American Southern secessionists attempting to preserve the institution of slavery. This definition has no method of judging between separate movements seeking to preserve inherited institutions and determining which is “more” conservative. It would have no means of judging between Abraham Lincoln’s constitutional, natural-rights based plea for union and the pro-slavery call for secession in the American South of the 1850s, both of which have been called conservative, for example.

Since each nation or political system has a set of fundamental principles, which constitutes the regime, whichever party or philosophy is in closest conformance to the fundamental ruling principle of the country is the most conservative, because it is not seeking to alter that principle onto any other new grounding. In this understanding of conservatism, Lincoln’s constitutional claims are considered more conservative than John C. Calhoun’s, who sought to conserve an institution contradictory to the fundamental professions of the American regime. The conservative impulse of different nations may, therefore, be markedly different from one another, for the fundamental principle behind one regime may be diametrically opposed to that of its neighboring nation. Governments’ foundations are widely diverse, and natural rights could be the principle of one, while the inherited rights of particular bloodlines could be the foundation of another. The conservative traditions of Great Britain and the United States, therefore, would exhibit marked similarities because of the close resemblance of their political foundations, and preserved through American colonization and subsequent American Revolution.

Until 1776, the same constitution governed Britain and the American colonies.

Undoubtedly a singular ruling system, a respect for law born of generations of political development characterized this constitution, which has no central written document to quantify its doctrines in ink. The doctrine of Parliamentary sovereignty, which necessitates a strong popular voice in rule, was placed immovably in the center of British political thought after the Glorious Revolution of 1688, in which Parliament played a crucial role in selecting the new monarch.⁶³ The common law tradition and a complex system of checks and balances prevented this parliamentary system from becoming an unlimited despotism. The central factor of the British regime is a respect for the rule of law: its impartiality, its just application, and the respect it is owed by politicians who hold only temporary office.⁶⁴ This principle was extended to the American colonies; the inhabitants of which enjoyed their full rights of protection of the law as British citizens and perpetuated the rule of law through their own self-governing institutions in North America. For nearly two centuries, this system functioned admirably and secured basic rights and the rule of law. While the American Revolution would disrupt this arrangement, it did not fundamentally alter the protection of natural rights provided by a foundational rule of law.

The American Revolution forcibly separated the overseas colonies from British rule, but was moderated to prevent a complete rejection of British institutions, laws, or political mores that were still considered

⁶³ Charles R. Kesler, "The Nature of Rights in American Politics: A Comparison of Three Revolutions," *The Heritage Foundation*. Accessed November 5, 2011. <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Reports/2008/09/The-Nature-of-Rights-in-American-Politics-A-Comparison-of-Three-Revolutions>.

⁶⁴ J Harvey, and L Bather, *The British Constitution*, (London: Macmillan and Company Limited, 1963).

crucial for a just government.⁶⁵ The revolution proceeded in a rational manner: the Founding generation of Washington, Jefferson, and Adams presided over the reconciliation attempts with Britain and attempted to revive the connection with the mother country rather than perpetrate revolution for “light and transient causes”—an eminently conservative sentiment. The Revolutionary War was a defense of the rights of self-government the Americans had already enjoyed for a century and half, not a wholesale rejection of their British roots. By instituting what they saw as purified forms of traditional, organic British principles, the Founders affirmed the British common law tradition and ensured that a close political connection would remain between the two. Like Britain, the nascent United States proved resistant to constant tumult and revolution, and transition of power was characterized by change of parties rather than coups. The constitutional basis for government was the fundamental similarity between the British and American systems that endured into the next century and would compose the core of the conservative movement of the twentieth century.

At the time of the American Revolution, it was readily observed that the United States’ experiment in self-government was fundamentally more conservative than that of the radical egalitarian French Revolution which followed and sought to reform every element of political and civil society. Whereas the American Revolution was grounded in the philosophical tradition of John Locke and Montesquieu, who both believed in the necessity of a properly constructed and legitimate government, the French Revolution was the immoderate offspring of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. His theories, beloved by the radical Jacobin faction

in France, held that true citizens must “alienate everything to society, including their powers, possessions, and natural rights.”⁶⁶ The English statesman Edmund Burke, widely considered the father of conservatism on both sides of the Atlantic, argued the legitimacy of American grievances before Parliament while denouncing the radicalism of the Jacobins’ revolution by comparison. The legitimacy of the American project, in Burke’s eyes, came from a political philosophy “based on the classical and Christian natural law, derived from God and perceived by good men through ‘right reason.’”⁶⁷ It was therefore fundamentally compatible with the British regime. This trans-Atlantic perspective affirmed the principles upon which the new nation was founded as the century turned.

Though most believed that the just role of government was the protection of natural rights through the rule of law, there were many controversies over how to implement these principles in the nineteenth century. Gradual extension of the franchise, representative government, and a concept of natural rights derived from a similar philosophical and theological heritage all flowered during this century on both sides of the Atlantic. The American Civil War provides a solemn example of the difficulty with which natural rights were extended. It was important to note, however, that the disagreement was over the application of natural rights and the protections granted by citizenship. An ideological disagreement about the fundamental duties of government had not yet arisen. The twentieth century would introduce a conflict that challenged

⁶⁵ Matthew Spalding, *We Still Hold These Truths: Rediscovering Our Principles, Reclaiming Our Future*, (Wilmington, DE: Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 2009).

⁶⁶ Kesler, 2.

⁶⁷ Edwin Feulner, "The Roots of Modern Conservative Thought from Burke to Kirk," The Heritage Foundation. Accessed July 25, 2011. <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Reports/2008/07/The-Roots-of-Modern-Conservative-Thought-from-Burke-to-Kirk>.

the nature of a constitutional regime in both Britain and America.

The turn of the century saw a new phenomenon in American political life: an attempt to re-found the American regime on a fundamentally new basis than by the one which had successfully ruled it for a century and a half. In America, the transition to a progressive form of government represented a fundamental redefinition of constitutionalism. The rise of the Progressive Party in 1912 revealed a gradual shift away from a republic, with carefully controlled filters for the tumultuous public will, and towards an administrative democracy. The Progressive system of thought sought to improve the lot of the ruled by a comprehensive, government-driven reform. This reoriented the purpose of the regime towards a system of rights granted by the government, rather than one of natural rights. Towards this end, systematic reforms were characteristic of the philosophic changes sought by the Progressives. They believed in the establishment of a purer democracy, whose will would be interpreted by a vigorous executive with broadly constructed, constitutionally unprecedented powers. Though the alterations seem small, the achievements of the Progressive Party, such as the direct election of senators, direct primaries, and a growing emphasis upon social justice rather than the protection of natural rights, was effecting a gradual revolution.⁶⁸

Even more blatantly, Woodrow Wilson's definition of progress insisted that America's original concept of constitutionalism was outdated. Initially, Wilson affirmed the deep connection between the carefully drawn out political institutions of the United States and those in Great Britain. He then, however, dismissed the astonishing

accomplishment of constituting a just and practicable regime based upon natural rights, stating that, "they were only following the English Whigs, who gave Great Britain its modern constitution."⁶⁹ These Whigs, according to Wilson, were in turn merely aping the scientific theory of the day, Newtonian physics, when they established their constitutions. Wilson refused to attribute lasting political worth to the institutions of his nation, and instead relegated them to anachronisms. Wilson's redefinition of constitutionalism in terms of organic growth, unlimited by institutions and murky in purpose, took firm root, and progressivism became entrenched in both the Republican and Democratic parties. The significance of this ideological shift constituted a gradual regime change for the United States from a federal republic to a democracy with a principle of unlimited Darwinian growth and the unsubstantiated hope for eventual perfection of human nature.

Drawing upon the popularity of Darwinian science for its justification, Progressivism was triumphing in wings of both political parties. The first election where progressivism played an overt role was in 1912. Through Progressivism, the Americans were determined to alter their political forms to make them more directly democratic, thus diluting one of the factors they shared with England, a public opinion filtered through various ruling bodies. They also sought a more administrative state, capable of swiftly enacting the aforementioned political will.⁷⁰ In this respect, Woodrow Wilson was a great admirer of the British parliamentary system because it lacked the redun-

⁶⁸ "Progressive Party Platform of 1912," Teaching American History. Accessed November 18, 2011 <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=607>.

⁶⁹ Woodrow Wilson, "What is Progress?," Teaching American History. Accessed October 27, 2011. <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=942>.

⁷⁰ Sidney M. Milkis, "Why the Election of 1912 Changed America," *The Claremont Review of Books*, 3, no. 1 (2002).

dancies of some of the U.S. divisions of power. Unfortunately, Wilson was emphasizing a structural element England and America had never shared instead of one of the many they did, like divided powers or an aristocratic branch designed to prevent the very expediency he so desired. Furthermore, the British Constitution is unique; it relies heavily upon tradition to restrain its legislature, as well as an aristocratic class to moderate the influences of popular rule, a quality that could not be replicated without the centuries of precedent the British had established.

The 1912 presidential election split the Republican Party and resulted in Teddy Roosevelt's rogue, "Bull Moose" campaign, but prevented the Progressive movement from commandeering the Republican Party officially. Progressivism lost the opportunity to run a Progressive as a Republican candidate in that election, but won a foothold in the party and thus emerged from its first battle self-assured and ready to face its challengers. The philosophic and practical groundwork was laid for future victories.

The practical expression of the new philosophy of the Progressives came when President Franklin Delano Roosevelt instituted the New Deal to help the country recover from a devastating depression. Initially, this was a plan designed to meet the needs of a crisis, but it evolved into the baseline for a modern welfare state. This plan involved measures to rescue banks, employment plans, and other relief programs. President Roosevelt heralded the bipartisan backing enjoyed by the measures to support the economy, stating: "the members of Congress realized that the methods of normal times had to be replaced in the emergency by measures which were suited to the serious and pressing requirements of the moment."⁷¹ Rather than remaining as

emergency means, however, Roosevelt's institutions formed the economic groundwork of the modern welfare state and set the stage for the social and cultural changes wrought by Lyndon Johnson in the Great Society thirty years later. Progressivism was rapidly becoming the *modus operandi* of American political life.

The Socialist and Progressive movements share many similarities. Most notably, they are peaceful movements that seek to alter society gradually. The end result of this evolutionary process, according to this philosophy, ought to be the welfare state and the eventual perfection of society under a collectivist model. Both of these models undermine the fundamental basis of Anglo-American political similarity: the rule of law. The duties of an ever-changing social order can never be defined or defended, and the vision of social order and perfection justifies the use of any means to secure the desired state of politics as quickly as possible. The demands of an administrative state necessitate a proliferation of regulation that further erodes a coherent understanding of law. Despite these common goals, the two movements were markedly distinct from one another. Socialism and Progressivism are not the same philosophy, though they have many similarities. Socialist parties gained widespread popularity across all of Europe in the late nineteenth century and continue into the present day with significant political influence. The basic tenet of socialism is the state ownership of the means of production. While most European Socialists did not take the radical path of many of their Marxist cousins, modern socialist parties still retain this basic defining feature. England was an example of this with its ownership of major industries. Progressivism, however, sought to regulate many American industries in

⁷¹ Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Fireside Chat on the New Deal," Teaching American History. Accessed

November 18, 2011.
<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=502>.

order to restrict the strength of large corporations as a social and political force. An example of this approach to government was made famous by Theodore Roosevelt and his “trust-busting,” where he regulated any industry that he believed was becoming a source of oppressive power in society. In both models, increased revenues were necessitated by the economic role of government, and this led to the increased rates of taxation and inevitably resulted in unrest within the electorate.

Britain had begun its socialist experiment at the apex of its industrial revolution. As the cities swelled with workers, a group known as the Fabians declared that a rigorous social apparatus was necessary to combat the inequalities of society and to allow politics to catch up with economics.⁷² This group was active in the late nineteenth century and laid the groundwork for a regime based on social justice. They, like many reformists of their time, believed in the doctrine of gradualism, which stated that a socialist state of society was naturally coming into being. It was believed that society was inevitably reorganizing itself into a socialist order, the ultimate realization of which would be nearly imperceptible because it had been so incremental. The role of politics in this belief was to be the helping hand that purposefully nudged the natural urge of society to become collectivist. Though socialism was already widely popular in Europe, its English sect disdained the teachings of Marx and lacked much of the sense of historical purpose that Marxism displayed.⁷³ This philosophy of governance, however, still had more in common with its intellectual cousins in universities on the Continent than it had with any previous

British experience in political philosophy and practice. The welfare state grew rapidly, even after society had returned to a level of equilibrium after industrialization. The well-meaning welfare state was widely accepted in Britain in the 1940s. Winston Churchill was castigated for excoriating socialists and their political philosophies in his rhetoric because it was taken as an insult of the “little old ladies” who proudly bore that name in the well-intentioned pursuit of societal equity. Though he recognized the danger of pursuing a socialist path, its philosophy had been so ingrained in the British imagination by mid-century that it was considered irrational to oppose this accepted, albeit novel, basis for government.

This gradualism was similar to the movement that was already well under way in America, but Britain was far ahead of that nation. By the 1920s, many British industries were nationalized, including electricity and aviation, and would remain so until the Thatcher premiership. As Britain became accustomed to adopting an increasingly interventionist economic model, the political rhetoric of the time shifted to match the trend. Co-opting the British Conservative Party into a socialist mentality was a critical turning point in Britain’s governmental shift. In 1938, Harold Macmillan, a Conservative party leader and eventual Prime Minister, published a book entitled *The Middle Way*. This platform advocated central planning and the firm establishment of a welfare state. This work defined conservatism for nearly the next four decades, and inaugurated “the middle way” as the soon-to-be famous phrase that sought to place British socialism firmly at the midpoint between totalitarianism and unbridled free trade.⁷⁴

Initially, there was a dearth of conservative response to the new philosophy of

⁷² David Willits, *Modern Conservatism*, (London: Penguin Books, 1992).

⁷³ Paul M Sweezy, "Fabian Political Economy," *The Journal of Political Economy*, 57, no. 3 (1949): 242-248.

⁷⁴ Willits, 29.

governance expressed by Socialism. In England, Conservatives became embroiled in the argument over means, instead of ends. For example, they disputed whether government should derive their vast revenues for new economic and social programs from tax incomes or tariffs.⁷⁵ This did not address the issue of disciplined spending, which would become a cornerstone of Thatcher's governing philosophy. The socialist character of Britain's post-war nation was firmly fixed in 1943 when the Tory Reform Committee lauded the Beveridge Report, ensuring a social insurance state. This branch of the Conservatives took control of the party and the chairman, Lord Hinchinbrooke, stated that:

Modern Toryism rejects Individualism as a philosophy in which the citizen has few duties in society ... True Conservative opinion is horrified at the damage done to this country since the last war by "individualist" businessmen, financiers and speculators ranging freely in a *laissez-faire* economy and creeping unnoticed into the fold of Conservatism.⁷⁶

In this report, Beveridge appealed to a false history for the Conservative Party in order to lend credibility to the anti-free market political economy in which he believed, a very new and un-conservative ideal. Essentially, the Conservative Party in England chose to embrace the doctrines of socialism that held such sway. As one historian put it, electoral issues became less about disagreements over the economic role of the government and more about which party was more capable of administering the

new welfare state.⁷⁷ As the century wore on, the Conservatives of England had to rediscover other elements of their movement capable of answering the Labour governments. Traditional hallmarks of the Tories, like a commitment to the British Empire and the pull of the House of Lords, lacked the relevance they had held in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁷⁸ Conservatism came to focus more upon economic concerns that would appeal to the growing middle class in England, the same electorate to which the Labour government had appealed in the first place.

Political economy was inherently tied to the new political systems because of their professed purpose to restructure society through governmental interventionism. The premier economist of his age, John Maynard Keynes had great success in uniting both sides of the pond and provided the arguments for a central planning system that would hold sway down to the present day. Though Keynes was not as interventionist as many in the economic movement that would later bear the Keynesian label, he envisioned a new philosophy that could manage the rapid changes in the economy and society. The middle way of government planning was seen as the only solution to a world torn between radicalism on the one hand or stuck in outdated ways on the other. He wrote to Roosevelt in 1933, exhorting the president to stay the course in his political program, stating that "[i]f you fail, rational change will be gravely prejudiced throughout the world, leaving orthodoxy and revolution to fight it out."⁷⁹ This was a rare, defining moment of history when the conscious choice

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Johnson, 325.

⁷⁷ Nicholas Wapshot, *Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher: A Political Marriage*, (New York: Penguin Group, 2008).

⁷⁸ Willits, 36.

⁷⁹ David M Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929-1945* (*Oxford History of the United States*), (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 357.

to embrace a regime change was observed as it was being made. Americans had once been told they would be a “shining city on a hill,” an example of freedom to all other nations who would wish to become like them. It appeared that they were getting their wish to become examples, but this time they would be modeling not a new basis for government, but a political basis for economics that would solve what politics could not. The President decided to heed the advice of Keynes, and the resulting interventionist political economy would quickly become the accepted model for civilized nations. The release of creative energy after the restrictive demands of the World Wars unleashed a massive growth spurt in the 1950s and 1960s in America. The enjoyment of this wealth had even led to a new theory of political economy, called Growth Liberalism that built upon the economic groundwork laid for an interventionist state under FDR. This unbridled confidence in the perpetuity of growth mirrored the optimism of progressive thought. This utopian attitude was summed up by Pat Moynihan, a member of President Kennedy’s administration:

There is likely to be \$4-5 billion in additional, unobligated revenue coming in each year. But this increment will only continue to come on condition that it is disposed of. Therefore one of the important tasks to which an administration must address itself is that of devising new and responsible programs for expending public funds in the public interest⁸⁰

Essentially, the government was obligated to find something to do with all the money that the American economy was producing, and

it attacked that project with great enthusiasm. The Great Society was launched by President Johnson in 1964 and was coupled with increased spending on the Vietnam War under both the Johnson and Nixon administrations. The emphasis upon political economy became a prominent feature of the collectivist governmental model. The Anglo-American economic relationship was well under way in the twentieth century, and the similarity of the New Deal and Socialist movements in the two countries would be met by the parallel development of conservatism.

In the United States, a number of loosely affiliated movements arose to challenge Progressivism. Though characterized by great diversity, each of these movements believed in the fundamental impracticability of a progressive strain of government. A traditionalist wing, which idealized the writings of Edmund Burke, cast a suspicious eye on modern culture as the source of degenerate moral values leading to a corrupt political and social system. This was joined by the Southern Agrarians, but this was not the branch of Conservatism which held the most in common with England, for it glorified the culture and history of the Southern United States as its most valuable principle. Its primary goal was to conserve the privileged Southern class of the nineteenth century. This ideology quickly died out due to its mistaken conception of American foundations. A group of conservatives concerned primarily with restoring a close reading of the Constitution was created with the National Association for Constitutional Government (NACG), and the *Constitutional Review*, which from 1917 through 1929 published works attempting to explain the principles of constitutional government.⁸¹ This strain was significant because it

⁸⁰ Steven F Hayward, *The Age of Reagan: The Fall of the Old Liberal Order, 1964-1980*, (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2001), 18.

⁸¹ Jonathan O'Neill, "The First Conservatives: The Constitutional Challenge to Progressivism," The Heritage Foundation. Accessed July 20, 2011.

correctly identified the least transitory basis for conservative agreement, namely, constitutional principles. These movements united largely around social conservative issues. This was augmented by the Libertarians. Though they would become a movement unto themselves, they shared some intellectual forbearers with the emerging conservatives and a desire to reinstate limited government that made them valuable allies. Libertarianism often conceptualized the state as the enemy of individual freedom, rather than the protector of individual rights, and thus was fundamentally at odds with the Lockean nature of the American Constitution. The Libertarian emphasis upon nearly unrestricted liberty as the foundation for government was a relatively novel political development and distinct from the conservative tradition developing simultaneously.

All of these various movements and personalities were united around the fact that they disagreed with the ruling principle of progressivism, which advocated an economic and social order determined largely by the state. Because the few remaining true British Conservatives opposed their socialist government on the same grounds, the two movements were able to see eye to eye across the Atlantic. This synchronization could only occur once momentum was gained and the fundamental tenets of constitutional conservatism were articulated. Though there was a growing camaraderie between the two movements, it could not be expected that they would operate in perfect concert. Dealing with the realm of human knowledge and action, politics is a fluid exercise, constantly changing as personalities come and go through the course of election or the inevitable passage of time. Though there would never be total agreement about what conservatism meant from

either side, the strain of conservatism most important for the purposes of studying the Anglo-American special relationship is the form that emphasized a constitutional protection of natural rights as the key institution to be protected from change.

In America in 1953, political theorist Russell Kirk published the seminal work on modern, constitutional conservative thought, entitled *The Conservative Mind*. The accomplishment of this book was its ability to speak of conservative principles in terms of positives, rather than defining it in terms of the ideology it was rejecting. One of the most popular criticisms of conservatism holds that it lacks a set of core principles that it defends, and that it is instead defined wholly by a rejection of change in any form. Kirk defied this attack when he outlined six specific principles that traced conservatism through its Anglo-American history. His six principles were as follows:

A divine intent rules society as well as conscience-‘political problems, at bottom, are religious and moral problems.’ Traditional life is filled with variety and mystery, while most radical systems are characterized by a narrowing uniformity. Civilized society requires orders and classes-‘the only true equality is moral equality.’ Property and freedom are inseparably connected. Man must control his will and his appetite, knowing that he is governed more by emotion than reason. ‘Change and reform are not identical’-society must alter slowly.⁸²

This was a philosophical mantra, and, besides the statement about the connection between property and freedom, concerns itself little with economic specifics that are generally considered the bread and butter of

<http://www.heritage.org/Research/Reports/2011/06/The-First-Conservatives-The-Constitutional-Challenge-to-Progressivism>.

⁸² Feulner, 3.

conservative rhetoric. This is because Kirk was attempting to supply the supposed lack of philosophical substance to conservative ideas, and his synthesis of the institutions of Western civilization was broad enough to encompass economic and social issues as well as any other political challenges that may arise.

The international influence of conservatism gathered speed after Kirk. The cooperation between the conservatism in Britain and America was also astonishing. A trans-Atlantic network of think tanks, intellectuals, and writers would help spread ideas that had an influence beyond the party systems of a single country. Professedly conservative publications gained popularity for the first time. The *Crossbow* in England represented a variety of moderate political organizations that sought to integrate the inherited socialist institutions of previous generation with ideas of tradition and moderate government.⁸³ This group did not yet differ greatly from the Labour mindset because of its attempt to combine both socialist and traditional policies, but was an early move towards a conservative challenge. The *National Review* was published in America by many of the prominent names of conservatism as a purposeful challenge to progressivism and gained a wide readership. Next, the concept of the think tank arose, indicating the need to define political doctrines through particular policy applications. The Number 10 Policy Unit, The Center for Policy Studies, and the Institute of Economic Affairs all sought to gain consensus about conservative policy in England. These were complimented by the American Enterprise Institute and the Heritage Foundation in America, established

⁸³ John D. Fair, and John A. Hutcheson Jr., "British Conservatism in the Twentieth Century: An Emerging Ideological Tradition," *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, 19, no. 4 (1987): 549-578.

around the same time and for similar purposes.

A key feature of this resurgent conservatism was its sense of international purpose. The constitutional principles shared by the United States and Great Britain began to appeal to European thinkers, who viewed the natural rights conception of freedom as superior to the despotisms that had decimated the continent in the first half of the twentieth century. Thinkers began to view the larger world of Western Civilization and define it in terms of a choice between statism or freedom. Especially in America, many of the main actors of the "New Conservative" movement were foreign-born. Leo Strauss, Eric Voegelin, and others were European academics who settled in the United States and gained a following as political philosophers.⁸⁴ This is another sign of the gradual expansion of the conservative movement beyond a definition restricted to a single nation, as these thinkers tended to develop a commentary upon American political life based upon their personal experiences in Europe. These academics strengthened the shared identity of many in the West by delineating the ancestry of ideas and their similar products in various regimes, thus defining the all-important weight of what is "free."

By the 1970s, the conservative and collectivist impulses were each well developed in both the U.S. and the U.K. The circumstances of this decade would force the two opposing philosophies into direct competition with one another. Great Britain was sunk deep in malaise, and the economy had been exhibiting sluggish growth. It was not a disastrous situation, but in comparison to other nations whose economies were booming, Britain's progress was humble by comparison. According to one historian,

⁸⁴ George H. Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945*, (Wilmington, DE: Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 1998), 69.

Britain “had 3.2% growth in terms of GDP per person per annum between 1950 and 1973, compared to with Japan’s 7.6%, Germany’s 6%, and Italy’s 5.5%, and France’s 5%.”⁸⁵ This was very modest growth and would interfere with Britain’s attempts to maintain a large-scale military presence in its traditional spheres of action. In 1965, England spent a total of £3.8 billion on welfare and health care combined, or 27 percent of its total spending, while its defense spending totaled £2.4 billion.⁸⁶ This was a blow to the onetime-empire that had commanded the world’s wealth for a century. The enthusiastic spending of the 1960s would soon give way to the infamous malaise of the 1970s, as government attempts to spend its way out of a stubborn economy were met with stagflation. Contrary to prior economic theory, unemployment and inflation rose in tandem, creating the always-dangerous political situation of too-few jobs, rising cost of living, and a discontented population. The government pursued an inflationary monetary policy, with the effect that unemployment temporarily went down because it now cost employers less in true value to pay workers. The workers soon realized that they were losing purchasing value, however, and they then demanded higher wages, which resulted in unemployment going up again. The end result was a higher inflation rate and a return to the high unemployment suffered before the policy.⁸⁷ The failures of decades of socialistic policies paved the way for Margaret Thatcher’s Conservative movement to gradually take hold.

⁸⁵ Roberts, 463.

⁸⁶ Christopher Chantrel, UK Public Spending, “Total Public Spending.” Accessed November 19, 2011).<http://www.ukpublicspending.co.uk/index.php?year=1965>.

⁸⁷ Claire Berlinski, *There Is No Alternative: Why Margaret Thatcher Matters*, (New York: Basic Books, 2008), 125.

Added to England’s economic woes was what came to be called “ungovernability.” This term referred to the constant battles between the government and unions that crippled industries and services and destroyed James Callahan’s Labour premiership. This was epitomized by the miners’ strike of 1971, which Thatcher characterized as “mass opposition to laws passed by a democratically elected government [and] mass infringement of the criminal law.”⁸⁸ A variety of public union strikes followed this, including strikes of hospital workers, teachers, and most famously, gravediggers. The resulting situation was one of entirely unpredictable public services. An Englishman could not be certain that his train would run or that there would be coal next month. The unions continued to strong arm the government in pursuit of wage increases. Along with the stagflation, this decreased the population’s confidence in their government’s capability to handle the intractable unions, and culminated in the “winter of discontent” of 1978-79.⁸⁹ This ended Callahan’s government and made room for Thatcher, who had gained control of the opposition party in 1975.

In her own way, Thatcher agreed that conservatism was about more than just economics. Though famous for her pragmatism and devotion to minutiae, she wrote that in the midst of her time in office she was:

Convinced that at the heart of the Conservative mission is something more than economics—however important economics might be: there is a commitment to strengthen, or at least not undermine, the traditional virtues which enable people to live

⁸⁸ Margaret Thatcher, *The Path to Power*, (New York: HarperCollins, 1995), 205.

⁸⁹ Roberts, 535.

fulfilling lives without being a threat or a burden to others.⁹⁰

Her understanding of an ordered liberty fit into the American conservative conception of a regime ordered for freedom. This would provide valuable background for the rhetorical consensus Thatcher and Reagan were able to achieve as they resisted communist countries and their domestic political opponents. It would not be until the 1970s that the intellectual framework of the conservative movements in both countries could find expression in an organized political movement capable of winning elections and affecting policy.

In the United States, the hold of the Progressive movement in both political parties was evident, the Richard Nixon administration, though Republican, continued the expansion of the welfare state, which accelerated under Jimmy Carter's presidency. Nixon was famous for uttering the statement: "we are all Keynesians now." This hardly presented a conservative alternative to the liberal movement. The Republican Party was gradually penetrated by a conservative element. The 1964 presidential campaign was the first time a candidate backed by conservative philosophy, Barry Goldwater, was taken seriously. Though his campaign was unsuccessful, many of his policies would be advocated by Ronald Reagan fifteen years later. He helped familiarize Americans with a more thoroughly conservative philosophy, and consequently Reagan's policies would seem more familiar to the electorate.

The immediate friendship between Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher stemmed from their similar view of the world. Thatcher admired Reagan's uncompromising stance against Communism, born

out of his long years in Hollywood during the height of communist influence, and he in turn regarded her view that socialism was a moral ill that had plagued England for quite long enough. The two therefore entered office with the two major goals of reducing interventionist government to a more manageable state and rolling back, rather than coexisting with, communism. These ideas were not original to Thatcher and Reagan, however. Like most politicians, they were the force which allowed ideas that had been put forward for decades to find expression in the public square and action through policy. They benefited from the development of a parallel conception of conservatism—one which emerged with such similarity on both sides of the Atlantic that Ronald Reagan's rushed campaign staff simply aired a few Margaret Thatcher campaign commercials for the committee, because they more or less expressed the governor's platform.⁹¹

As they assumed office in 1979 and 1981, Thatcher and Reagan had at their fingertips a well-articulated conservative movement to draw upon in their ruling philosophy. The conservatism they shared was based upon a natural rights theory of government, in contrast to both the totalitarian Soviet philosophy and the gradualist, collectivist socialism of European nations. This fundamental agreement on the duties of government and the nature of rights would provide the firm foundation needed for foreign policy cooperation in the 1980s between Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan.

⁹⁰ Margaret Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, (New York: HarperCollins, 1993), 279.

⁹¹ Hayward, *Old Liberal Order*, 534.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Special Relationship Fulfilled: The Reagan and Thatcher Years

The Thatcher and Reagan years show the Anglo-American special relationship at its most fully formed. These two heads of state possessed the closest definition of a free regime shared by any world leaders at the time, and their respective philosophies produced common goals that drew their nations together. Their governments were both distinct from collectivist models that had characterized many contemporary Western nations and united in opposing the most radical form of socialism: the Soviet Bloc. This notable tendency arose from the growing conservative movement they inherited from their countries, which had been struggling to redefine constitutionalism for the better part of the twentieth century. Entrenched in a primarily ideological international conflict against the USSR, the natural rights worldview of the U.S. and the U.K. provided a catalyst that moved the special relationship to the fore in opposition to that regime. This alliance proved itself critical to the Cold War effort by reasserting the importance of shared political principles in international affairs, revealing the influence that domestic principles have upon foreign policy, and reaffirming the position the United States and the United Kingdom hold as natural allies.

Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan both saw the inherent value of this trans-Atlantic partnership and saw beyond historic disagreements between their nations. Together they took a firm stance in defense of the free world through pragmatic foreign actions in the Cold War. Their approach did not demand ideological purity from the other; rather, their mutual desire to preserve liberal democracy drew a close relationship between the United States and Britain. Early

in his presidency, Reagan seized upon Thatcher's assertions that the two nations were linked through their political systems. In 1981, President Reagan set the tone for this close working relationship by sending a note to the Prime Minister, stating:

You are indeed right that we share a very special concern for democracy and for liberty. That is the essence of the special relationship between our two countries, and it is similarly an excellent basis for inaugurating an extended period of co-operation and close consultation between your government and my administration.⁹²

This helped to lay the foundation of their future successes by acknowledging their similar definition of freedom and desire to safeguard liberal democracy. These commitments constituted the most significant bonds of alliance available to nations. Since the beginning of the modern era, the disputes between Western nations have been primarily conflicts over the proper definition of freedom. In the contest with the Soviet Union, the United States and Great Britain would need to prove that they indeed possessed a correct understanding of freedom.

Prior to this gesture from Reagan, Thatcher had delivered a substantial speech that detailed how the common political history of these two nations continued to affect their actions domestically and abroad. In her address, Thatcher classified Britain as one of "those allies who share America's ideal of freedom."⁹³ She made it clear that their

⁹² Ronald Reagan to Margaret Thatcher, February 2, 1981, The Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Accessed September 10, 2011.

<http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/109257>

⁹³ Margaret Thatcher, "Speech at the Pilgrims' Dinner." The Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Accessed September 10, 2011.

<http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/104557>

conception of freedom was the source of the long list of characteristics typifying the special relationship. She confirmed Reagan's belief in the uniqueness of the special relationship, attributing their close understanding of freedom to the inheritance of British common law and "our contribution to the development of representative democracy, of economic liberty and of the rule of law."⁹⁴ Thatcher described another layer of the special relationship historically characteristic of these two nations: the mores of the governed that kept the rulers in check. Thatcher attributed many of the international political problems of her day to "the temptation for governments to extend the scope of their activities and responsibilities."⁹⁵ She went on to link this temptation to both the menace of "totalitarian governments" and the threat of soft despotism faced by the U.S. and U.K. Thatcher clearly believed that socialistic policies had become the modus operandi of many in the community of free nations and was ultimately eroding their liberties. In response to the socialist tendencies undermining individual freedom, she enumerated several alternatives, including reduced income tax rates, disciplined monetary policy, and governmental deregulation. The belief that governmental policies presented as much of a threat to domestic stability as the ambitions of foreign enemies was a particular philosophical stance that separated Thatcher and Reagan from the rest of their allies in the Western entente. The two knew that their ideas of proper government, derived from their conservative heritages, set their alliance apart.

Early in their respective administrations, Reagan and Thatcher made it clear that their domestic and foreign policy stemmed from the same source. Reagan saw the

foreign policy of his administration as the natural outworking of its domestic concerns. He said that 1981 was the year of "applying the conservative principles that I had so long espoused to national government."⁹⁶ His inaugural address outlined his economic agenda that would later be dubbed "Reaganomics." Observing the malaise sapping the vitality of the West, he sought to reverse the effects of central planning, declaring "in this present crisis, government is not the solution to our problems, government is the problem."⁹⁷ This prompted his administration to unveil an unprecedented body of legislation that deregulated the private sector, promoted free trade, and dramatically reduced taxes; these policies mirrored the efforts Margaret Thatcher was making overseas. After beginning to set the house in order, President Reagan then turned systematically to the concerns of international affairs. In 1982, Reagan addressed the British Parliament and famously called the Soviet Union an "evil empire."⁹⁸ He enlisted British support in steadfastly resisting the spread of communism. Reagan recalled this as one of his most important speeches as President, saying "I think the real story of 1982 is that we began applying conservatism to foreign affairs."⁹⁹ Reagan applied a specific set of political principles first domestically and then to his foreign policy. He consistently viewed both his domestic and foreign policy as stemming

⁹⁶ Ronald Reagan, *Speaking My Mind: Selected Speeches*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 60.

⁹⁷ Ronald Reagan, "First Inaugural Address," *Teaching American History*. Accessed November 7, 2011. <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=152>.

⁹⁸ Ronald Reagan, "Remarks at the Annual Convention of the National Association of Evangelicals in Orlando, Florida," *Teaching American History*. Accessed November 7, 2011. <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=961>.

⁹⁹ Reagan, *Speaking my Mind*, 107.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

from a particular brand of conservatism, one which held that political and economic freedom were rooted in the same source and argued that accepting the continuance of Soviet Union was akin to moral relativism applied to public affairs.¹⁰⁰

Reagan's first priority as President was to stabilize the economy. However, domestic and foreign policy were linked in his mind, and he wrote:

Power is not only sufficient military strength but a sound economy, a reliable energy supply and credibility—the belief by any potential enemy that you will not choose surrender as the way to maintain peace.¹⁰¹

This essential bit of Reagan's philosophy held that institutions of free exchange of property coupled with a strong concern for the defense of its citizens was integral to the definition of a free society. These were conservative ideas, not just because they were endorsed by the Republican Party of the time, but because they had their roots in the natural rights principles upon which the American regime was founded. It is necessary to understand Reagan's approach to domestic affairs because he believed that a free economy was inextricably linked to foreign affairs and defense. Reagan relentlessly applied his understanding of a free society to domestic situations: he would do the same to relations with the Soviet Union.

Thatcher's conservatism took a similar tone, and she invoked a moral responsibility to use Britain's clout in foreign affairs to help ensure the enjoyment of free societies by other nations. She stated: "Britain, with her world-wide experience of

diplomacy and defense, has a special role to play. We in the Conservative Party are determined that Britain should fulfill that role."¹⁰² That "special role" was showcased in Britain's careful practice of self-governance in conformity with tradition, a custom Thatcher sought to revive. While economics were a cornerstone of her philosophy, the nickname of her governing beliefs, "Thatcherism," described more closely her attitude towards governance and entailed a general appreciation for conservative attitudes such as decreased government control of the economy, a demand for a virtuous society, and the need for a strong defense—characterized by a defense of stable, constitutional government. The diversity and practical nature of these policies has led to accusations that Thatcherism is merely "a bundle of attributes, held together by time and place" or "a historical phenomenon" that was "anything but timeless."¹⁰³ This, however, is not how Thatcher understood her own policies, and the tendency to ascribe an -ism to her premiership was not used first by her followers, but her opponents, who wished to isolate her policies by making them seem novel and unique to her personality, rather than the practical outworking of her principles.

When asked if her campaign depended upon the people's trust in Thatcherism, the Prime Minister downplayed the movement attached to her own name and instead cast it as a choice between socialism and liberalism. She informed the reporter that: "What you have got now is a choice between two governments and the choice is

¹⁰⁰ Nash, 80-81.

¹⁰¹ Kiron K. Skinner, Annelise Anderson, and Martin Anderson, *Reagan, In His Own Hand: The Writings of Ronald Reagan that Reveal His Revolutionary Vision for America*, (New York: Touchstone, 2001), 9.

¹⁰² Margaret Thatcher, "Speech at Kensington Town Hall," The Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Accessed September 7, 2011.

<http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/102939>

¹⁰³ Shirley Robin Letwin, *The Anatomy of Thatcherism*, (Piscataway, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1993), 25-26.

absolutely stark in philosophical terms.”¹⁰⁴ She viewed her government as the working out of a liberal philosophy in her particular circumstances. Thatcher was not out to prescribe a wholesale governing program, like the socialist platforms to which Britain had become accustomed. If she failed to create a comprehensive ideology, this is because she was not attempting to manufacture a wholesale program of governance to apply to all conceivable situations. A common critique of conservatism holds that it is concerned with only particulars, not universal principles. This fundamentally mischaracterizes the purpose of a prudent regime, which applies principles of government to particular situations. While the success or failure of the particular measure can be debated, Thatcher's government was a clear example of applying conservative ideals in a practical manner. Thatcher's brand of conservatism was, therefore, based upon solid conservative ideas interpreted through her fundamental practicality.

One historian attributes three defining characteristics to modern British conservatism.¹⁰⁵ The first is a commitment to personal freedom or a desire to decrease the state's influence upon personal action. The second is a belief that this freedom will naturally lead to a more responsible management of wealth and the revitalization of the economy. The last principle recognizes the pragmatic need to work with the established welfare systems in order to achieve the first two goals. This summarizes the British conservatism that Thatcher inherited and put into policy; Reagan's brand of conservatism was certainly similar and illuminates the trans-Atlantic application of the first two of

these characteristics. Reagan's inaugural address had a strong Jeffersonian influence that emphasized self-government and accused the modern state of growing beyond the degree of consent which the American people had granted.¹⁰⁶ His first speech on the economy in February of 1981 addressed the debate over budget cuts and equated inflationary monetary policies to robbing Americans of their property.¹⁰⁷ Like Thatcher, Reagan viewed his conservatism as an attitude toward the decisions made by government. He would approach the economy, a long-time topic of his radio addresses, with this philosophy in mind.

The first domestically significant policy shared by Thatcher and Reagan was also one which held great promise for stabilizing the international system. The world commercial system had suffered from two World Wars that destroyed massive amounts of capital and then remained imbalanced by the interventionist policies of domestic governments, which attempted to contrive trading advantages for themselves while ignoring the volatility created in the markets by constant currency manipulation. Thatcher and Reagan pursued fiscal policies that were both simple and radical. The principle of fiscal responsibility was viewed as sacred by Reagan and Thatcher alike, and their economic policies reflected their desire to strengthen their economies as quickly as possible while avoiding the inflationary and regulatory practices that had become the norm. The first stage of the economic reforms was a deflationary policy. Embarked upon on both sides of the Atlantic, this was an attempt to control the wild stagflation of the 1970s. In the U.S., an inflation rate of 9-10 percent that had been persistent from 1979-1981 was reduced to 3.9 percent by 1983. In

¹⁰⁴ Margaret Thatcher, "General Election Press Conference Launching Manifesto," The Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Accessed September 6, 2011. <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/105320> (accessed September 6, 2011).

¹⁰⁵ Willits, 34-5.

¹⁰⁶ Steven F. Hayward, *The Conservative Counter-Revolution: 1980-1989*, (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2009), 52.

¹⁰⁷ Reagan, *Speaking My Mind*, 78.

Britain a 20 percent inflation rate of 1980 was down to 5.1 percent in 1983. The natural result of a reduction in the money supply, however, saw a rise of unemployment in 1982 to almost 10 percent in the United States and 30 million unemployed in Britain: a deep recession belied these numbers.¹⁰⁸ As equilibrium was regained, however, both Britain and the United States experienced a fruitful period of growth well into the 1990s. The chief difference between these leaders' approaches to economic policy were that Reagan attempted tax cuts and spending reductions simultaneously, while Thatcher held off on tax cuts until the spending reductions had been effective over time. Their goal was the same: they sought to achieve a stable economic baseline based upon the belief that the role of government was not comprehensive economic management. Once this had been accomplished, the special relationship was equipped to face the rapidly advancing foreign policy challenges.

The conservative governing philosophy shared by Thatcher and Reagan had an undeniable effect upon the special relationship. Many situations would arise during their eight shared years in office to test the strength of this bond. A major international incident in 1982 tried the partnership of the new governments: the Falklands War. This conflict would indicate whether the United Kingdom and the United States had truly found their place in twentieth century international affairs or if they were still entrenched in the resentments of the previous century's controversy over colonialism.

The Falklands are a small island chain 250 miles off the coast of Argentina. Settled by both the British and the Argentinians in the 1820s, the British declared their sovereignty over the islands in

¹⁰⁸ John N. Smithin, *Macroeconomics after Thatcher and Reagan: The Conservative Policy Revolution in Retrospect*, (Aldershot, England: Edward Elgar Publications, 1990), 34-35.

1833, and it has been disputed on and off ever since.¹⁰⁹ This territorial squabble had become something of a back-burner issue for the British by 1982, as 97 percent of the islands' population was British and did not express any notable desire to be separated from the protections afforded to British citizens.¹¹⁰ The situation suddenly erupted when the newest revolutionary government of Argentina decided to invade the islands. The U.S. and Britain had some advance warning of the action, and Reagan sent Thatcher an urgent telegram on April 1, notifying her that invasion might be imminent and that he would immediately contact General Galtieri, the dictator of Argentina. Galtieri had nothing to say to Reagan's pleas, and the President informed his British friend that "we will continue to cooperate with [the British] government in the effort to resolve the dispute, both in attempting to avert hostilities and to stop them if they should break out. While we have a policy of neutrality on the sovereignty issue, we will not be neutral on the issue involving Argentine use of military force."¹¹¹ The next day, Argentina invaded the Falklands.

Thatcher was forced to decide if she would use the British military to defend a small enclave of Britons thousands of miles away. The Prime Minister gave her authorization to the Chief of Naval Staff to assemble a task force of ships. After the Argentinean negotiations with the Americans broke down, Britain engaged in a war to recapture the islands. The entire conflict lasted 74 days, and several hundred Argentinean and British troops lost their lives in

¹⁰⁹ BBC, "The Battle Over the Falklands." Accessed July 30, 2011.
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/199850.stm.

¹¹⁰ Roberts, 526.

¹¹¹ Ronald Reagan to Margaret Thatcher, April 1, 1982, The Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Accessed July 30, 2011.
<http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/109401>

the conflict.¹¹² After decades of miscommunication and misunderstanding in foreign affairs, this incident showed many of the lessons that had been learned by America as well as Britain, and provided an example of the two working well in concert.

Thatcher was immediately concerned that the United Nations would disapprove of the British action in the Falklands in light of Britain's colonial past. The anti-imperial sentiment that had ruled the Western nations after WWII was viewed as a threat by Thatcher, who thought this action would undermine another principle held dear by the UN: self-determination. As recently as the Suez Crisis, Americans had exhibited a resentment of Britain's colonial past and attempted to attribute all of that nation's actions to paternalistic tendencies, calling the Suez Crisis "nothing but the straight old-fashioned variety of colonialism of the most obvious sort."¹¹³ The Falklands were primarily British and wished to remain that way, but Thatcher feared an intervention that would hobble the military efforts of the British to get the islands back. She wrote:

With the Cold War still under way, and given the anti-colonialist attitude of many nations at the UN, there was a real danger that the Security Council might attempt to force unsatisfactory terms upon us. If necessary we could veto such a resolution, but to do so would diminish international support for our position. This remained a vital consideration throughout the crisis.¹¹⁴

In short, Thatcher feared that well-meaning but misplaced ideology within the international organizations would obstruct her efforts as head of government to protect her

own people. In this matter, Reagan fully supported her. He wrote: "We will leave no doubt that Her Majesty's Government worked with us in good faith and was left with no choice but to proceed with military action based on the right of self-defense."¹¹⁵ Instead of denouncing Britain, America supported her ally. Reagan went beyond rhetorical and diplomatic support and provided "invaluable logistical, weaponry, intelligence, and satellite support" to the British, all while still serving the interests of the U.S. in a strategically important region by maintaining his neutrality.¹¹⁶

This is a fine example of strategic cooperation, but some may wonder why the Falklands would matter in the larger picture of a face-off with the Soviet Union. Besides the people of the Falklands, who were quite happy to be back under British protection rather than that of a military junta that was overthrown a few months after the Falklands War, this conflict helped the British to regain some international credibility. This was the first example of a successful offensive military action since the disastrous Suez Crisis three decades earlier. That conflict, which achieved none of its objectives, strained the special relationship and revealed confusion within the British concept of its place in world affairs, was a mirror image of the Falklands conflict. British success in this struggle was an encouragement for the United States as well, which was still suffering a deep lack of confidence in its international role in the wake of Vietnam. The Falklands War, while an unnecessary battle provoked by a revolutionary regime, revealed that the Anglo-American partnership was still able to accomplish a mutually defined goal.

Along with the strategic assistance provided in this instance, America was able to assist the United Kingdom in a critical

¹¹² BBC, "Battle Over the Falklands."

¹¹³ Hathaway, 44.

¹¹⁴ Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, 174.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 211.

¹¹⁶ Roberts, 530.

task—the recovery of her national prestige. While nations can relate to each other through scientific, structural arrangements, the unalterable effects of the human experience on politics will ensure that psychological factors of diplomacy hold as much clout as the quantifiable formal relations. National prestige helps to hold the international system together by allowing reputation to sometimes avert blatant challenges and can be irreparably damaged by singular events like the Suez Crisis. Failures to maintain a decisive policy can send the message to small despotisms that, though the might of the free nations is incomparably greater than their own, internal divisions can destroy their enemy. Victor Davis Hansen accurately identified this phenomenon, and wrote:

Why would two states like Argentina and England...go to war over something from which they really didn't receive any economic benefit? Surely, the cause of the war was the perceived value of those rocks, the perceived status and accompanying honor. Argentina wanted to whip up public support for failed dictatorship. Britain felt that it could not establish the precedent that it would be attacked in peace by a second-rate power and thus encourage further adventurism on the part of possible enemies. So it is this perception, this belief, that can start wars.¹¹⁷

The support of the United States, Great Britain's most powerful ally, was inestimable in correcting the years of waning influence Britain had suffered during the twentieth century. The Falklands incident marked a significant step forward as the United

Kingdom reasserted her place as a world power with a voice worth listening to.

Thatcher and Reagan are famous for their Cold War partnership. In hindsight, it is easy to think of the communist regime as possessing a fatal flaw that naturally led to its inevitable failure. While many engaged in the Cold War may have felt similarly, they were of course unaware of the developments of the future, just as we are uncertain about the eventual consequence our current experiences with terrorism as an instrument of war. Furthermore, the famous decline and fall of the Soviet Empire was partly the consequence of the choices made and actions taken by the individuals and nations during the war. The policies and worldviews present in those fighting the Cold War, including the role of the special relationship provide an important context when discussing why nations made certain foreign policy decisions over others.

Thatcher and Reagan inherited a world where the balance of power, repudiated only four decades earlier, had begun to reassert itself as the natural divisions of strength within the international system followed their logical paths. In the 1970s, the process of détente emerged from a mutual realization that neither side could really afford to initiate a hot war because of the immense cost associated with nuclear weapons. Détente was an attempt to halt the escalation of antagonism, rather than establish a complete state of peace because it still maintained that the communist and liberal democratic models were fundamentally incompatible. Nevertheless, détente offered an escape from fears that by fighting over purportedly minor matters a full-scale nuclear war would be provoked. This was the core of the fear of the Cold War. War has always been terrible, but nuclear weaponry dramatically shifted the perception of conflict onto doomsday grounds. It is easy to understand why many would want to take any measures possible to avert the eruption

¹¹⁷ Victor Davis Hansen, "Our Current War is Not New," *On Principle*, 11, no. 2 (2003).

of a hot war with the potential to destroy not just a single city, but huge swaths of a country's civilization. Détente held promise because it had the potential to reduce the presence of these weapons, which would produce a desirable outcome for everyone.

Representative of the belief at the time, Henry Kissinger outlined the path he believed détente ought to take and defined it as "an acceptance of mutual obligations and of the need for accommodation and restraint."¹¹⁸ Kissinger emphasized that this policy of mutual responsibility and coexistence must also apply to third-party nations to function. Détente was thus primarily a policy pursued by the two superpowers but also provided the context for each nation and its allies. Two documents, the Statement of Principles and An Agreement for the Prevention of Nuclear War were signed in Moscow along these lines. In 1972 the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) limited the development of certain classes of weapons. This was an example of a policy based on the concept of mutual vulnerability, or the guarded attitude of coexistence between the Soviets and the Americans.¹¹⁹

Détente held a troublesome corollary, however. One member of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee pointed out that in its eagerness to reduce tensions, the United States could become guilty of making concessions that gambled with the fate of peoples under a more direct threat from the USSR and its expansionary policies. As the Committee was debating the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the USSR was in the process of taking military action in Czechoslovakia. The result, said Senator Sparkman in 1968, was that "the price of detente is to sell the Czechs down the

river."¹²⁰ This concern evoked uncomfortable memories for America and England, two nations who had been engaged in similar but ill-fated policies of appeasement before the Second World War. Margaret Thatcher also believed that the policy of détente was desirable but volatile. She wondered why the SALT agreement had not discouraged Russia from increasing involvement in Africa and queried if perhaps the American and British enthusiasm for détente had caused them to turn a blind eye to Soviet incursions.¹²¹ The tendency to leave the Soviet Union to its sphere of influence was typified in the sentiment that "we must accept the existence of 'two worlds' and concentrate upon putting our own world in order, and not upon fruitless attempts to appease or get on with the Russians."¹²² While Thatcher and Reagan, along with most, sought a reduction in nuclear weapons, these concerns figured into their attempts to pursue a more robust policy towards the USSR while still seeking arms reduction. While détente had its benefits, the influence of its rhetoric of peaceful coexistence was damaging to a conflict which had defined itself in stark moral terms and downplayed the fundamentally irreconcilable differences between a communist regime and a liberal democracy. Reagan and Thatcher, however, developed well-articulated ideas about the nature of the conflict without compromising their belief in liberal democracy.

¹¹⁸ Kissinger, *American Foreign Policy*, 153.

¹¹⁹ Mason Willrich, and John B. Rhineland, *SALT: The Moscow Agreements and Beyond*, (London: The Free Press, 1974), 127.

¹²⁰ United States. Cong. Senate *Executive Sessions of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Volume XX*. 90th Cong., 2nd sess. S. PRT. 111-23. Washington: GPO, 2010. Accessed July 30, 2011. <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CPRT-111SPRT34737/pdf/CPRT-111SPRT34737.pdf>.

¹²¹ Margaret Thatcher, "House of Commons Statement," The Margaret Thatcher Foundation Accessed July 28, 2011. <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/103702>

¹²² Sean Greenwood, *Britain and the Cold War 1945-91*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 50.

Ronald Reagan filled his post-Governorship days between political campaigns with a radio broadcast show. During these radio talks he frequently denounced American policies that he thought were accommodating the Soviets at the peril of the U.S. He expressed disgust at the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT), and articulated his opinion that the doctrine of mutually assured destruction was merely a means for the Russians to hide their continuous development of further weaponry while Americans stood idle.¹²³ Reagan was prepared to confront foreign policy towards the Soviet Union as one of his major presidential issues. Though sometimes described as a domestic policy Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher also expressed her views about the Soviet Union in no uncertain terms. Many have heard Thatcher's nickname—"the Iron Lady." Rather than referring to her actions during miners' strikes, however, this appellation was bestowed upon her by the *Red Star*, the official newspaper of the Soviet Army. Originally intended as a derisive nickname, Thatcher earned this name because of the hard line she took against the Soviet Union in a speech at Kensington as early as 1976. In this speech, she stated:

The Russians are bent on world dominance, and they are rapidly acquiring the means to become the most powerful imperial nation the world has seen...They put guns before butter, while we put just about everything before guns. They know that they are a super power in only one sense—the military sense. They are a failure in human and economic terms.¹²⁴

Thatcher and Reagan appealed to a dichotomous view of regimes, and cast the Cold War in terms of victory rather than stasis. This shared opinion would provide the foundation for the diplomatic war they fought against the USSR. Thatcher and Reagan were clearly agreed on the folly of a weak system of defense in the face of a Soviet military buildup of the kind that had been going on since the 1950s. They took a moral principle and sought to find its practical application.

A moral outrage against the government of Russia also united them, as evidenced by the Thatcher speech and by Reagan's famous "Evil Empire" speech in 1982, where Reagan affirmed that "Marxist Leninist thought is an empty cupboard."¹²⁵ That Thatcher joined Reagan in an increasingly confrontational attitude towards the Soviet Union was a departure from previous British policy. As early as 1947, Ernest Bevin, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in Britain, had been determined to establish Britain as a "Third Force" balancing the bipolar situation. This implied a degree of avoidance to an exceptionally close alliance with the United States because they wanted to retain ties to both sides. Thatcher made use of this policy as she maintained connections to the Soviet Union through her frequent communication with Mikhail Gorbachev, but she was definitively aligned with Reagan's policies. Thatcher kept Reagan apprised of her various dealings with communism in the hope that it would inform his own policy and allow them to take a more united approach. She shared her initial impression of the newcomer Gorbachev with the famous line that "here was a man we could do business with," and offered her thoughts on the state of Hungary after she visited there, Thatcher's careful use of her position showed that Great Britain was at last dis-

¹²³Skinner et al, 79.

¹²⁴ Thatcher, "Speech at Kensington Town Hall.

¹²⁵ Reagan, *Speaking my Mind*, 108.

covering a role that would allow it to navigate well the postwar world.

As the U.S. and U.K. continued to navigate the treacherous waters of the Cold War, the nuclear relationship of the two came once again to the fore. As much a controversial issue in the 1980s as it had been in the previous decades, one of the great accomplishments of the Reagan-Thatcher partnership was its ability to reconcile Thatcher's determination to maintain an independent British nuclear deterrent with Reagan's desire for massive missile reductions. Thatcher had the agreement of French President Mitterand and German Chancellor Kohl on the necessity of nuclear weapons in the face of Soviet superiority in conventional forces, and she could have put up a considerable resistance to Reagan's inclination towards disarmament.¹²⁶ Instead, Thatcher walked the fine line of preserving her close alliance with the Americans and supporting Reagan's negotiations with the Russians while still defending the nuclear deterrent her own country needed. Nations that wished to control either world or regional affairs were drawn to nuclear weapons because it gave them the authority to direct alliances. It had the downside, however, of making them a target to the USSR.¹²⁷ As the century wore on, Britain began to question the utility of possessing the independent deterrent that it had fought so hard for in the 1950s and 1960s. Thatcher faced domestic opposition to maintaining a nuclear presence in the 1980s, but her success in retaining it helped to keep Britain an integral factor in NATO. While Thatcher strongly supported disarmament, along with practically everyone else in foreign affairs at the time, she made a few simple arguments in favor of a robust British deterrent, namely that it would provide a more immediate

deterrent against Russian hostility towards Europe, that it would provide a ready defense that Britain had often lacked, and that it would allow Britain to contribute to and in some cases direct NATO defense policy.¹²⁸

The initial meeting between Reagan and Gorbachev at Geneva in 1985 was the first meeting between any leaders of the two countries in six years and set the tone for the endless rounds of arguments over disarmament that would characterize the decade. The reduction of nuclear weapons was the wolf by the ears of the Cold War: everyone disdained holding onto them, but could not safely let them go.¹²⁹ Thatcher wrote that "nuclear war was indeed a terrible threat, but conventional war a terrible reality," meaning that as much as the world feared nuclear power, it seemed necessary to stave off the terrors of conventional war with which people were all too familiar.¹³⁰ Reagan attempted to resolve some of the ambiguity of nuclear possession by seeking defensive alternatives. Reagan distrusted the accepted wisdom of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) and actively pursued the idea of a missile shield. This Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) was colloquially known as "Star Wars," usually uttered in a derisive tone as an unrealistic idea. Thatcher was wary of this idea because she thought it undermined the threat that kept nuclear power a useful deterrent. She was reconciled to the plan, however, because she believed "that the

¹²⁶ Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, 477.

¹²⁷ Wolfers, Arnold, ed. *Alliance Policy in the Cold War*.

¹²⁸ Paul Sharp, *Thatcher's Diplomacy: The Revival of British Foreign Policy*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 131.

¹²⁹ "Wolf by the ears" is a paraphrase of a Roman proverb describing a difficult choice between many dangers. Thomas Jefferson popularized it when discussing the evils of American slavery. Thomas Jefferson Encyclopedia. Accessed November 21, 2011. <http://www.monticello.org/site/jefferson/wolf-ears>.

¹³⁰ Thatcher, *Downing Street Years*, 236.

United States would never start a war by launching a first strike against the Soviet Union, whether it believed that it was secure from retaliation or not.”¹³¹ Subtle remarks like this one serve as a reminder that the special relationship rested primarily upon the high levels of confidence each nation held in the other. Thatcher was not expressing her faith solely in Reagan’s good judgment not to use the bomb, but rather in the American system, people, and its present and future leaders. This was indicative of a confirmed trust that they could be trusted with such technology. This crucial point of faith explains why the special relationship functions even in times of leaders diametrically opposed in their governing philosophies, for the institutions of the two regimes can sustain the relationship in times of tension between the leaders. Though various presidents and prime ministers may deviate from a close constitutional principle, the institutions and governing systems established by that constitutionalism remain. Faith in the system sustains the special relationship when ideological agreement disappears.

Furthermore, any American development of the SDI would likely have been shared with Great Britain eventually. England still enjoyed the privileged position of sharing nuclear technology with the United States, but Reagan had expressed an interest in developing a technology that could provide protection for many allies. In his memoirs he wrote:

I’ve had to tell the Soviet leaders a hundred times that the SDI was not a bargaining chip. I’ve told them I’d share it with other willing to give up their nuclear missiles.we all got together in 1925 and banned the use

of poison gas. But we all kept our gas masks.¹³²

He firmly believed that a missile shield would prevent further proliferation of nuclear weapons. His dedication to this project would be tested at a turning point in U.S.-Soviet relations: Reykjavik.

This summit, held in the capital of Iceland, lasted only two days, October 10-11, 1986. It was a grueling process of negotiation, and both teams were shocked when Reagan and Gorbachev actually reached a radical agreement to seek the abolition of all nuclear weapons. This taste of triumph was only to be ruined at the last moment by Gorbachev’s insistence that SDI be restricted to the laboratory, and Reagan’s stringent refusal to do so. Nothing could be said or done to change either man’s mind.¹³³ The conference ended with no agreement. Some were furious that the President had let a pet project obstruct the reduction of nuclear weapons. Somewhat surprisingly, many more felt oddly relieved. As it turned out, the world had become quite used to the nuclear bomb and became decidedly uneasy at the “reckless” suggestion of the two superpowers that they might abolish the deterrent. Mitterrand and Thatcher issued a joint declaration that nuclear strength was a cornerstone of NATO strategy.¹³⁴ In her memoirs, Thatcher observed that in hindsight the nuclear concessions that Gorbachev offered at Reykjavik had not been lost by American mishandling; rather, “a trap had been prepared for the Americans.”¹³⁵ Gorbachev had gambled huge concessions on the knowledge that Reagan would not be willing to give up his missile defense and that NATO would not be

¹³¹ Ibid, 466.

¹³²Ronald Reagan, *An American Life*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 548.

¹³³ Hayward, *The Conservative Counterrevolution*, 506.

¹³⁴ Sharp, 134.

¹³⁵ Thatcher, *Downing Street Years*, 470.

willing to sacrifice their independent deterrent.

Reykjavik was a propaganda victory for the Soviet Union, which could point to their adversaries and argue that they were opposed to peace because they had refused to accept the Russians' offer. There was also the hope that the failure of the Reykjavik talks would pit the allies against one another, but this proved to have a limited effect. Thatcher shared some of the alarm that Reagan would agree to seek an absolute abolition of the deterrent and travelled to Camp David to reassess the joint position of the U.S. and Britain, in the vein of other meetings such as the one to discuss the potential of SDI in 1984. This meeting produced a document stating a more moderate approach to nuclear policy, including a cut of 50 percent over 5 years to Soviet and U.S. missiles, eliminating the gap in conventional weapons, and ensuring Britain's possession of the Trident weapon.¹³⁶ This plan retained many of the arms reduction measures adopted in the first phase of negotiations while precluding further extreme cuts in a second phase.¹³⁷

The Camp David plan expressed the broad aims of the two governments, which Thatcher would try to achieve when she travelled to Moscow in 1987. She assumed that Gorbachev would not be pleased with her, nor with the Camp David statement she and Reagan had agreed to, for it "demonstrated that, whether they liked it or not, I was able to have some influence on President Reagan on fundamental issues of alliance policy."¹³⁸ Gorbachev evidently disliked this because it showed that there was a consistency to the Cold War negotiations that would force him to make some concessions. Thatcher alluded to the similar methods used by Britain and America in

diplomacy, stating that "the Soviets often preferred to deal with right-wing western governments," because of their tendency to adhere to their agreements.¹³⁹ So, according to Thatcher, despite the diametrically opposed views of communism and the capitalism espoused by Thatcher and Reagan, a conservative alliance was peculiarly suited to negotiating for specific concessions in light of a specifically-desired principle. The Anglo-American alliance allowed them to confer about the delicate issues of rearmament and then present a unified front to their Soviet rivals.

The connection between Thatcher and Gorbachev illustrates the value of Britain's unique situation, the benefit of a strong, conjoined Western stance on foreign policy, and Thatcher's personal contributions to Cold War diplomacy by means of the special relationship. It was always understood, however, that the negotiations between the two major world superpowers would harbor repercussions for the rest of the world that Soviet relations with Britain did not. Thatcher's relationship with Gorbachev served a valuable purpose in this situation, for she was able to converse with him without the weight of responsibility that the United States carried. Outside of the bipolar relationship, Thatcher could negotiate with Gorbachev without being seen as a direct competitor for supremacy. Thatcher was careful to clarify her position in the Cold War negotiations. She was not a broker between the USA and the USSR. Britain had far too many national interests invested in the Cold War to affect anything like impartiality in the conflict. Thatcher worked hard to become something of an expert on Gorbachev and in her 1987 visit to Moscow she alternately encouraged the Russian leader in his reform efforts and reiterated the hard line she wanted the Western allies to take against

¹³⁶ Thatcher, *Downing Street Years*, 473.

¹³⁷ Sharp, 134.

¹³⁸ Thatcher, *Downing Street Years*, 473.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 474.

Soviet incursions in Afghanistan. Though she did not want to be taken as an emissary for all of NATO, Thatcher wrote that she “knew President Reagan’s mind and had... his confidence.”¹⁴⁰ In her remarks to the House of Commons, she reiterated that cooperation between Britain and the U.S. was necessary to “thrash out” the details of nuclear policy decided at Geneva in order to negotiate with Gorbachev.¹⁴¹ This kind of personal communication aided in the Cold War negotiations.

Bowing to the inevitabilities of the electoral cycle, Ronald Reagan made way for George H.W. Bush in 1989. Reagan retired to his ranch, but left with the honor of his vice-president succeeding him—a sure approbation of his presidency. Thatcher stepped down from her post a year after her friend, but not before she delivered a brilliant valedictory speech defending her government. In the Prime Minister’s words, she left Britain with a “standing in the world...that is deservedly high, not least because of our contribution to ending the cold war and to the spread of democracy through eastern Europe and Soviet Union.”¹⁴² Reagan’s tax policies had ensured that “between 1981 and 1988, the income tax burden of the middle class declined from 57.5 percent in 1981 to 48.7 percent in 1988.”¹⁴³ Despite these dramatic cuts, “individual income tax revenues rose from

\$244 billion in 1980 to \$446 billion in 1989.”¹⁴⁴ These revenues helped to adjust for the floundering economy of the 1970s. When Thatcher left office in 1990, she left an economy that, following her policies through the next decade, had “partially closed the gap in income per capita with France and Germany,” an impressive accomplishment after the decline of the past years.¹⁴⁵ As Reagan and Thatcher stepped down, they left a world firmly convinced of the bankruptcy of the Soviet Union—not only its economy, but its ideas. The strength of the Anglo-American special relationship allowed these two, mocked a decade earlier for their unorthodox economic policies and relative foreign policy inexperience, to accomplish one of the great feats of the twentieth century: the defeat of the Soviet Union.

CONCLUSION

The history of the Anglo-American special relationship is inextricably bound to the political development common to the two nations. Without the growth of closely parallel political institutions and mores, the special relationship would not have emerged as a notable phenomenon in the twentieth century distinguishable from the Cold War entente to which many and diverse nations belonged. The dichotomous arrangement of the liberal democratic and communist models of government provided a clear ideological conflict during the Cold War, which necessitated alliances that were legitimized primarily upon how closely the potential allies agreed with one another’s dominant political philosophy. The rise of conser-

¹⁴⁰ Thatcher, *Downing Street Years*, 476.

¹⁴¹ Margaret Thatcher, “Prime Minister’s Visit to the Soviet Union,” The Margaret Thatcher Foundation, Accessed September 1, 2011.

<http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/106787>

¹⁴² Margaret Thatcher, “Confidence in Her Majesty’s Government,” The Margaret Thatcher Foundation. Accessed November 2, 2011.

<http://www.margaretthatcher.org/speeches/displaydocument.asp?docid=108256>.

¹⁴³ Congress of the United States, Joint Economic Committee, “The Reagan Tax Cuts: Lessons for Tax Reform.” Accessed November 2, 2011.

<http://www.house.gov/jec/fiscal/tx-grwth/reatxtct/reatxtct..>

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ David Card, and Richard B. Freeman, “What Have Two Decades of British Economic Reform Delivered?,” *The National Bureau of Economic Research*. Accessed November 1, 2011. <http://www.nber.org/papers/w8801.pdf>

vatism in both Great Britain and the United States produced two leaders who characterized their understanding of freedom as the uniting factor between the two nations and thus the cornerstone of the special relationship.

The nature of the Anglo-American special relationship is significant for an understanding of twentieth century alliance politics because it emphasized the necessity to ally based upon similar political principles rather than, or in addition to, temporary necessity. Conservatism was a critical factor in the strengthening of the special relationship because it emphasized those constitutional principles which the two nations shared, thus making the friendship more natural. Tension between the collectivist tendencies inherent in the Progressive and Socialist movements of the respective nations and the Conservative Movement, which emphasized traditional constitutional rights and limited government, resulted in the awareness that some nations are naturally more united than others due to their political similarities. This realization added to the moral claim the Western allies could exert against the Soviet Union in contrast to the pure calculations of the balance of power structure of the kind that existed before the Great War.

The influence of the Conservative ideals of Thatcher and Reagan held fast in their respective nations for a decade after they left office. Even the Center-Left administration of Bill Clinton and premiership of Tony Blair borrowed hugely from the economic principles of the 1980s, while clothing the continuation of these policies in mild social justice rhetoric to differentiate themselves from their predecessors.¹⁴⁶ The post-Thatcher and Reagan era saw a resurgence

of “middle way” rhetoric, which was noticeably modified from the arrangement formulated by Harold MacMillan in 1938. First, the “third way” became a feature not only of British rhetoric, but also American and German parlance. Rather than using the middle way to describe the unique position of the United Kingdom as a balancing agent between Europe and the United States, this middle route came to describe a pursuit of conservative policies to serve liberal ends. It was a kind of utilitarian philosophy that recognized the gains made by the conservatives in realms of economic policy, but denied the principles of limited government and a traditional understanding of constitutionalism upon which those gains were achieved.¹⁴⁷ The ideological foundation for the special relationship was thus obscured during the 1990s, even while Blair and Clinton exhibited a friendly personal relationship. The special relationship has endured through many wars and foreign actions since the fall of communism, but the careful articulation upon its uniting principles has been lacking since the 1980s. Britain’s further connections with the European Union have also served to distance it from its neighbors across the Atlantic.

The Anglo-American special relationship has an uncertain future, but it serves an additional and useful international purpose for the twenty-first century. The special relationship, as it was first formulated by Winston Churchill and practiced by Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, provides a useful template for cultivating alliances in the future. According to Samuel P. Huntington’s hypothesis, culture, instead of ideology or economics, will provide the fault lines of post-Cold War conflict.¹⁴⁸ In this formula,

¹⁴⁶ Flavio Romano, “Clinton and Blair: The Economics of the Third Way,” *Journal of Economic and Social Policy*, 10, no. 2 (2006): 79-94.

¹⁴⁷ “Mr. Blair Goes to Washington.” *The Economist*, February 5, 1998.

¹⁴⁸ Samuel P. Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?” *Twentieth Century Political*

the role of political similarities in the choice of allies remains. The choice of regime—the way of life—of a people has great influence upon how they view their role in the world and who they perceive as their enemies. While the clear ideological dichotomy between the Soviet Union and the United States has faded and blurred since 1989, the moral component of foreign policy has proved tenacious and allies and enemies are still defined in terms of the justice of their regime. For example, under the nineteenth century balance of power system, the modern American support for Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak would have seemed fully justified in the pursuit of maintaining a stable Middle East where substantial U.S. and allied interests are represented. Under the modern formulation of international relations, nations which do not fall under the category of liberal democracy are repudiated; therefore, the United States was criticized for supporting a dictator. Clearly, the choice of regime within a nation still determines, to a large degree, the nature and actions of its allies.

Furthermore, the example of the Anglo-American special relationship can serve as a template for future manifestations of this type of alliance. By the 1960s, other nations had already begun to use the term “special relationship” to refer to their alliances. Two examples were Israel’s connection with the United States and Germany’s alliance with the United Kingdom.¹⁴⁹ Rather than making the friendship between the U.S. and the U.K somehow less “special” or significant, the addition of other nations claiming a similar connection denotes the possibility of future alliances being strengthened according to this pattern. The original special relationship provides a helpful

standard when discussing the relationship amongst other nations. Thatcher thought the British shared a natural connection to Germany within the framework of the European Community because they shared a more economically conservative approach which was lacking in other member nations.¹⁵⁰ Furthermore, the foundations for a strong future alliance between the United States and Israel were laid during the Cold War, as the United States sought increasing reliance upon the familiar political structures of Israel as a bulwark against Soviet incursions.¹⁵¹ In both cases, there was something in the structure of the potential ally’s domestic policies that prompted the trust upon which a special relationship could be proposed.

The Anglo-American special relationship held a significant role in the twentieth century. This alliance successfully navigated two World Wars and the multifaceted conflict that was the Cold War. The mutual political heritage of constitutionalism and rule of law continues to influence the institutions common to both Great Britain and the United States. The extension of this common bond of freedom was the great triumph of the Cold War and the legacy of an alliance so many in both Britain and America helped to build.

Theory: A Reader ed. Stephen Eric Brommer, (New York: Routledge, 2006), 439-456.

¹⁴⁹ Paul Addison, and Harriet Jones . *A Companion to Contemporary Britain: 1939-2000*, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005).

¹⁵⁰ Thatcher, *Downing Street Years*, 69.

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