

## **Reflections on the Contemporary US-UK Special Relationship: Structure and Agency in Anglo-American Relations**

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The US-UK Special Relationship embraces formidable accretions of myth, sentiment, and emotion. In historical terms, much of the 'specialness' may be very recent. It was only after the Arcadia conference with Franklin Roosevelt in 1942 that Winston Churchill informed King George VI that 'Britain and America were now married after many months of walking out' (1). However, the sentimental accretions have developed almost a life of their own. The Special Relationship has its own vocabulary, its own syntactical and attitudinal structure. It ranges from the comic effusions of Stephen Potter's 'hands-across-the-seamanship' to the view of Churchill (as quoted by Margaret Thatcher) that 'there is nothing more important for the future of the world than the fraternal association of our two peoples in righteous work' (2). There is also a kind of 'hands-across-seamanship' in reverse: the anti-Americanism of British poodles and spineless prime ministers seeking to please their American masters. It is easy to be cynical about the cultural and sentimental aspects of the Special Relationship, whose story is one of increasing lop-sidedness, with British diplomats seeking to exaggerate and reify the relationship in order to associate Britain with the global superpower. From the US viewpoint, America has 'special relations' with many countries. It is also a simple matter to expose the power relations inherent in the sentimentality. Suez was the most brutal example. On the British side, Special Relations thinking is imbued with the 'Greeks and Romans' mind-set whereby London civilizes the barbarian intentions emanating from Washington (3). British leaders have also traditionally been clear that they do expect something more from the relationship than a good feeling about fraternal association. In 1961, Harold Macmillan wrote to Queen Elizabeth II that he had 'always thought about American Presidents that the great thing is to get them to do what we want' (4).

In international politics, no doubt, interests are all. Yet culture, sentiment, history and language do count for something. In the case of the US-UK Special Relationship they arguably set the stage for at least a degree of (primarily elite) cooperation and shared understanding. In 1990, Gregory Treverton, reviewing the prospects for Anglo-American cooperation in the post-Cold war era, wrote that 'bright British diplomats in

Washington will continue to feel that Anglo-Saxons can understand each other better than those who do not speak (roughly) the same language' (5). My main point at the start of this paper, however, is to assert that the Special Relationship actually does exist in concrete structural form. We do not need to appeal to the vague gods of culture and sentiment, although culture and sentiment no doubt have their role in forming and sustaining these structures. What I have in mind here are the institutionalised structures of defence and military cooperation.

US military and intelligence cooperation in its current form dates back to World War Two. It was rooted for nearly fifty years in the doctrine of anti-Soviet containment: in Dean Acheson's 'common fate' (6). The removal of the Soviet threat in the early 1990s led to a weakening of these ties. The ties remained nevertheless, sustained by inertia, and by the British desire to retain close association with what was now the world's only superpower. For Washington, the alliance was clearly far less important than in the days when US air bases in the UK formed a vital part of anti-Soviet forward defence. Yet the alliance still had its utility to Washington, especially since it seemed unlikely to involve commitments which strayed too far from core American interests (7). The ties, of course, were reinvigorated by the War on Terror – or rather, by Prime Minister Tony Blair's response to America's War on Terror. In 2006, Jeffrey McCausland wrote in a publication issued by the US Strategic Studies Institute: 'no other state has the daily involvement in the planning and preparation of operations that the UK has with the US' (8). British intelligence has been intimately involved in post-9/11 intelligence operations, even if Washington's fragmented intelligence structure has on occasion interrupted close cooperation. The British Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) in Cheltenham appears to operate as a kind of default facility for America's National Security Agency, actually taking on the NSA role when American electronic spying systems failed in 2001 (9). US-UK defence cooperation is still organised to a large degree in the Mutual Defence Agreement, last renewed in 2004. There remain around 11,000 US service personnel on British soil. The most celebrated instance of US-UK defence association is the British nuclear programme. Most scenarios for Trident renewal involve some continuation of the American role in the UK nuclear programme which was fashioned by Kennedy and Macmillan at Nassau in 1962. The UK is a major participant in US Ballistic Missile Defence. London has been a conspicuous supporter of War on Terror

operations, probably including support for 'extraordinary rendition' and operations involving CIA Predator Drones. The two governments work together on numerous defence projects, notably the Joint Strike Fighter programme. Unsurprisingly, the Pentagon is by some way the biggest customer for BAE Systems (10).

The defence and intelligence relationships also draw upon complex and close economic ties between the US and the UK. Despite the Europeanisation of British trade and commerce, in 2006 each country was still the biggest single country investor in the other's economy. The UK receives around 40% of direct US foreign investment in Europe (11). Obviously, the closeness does not encompass a great degree of 'partnership' in the sense of equal weight and mutuality. There are major interoperability and capability gaps between the US and the UK, as there are between the US and all other nations. There is also a gap in strategic culture – with 'force protection' squaring off against 'low intensity'. However, the structures of US-UK defence and intelligence cooperation clearly do exist. They have been greatly strengthened in recent years and are bound to have a continuing impact on transatlantic relations in the post-Blair, post-Bush eras. The intention now is to consider the issue of structure and agency in the Bush-Blair Special Relationship. How much did the structures of Anglo-American defence and intelligence cooperation incline London to support Bush's conduct of the War on Terror, in particular to participate in the invasion of Iraq?

### **Blair and Iraq: Structure and Agency**

A simple point to make about the structure/agency problem in relation to British support for the War on Terror is that the US-UK ties as of September 2001 were actually at a historically relatively weak point. Inertia and shifting patterns of national interest kept them broadly in place during the 1990s, but there were distinct signs of strain. The later Clinton period saw an increased American inclination towards unilateral action. The various Iraq bombing campaigns of the late 1990s and the Kosovo campaign did, it is true, involve close US-UK cooperation, even if the Balkans action in particular revealed tensions. The sharpening of the European integration agenda, and especially Blair's sponsorship of the St Malo defence coordination programme, seemed nevertheless to point in the direction of transatlantic

pulling apart. By the early part of 2001, journalistic comment focused on the parting of the ways. *The Economist* on 9 June 2001 described prevailing Bush administration attitudes towards Western Europe as follows: 'The American stereotype is of a Europe that is economically sclerotic, psychologically neurotic and addicted to spirit-sapping welfare programmes and a freedom-infringing state'. Britain's recent past had no doubt seen a turn away from such characteristics, though, as a country whose leader was seeking to put it at the heart of Europe, the UK seemed to stand awkwardly poised between American and European socio-economic models. Blair stood opposed to the Bush administration position on the Kyoto agreement on climate change, on the International Criminal Court and on US withdrawal from various multilateral agreements. Labour MPs seemed set to attack Blair if he agreed to allow Britain to participate in US anti-missile programme. Downing Street's attempts to square the US-European circle risked a double bind: being seen in Western Europe as a stalking horse for American imperialism and in Washington as being implicated in Franco-German schemes to 'rebalance' against the United States.

What transformed all this was, quite simply, Blair's response to the Bush response to 9/11. Was agency or structure at the root of this? It will be argued shortly that agency, primarily Blair's own beliefs about international politics and about the obligations and opportunities of the Special Relationship, were key. At this juncture, however, it is worth briefly considering the structure of global politics, and Britain's relationship to it, as well as the cooperative structures of US-UK relations. Put briefly, Britain in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century found itself pressed between two sets of competing international relations. On the one side was the global picture: a unipolar order characterised by American primacy, rooted in various formations of 'hard' and 'soft' power. Several strategies were open to all countries in the face of this reality (12). Blair's favoured strategy was a form of close 'bandwagoning': staying close to the hegemon, thereby hoping to extract various goods, typically a combination of favours and influence. It was always possible, of course, that the drawbacks of the strategy – the possibility of 'entrapment', over-extension and the negative impact of being associated with unpopular (even with failed) policies – might come to outweigh any benefits. In Blair's case, moreover, the international structure also threw up the systemic pressure of the multipolar order in Europe. British interests, at least as traditionally conceived, seemed to point to action designed to prevent European multipolarity turning into

something less pluralist in nature. Blair's 'solution' – 'bandwagoning' with the US while remaining closely engaged in EU integration agendas, with a view to undermining unwanted power concentrations in Western Europe – was 'rational' and to some degree imposed by global structure (13).

The current argument, however, is that the principal driver of London's recent support for Washington has been agency rather than structure, either in its Special Relationship or its global international systemic forms. This paper holds that the principal force leading to British participation in the Iraq invasion was Blair's own belief system. Before proceeding further, let us take a moment to consider the nature of these beliefs.

Most attempts to analyse Blair's foreign policy beliefs begin with his religious outlook. Will Hutton, for example, puts Blair in 'the same Christian reformist tradition as Lord Shaftesbury'. Tony Blair 'believes in the West of the Christian Enlightenment. Any global initiative, whether it's action against climate change or the fight against terror, requires the West to stand collectively together, even when the US is wrong' (14). Visibly embarrassed when discussing his religious position, Blair described the background to the 2003 invasion decision thus: 'Well, I think if you have faith about these things then you realise that judgement is made by other people'. Pushed further, he continued: 'If you believe in God it (the judgement) is made by God as well' (15).

The intention here is not to portray Blair as some species of religious fanatic, but merely to underline the centrality of a religious conviction, derived from an Anglo-Catholic muscular, Christian reforming outlook, which clearly did attach itself to the 2003 invasion decision. The Blair Doctrine of liberal interventionism, outlined most famously in the speech he gave to the Economic Club of Chicago during the 1999 Kosovo crisis, is extremely well known. The Prime Minister continued to expound it well into the post-2003 period; before the Australian parliament, for example, and to various American audiences during 2006 and 2007. In these speeches, the post-9/11, 'post-Westphalian', Blair Doctrine adopted a rhetorically all-embracing messianism. On August 5, 2006 in Los Angeles, for example, he described the War on Terror as a 'clash about civilisation': '9/11 in the US, 7/7 in the UK, 11/3 in Madrid, the

countless terrorist attacks in countries as disparate as Indonesia or Algeria ... the continuing conflict in Lebanon and Palestine, its all part of the same thing' (16). These beliefs were intense, dynamic and pivotal to Blair's decision-making. They shared the moral certainty and some of the policy implications of American neo-conservatism, while lacking the latter's preoccupation with *American* destiny and commitment to untrammelled American military primacy.

When asked to explain his decisions to British audiences, Blair has generally shied away from expressions of moral absolutism. His justification for staying close to America appears rather in the traditional garb of the Special Relationship: the garb of influence and favours as well as of 'hands-across-the-seamanship'. Former Ambassador Christopher Meyer noted that his declaration (at the Labour Party conference in 2002) that 'we will stay with you to the last 'was a 'a great line', though unfortunately 'Americans tend to hear these things literally' (17). Blair would certainly concur with Australian Premier John Howard's comment that one should never be a 60% friend. (One is reminded of the comments made by Bob Hope to serving troops in Vietnam: 'The country is behind you: 50%'). Blair's domestic defence of his support for Bush tends, however, to be along the lines of 'get real', rather than simple invocation of Churchillian doctrines of fraternal association. Asked by Timothy Garten Ash what he had got from the Special Relationship over the last ten years, Blair replied 'the relationship itself': essentially the opportunity for influence (18). Blair wrote in *The Economist* in June 2007:

There is talk of Britain having a new strategic relationship with China and India bypassing our traditional European and American links. Get real. Of course we will have our own relationship with both countries. But we are infinitely better more influential with them if we have two strong alliances behind us (19).

Cutting loose from the United States would fly in the face both of British interests and of the realities of world power. He told the joint session of the US Congress in 2003:

There never has been a time when the power of America was so necessary; or so misunderstood ... Believe me, if Europe and America are together, the others will work with us. But if we split, all the rest will play around, play us off and nothing but mischief will be the result of it (20).

He might have added, in line with ‘Greeks and Romans’ logic, that America was most dangerous and irresponsible when denied the civilising wisdom of its British ally. He also repeatedly emphasised that, if Britain were to veer away from America, it would be exceedingly difficult later to recover lost ground. Empirical research on the Blair belief system points to the British leader’s strong belief in his ability to control events, relatively low conceptual complexity and a high need for power (21). Personality traits, religious conviction, personal understanding of the logic of global power, the obligations of the Special Relationship, British interests: all these forces conspired to push Blair in the direction of the Bush administration. David Manning’s interpretation of Britain’s role in the Special Relationship has become canonical in this connection: ‘At the best of times, Britain’s influence on the US is limited. But the only way we exercise that influence is by attaching ourselves firmly to them and avoiding public criticism where possible’ (22).

### **Beliefs and the Iraq Invasion**

Considerable attention has been given to the question of whether Blair ‘lied’ over the issue of Weapons of Mass Destruction in Iraq. Though distortion and ‘spinning’ were evident, the term, ‘lying’, is rather strong (23). There was, as Robin Cook argued, some element of ‘bad faith’ – seeking a diplomatic solution in a situation which was almost bound to involve American military action – in Blair’s handling of the crisis (24). Yet both Bush and Blair had every reason to be genuinely surprised when no WMD were discovered. My intention so far has been not to deride or ridicule Blair’s beliefs, but rather to establish their intensity and their characteristic blending of conviction and pragmatic interest. Why should these beliefs, rather than more fundamental ‘structures’, be seen as determining the key decisions?

In seeking to answer this question, let us look firstly at the parallel case of Prime Minister Harold Wilson and the Vietnam War. Though pressed by President Lyndon Johnson to commit at least a troop of bagpipers to the conflict (and excoriated by left-wingers in his own Labour Party for offering largely rhetorical support for US policy in Indochina), Wilson refused. The comparison with Iraq is not exact. The fact the Vietnam conflict was slow in building up gave Wilson more room to manoeuvre. The

Americanisation decisions of early 1965, however, were arguably Vietnam's equivalent to the starting gun that was fired in March 2003. For present purposes, however, it is important to appreciate that the structures of the Special Relationship – defence and intelligence sharing – were actually (if anything) stronger, and therefore presumably harder for Wilson to resist, in 1965 than in 2001-3. By 2003, though they had been reinforced by Blair's response to 9/11, they had just suffered the prolonged effects of the disappearance of the integrating Soviet threat. In 1965, moreover, the US had far greater economic leverage over Britain than it was to have thirty-eight years later. In the mid-1960s, the US was engaged in periodic and costly attempts to rescue the over-exposed pound. Though no doubt designed primarily to protect the first line of defence against the dollar, the sterling rescues did give the US huge leverage. Though they balked at a repetition of Suez, Johnson and his advisers were able to contemplate employment of the 'Hessian option', whereby Britain would have been *forced* to commit troops. It is difficult to imagine such an option being available in any realistic sense in 2003 (25).

Wilson explained to LBJ in 1965 that his government simply could not survive the commitment of British troops to Vietnam. The 2005 general election arguably illustrated that a Prime Minister *can* commit troops to an unpopular war and still be re-elected. Again, we have to appreciate the force of important distinctions between 1965 and 2003: the difference in the size of the Wilson and Blair parliamentary majorities, the shifting ideological composition of the parliamentary Labour Party, and so on. However, it is manifestly the case that in 2003, Blair (unlike Wilson in 1965) took a huge personal, political risk. The risk involved, among other things, a gamble on the likely behaviour of Gordon Brown. It is difficult to understand what exactly, beyond intensely held personal belief, would explain such a decision. What is also extremely relevant here is the fact that Washington offered Blair a way out. On the eve of war, Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld blurted out at a press conference in Washington that British military involvement was not essential to the invasion. Bob Woodward's account of these matters indicates that Bush and Condoleezza Rice were extremely sympathetic to Blair's domestic predicament – as indeed, when it came to the crunch, LBJ had been sympathetic to Wilson's parallel problems. Bush apparently gave Blair the clear option of ducking out of the actual invasion. Such a route would certainly have represented a temporary political salve to Blair, despite what was to



become a devastatingly bloody four-years-and-counting aftermath to the invasion (26).

### **The Special Relationship after the Iraq Invasion**

To the extent that Blair was seeking influence and favours from participation in the invasion of Iraq, the current consensus is that he failed. Some attempts have been made to argue the case for Blair's influence. Bush's attempt to achieve a second UN resolution in early 2003 surely did owe something to Blair, though it also reflected the desire of the American public that Washington should spread the cost of invasion by seeking multilateral support. British involvement in the negotiations which secured the Libyan renunciation of nuclear ambitions seemed to indicate that London could indeed participate productively in post-9/11 global diplomacy (27).

Denis MacShane has put the case for seeing Blair's hand not only in the matter of the second UN resolution, but also in America's re-entry into UNESCO, the development of the Israel-Palestine 'road map', shifts in US stances towards Iran, and even in the Israeli military exit from Gaza (28). Such arguments are not especially convincing. They tend to confuse direct British influence with the desire of the Bush team to repair relations, especially after the administration entered its second term in early 2005, even with those Western European countries which had so spectacularly opposed the invasion. Even the second Bush administration has declined to put Israel-Palestine negotiations at anywhere near centre-stage. There are one or two other candidates for establishing a degree of influence for Blair. In a BBC radio interview broadcast on 11 May 2007, Condoleezza Rice traced Blair's influence in changing the administration's line on climate change and in promoting aid to Africa. She also described Bush's attitude towards Northern Ireland as being 'whatever Tony Blair needs, Tony Blair should have' (29). Disagreements over Sinn Fein fundraising in the US did break out in 2006, with Washington in post-9/11 conditions actually being reluctant to recognise the IRA's renouncement of the armed struggle. It is fair, however, to point out that US activism on Northern Ireland has continued, despite predictions that it would evaporate with the end of the Clinton presidency (30). It is reasonable to point to Blair's stance on Africa and on climate change as having some

kind of effect in Washington, though policy in such areas reflects infinitely more than simple pressure from London. Tensions between London and Washington were evident in a number of areas during the early part of 2007: for example, in the coolness of the official British response to the US military 'surge' in Iraq. Tensions also surfaced in interviews given by administration, or former administration, conservatives (notably John Bolton and Zalmay Khalilzad) on British conduct during the naval hostage-taking by Iran and on the timetable for UK troop withdrawal from Basra. In February 2006, the US scrapped a major defence deal with Rolls-Royce, despite Blair's reported personal intervention. There were some compensatory signs of movement on long-standing British complaints about denial of access to US defence technology. In June 2007 Blair and Bush signed a treaty which went at least some way to answering these complaints (31).

In assessing Blair's influence, it is worth mentioning that there clearly were elements of the administration – especially Rice, Colin Powell and indeed Bush himself – who took Blair very seriously and were prepared to acknowledge his courage and wisdom in making unpopular decisions. By the same token, there were elements – most obviously in the Pentagon and in the circles around Vice President Cheney – to whom Blair seems to be little more than a rather sanctimonious nuisance. Christopher Hitchens portrays Blair as a species of post-9/11 Mr Magoo: 'Without quite realising it, Blair intruded himself into the largest untold Washington story of the past decade: the bitter internecine war, or wars, between the Pentagon, the State Department and the CIA. No British Prime Minister should ever be such a position' (32).

An important strand in the controversy about the transatlantic influence exerted by Blair relates to lost opportunities. Both Christopher Meyer and former President Jimmy Carter have offered argument along these lines (33). *Times* journalist Anatole Kaletsky puts the point thus:

Mr Blair was the one man in the world who could have forced President Bush to back Colin Powell, sack Donald Rumsfeld, close down Abu Graib and Guantanamo and launch a serious drive for Palestinian statehood. In the months before the 2004 presidential election, when President Bush was behind in the polls and desperate for international support for the Iraq adventure, Mr Blair could have laid down all these conditions – and more – for his continuing participation in Iraq. He did not even try (34).

This viewpoint is worth recording, and it is even possible that the process of document release may increase its persuasiveness over time. Looked at from the perspective of our current knowledge of the Bush administration, however, this argument seems both to attach an unrealistic potency to Blair and to underplay the power of warring factions within the American administration. Extending the argument slightly, it is evident that Blair failed to make any impact on the issue of post-invasion planning. The Prime Minister was certainly advised by David Manning in March 2002 that Washington was seriously underestimating the difficulties of Iraqi democratic reconstruction. Blair was kept informed of the deteriorating situation immediately after the invasion in a series of detailed memos from John Sawers, his personal envoy in Baghdad. Recognition of the post-invasion mess, and arguably of his own failure to press the issue of post-invasion realism, seems to have led Blair to the brink of resignation in the spring of 2004 (35). The story of all this is most likely a familiar one: good-faith efforts by Blair to promote his case in Washington being greeted positively by sympathetic elements in the administration, only subsequently to be undermined by the Pentagon and by Cheney's office. In a 2007 *Guardian* interview, former Defence Secretary Geoff Hoon acknowledged that London had failed to achieve any plan for 'the right sort of aftermath' to the invasion. London, according to Hoon, was to some extent swept up in the general optimism. Its advice was, however, also dissipated amid ferocious American bureaucratic politics:

Sometimes ... Tony had made his point with the president, and I'd made my point with Don (Rumsfeld) and Jack (Straw) had made his point with Colin (Powell) and the decision actually came out of a completely different place. And you think: what did we miss? I think we missed Cheney (36).

By 2004, the conventional wisdom in the UK was that some kind of drawing apart between London and Washington was inevitable. The new Conservative leader, David Cameron, even took the opportunity of the fourth anniversary of 9/11 to criticise 'unrealistic and simplistic' world views in Washington. His rhetoric drew the public displeasure of Margaret Thatcher (37). The 2006 firing of Jack Straw from his job as Foreign Secretary was traced even by conservative commentators – notably William Rees-Mogg – to US displeasure at Straw's opposition to US military action in Iran (38). The 'Yo Blair' incident at the St Petersburg summit of July 2006 further

damaged Blair's public reputation. In an accidentally recorded conversation, Blair was heard offering his services to Bush in connection with the Israel-Hizbollah conflict taking place in Lebanon. With Condoleezza Rice about to make a trip to the region, Blair interjected: 'Well ... it's only if I mean ... you know. If she's got a ... or if she needs the ground prepared as it were ... Because obviously if she goes out, she's got to succeed, if it were, whereas I can go out and just talk' (39). (Blair did not 'go out'). His position on the Lebanon conflict was additionally undermined by the leaking of a critical memo from David Manning and by the publication of criticism by former adviser Stephen Wall. Wall urged Blair to think 'less about private influence and more about public advocacy'; it was time to 'unhitch' the UK 'from the Bush chariot' (40).

## **Prospects**

Blair's experience with the Special Relationship in the era of the War on Terror has been a miserable one. His conduct has not been indefensible and indeed may even in the course of events come to be viewed in a much more positive light. Yet it is exceedingly difficult to imagine any future British leader wishing to tread a similar path. The political landscape has shifted in Western Europe with the election of Angela Merkel and Nicolas Sarkozy. It will shift on a global scale with the 2008 US presidential elections. Whatever happens as a result of these various shifts, it surely is the case that Iraq 2003 will cast a similar pall over the Special Relationship to that experienced after Suez 1956. No British Prime Minister will contemplate action which might plausibly be compared to the Blair war decision of 2003.

Journalistic forecasts of what may happen to the Special Relationship under a Brown premiership have tended to focus on the possibility of some easing away from the United States. Brown's personal history is one of intense involvement and interest in American liberal politics. As his biographer Tom Bowyer puts it, 'America inspired Brown'. Clinton's 'social inclusion', welfare and economic policies were models for the New Labour approach to economic and social management, an approach which

Brown nurtured in the mid-1990s even more conspicuously than did Tony Blair (41). As Chancellor, Brown kept his foreign policy profile extremely low, frequently indulging his McCavity-like ability to be absent when awkward decisions had to be defended. He certainly seems to have defended Blair's war decision in Cabinet (42). In 2007, shortly before Blair's resignation, he declared: 'I take my responsibility as a member of the Cabinet for the collective decisions that we made, and I believe they were the right decisions, but we're at a new stage now' (43). Early appointments included those of David Miliband as Foreign Secretary and Mark Malloch Brown as Minister for Africa, Asia and the UN (with a right to attend Cabinet meetings). The former had criticised Israeli conduct in the Lebanon conflict of 2006, while Malloch Brown had frequently crossed swords with John Bolton at the UN (44).

The 'Brown approach' is generally thought to involve the prioritisation of Middle East and African economic development. The problem of course is that foreign policy so rapidly becomes a matter of reacting to swiftly changing events, rather than the rolling out of carefully worked out policy. An anonymous Blairite political figure interviewed by Jonathan Freedland put it thus: 'If Iran invades southern Iraq, you can't commission Derek Wanless to do an 18-month review' (45). Brown's elevation was greeted by American conservative opinion with a degree of distaste. The *Wall Street Journal* editorialised on 10 May 2007 on the subject of US-UK cooperation in the War on Terror: 'Thanks to Gordon Brown's reticence, no one knows how well he'll meet this challenge. He did have an excellent instructor for the past 10 years, assuming Mr Brown was listening'. Brown is generally thought to have poor relations with Secretary Rice, with whom he is reported to have had a huge row (over aid to the developing world) in February 2005. After their first meeting, President Bush referred to the new British leader as a 'good fellow', an approbation he has also used to refer to Vladimir Putin.

Brown inherits from Blair a set of Special Relationship structures which, despite the agonies of recent years, remain strong. Our preceding analysis of the Blair era would suggest, however, that intense personal beliefs may be more important than such structures. As the *Wall Street Journal* indicated, Brown's personal beliefs are not easy to establish. They would seem to reside in pragmatic internationalism, a less-than-fervent commitment to the European integration agenda, and a commitment to

development aid (46). Brown's personal beliefs seem to be less intensely held than Blair's. It is difficult to know how seriously to take his promises about a return to regularised Cabinet government and accountability to parliament. Nevertheless, to the degree that the Brown government does turn itself away from the Blair sofa – what Anthony Seldon calls Blair's 'denocracy' (47) –, the impact of personal belief upon policy will presumably decline. Brown inherits similar international systemic pressures to those faced by Blair. The United States, though suffering a degree of military overstretch and some loss of 'soft power', still remains unchallenged as global hegemon at least in the immediate future. Brown additionally inherits a formidable degree of domestic anti-Americanism and hostility, in particular, to the Bush team. A strong temptation will be to put all his trust in a Democratic victory in 2008. Brown's public statements have balanced a commitment to good American relations with a promise to be 'very frank' with George W. Bush (47). The future would seem to be one of rhetorical rebalancing with the US, pragmatic Europeanism, possibly some swift movement on troop deployments (notably from Iraq to Afghanistan) and complex positioning in the run-up to the 2008 US elections.

## Notes

1. Quoted in Roy Jenkins, *Churchill* (London, Pan Macmillan, 2002), p. 676.
2. Stephen Potter, *The Complete Upmanship* (London, Hart-Davis, 1970), pp. 260-4; Alex Danchev, 'Tony Blair's Vietnam: the Iraq War and the "Special Relationship" in Historical Perspective', *Review of International Studies*, 33/2, 2007, pp. 189-204, 191.
3. See John Dumbrell, *A Special Relationship: Anglo-American Relations from the Cold War to Iraq* (Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2006), pp. 17-18.
4. Harold Macmillan, *Pointing the Way: 1959-1961* (London, Macmillan, 1972), p. 591.
5. Gregory Treverton, 'Britain's Role in the 1990s: an American View', *International Affairs*, 66/4, 1990, pp. 703-10, 710.
6. Quoted in Alex Danchev, 'On Specialness', *International Affairs*, 72/4, 1996, pp. 737-51, 739.
7. See John Dumbrell, 'The US-UK "Special Relationship" in a World Twice Transformed', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 17/3, 2004, pp. 437-50.
8. Jeffrey McCausland, 'When You Come to a Fork in the Road, Take It – Defense Policy and the Special Relationship', in Jeffrey McCausland and Douglas Stuart, eds.,

*US-UK Relations at the Start of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Carlisle PA, Strategic Studies Institute, 2006), pp. 191-200, 191.

9. See Dumbrell, *A Special Relationship*, pp. 168-72.

10. See Kristin Archik, *The United Kingdom: Issues for the United States* (Washington DC, Congressional Research service Report, 2005).

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

12. See Stephen Walt, *Taming American Power: the Global Response to US Primacy* (New York, W. W. Norton, 2005).

13. See Adrian Hyde-Price, *European Security in the Twenty-first Century: the Challenge of Multipolarity* (London, Routledge, 2006); Mark Beeson, 'The Declining Utility of "Bandwagoning": American Hegemony in the Age of Terror', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, forthcoming 2007.

14. Will Hutton, 'The Private Man I Knew Who Drove the Public Revolution', *The Observer*, 13 May 2007.

15. 'God Will Judge Me', *The Guardian*, 4 March 2006.

16. 'The Poodle's Dilemma', *The Economist*, 5 August 2006, pp. 27-8; 'Bagehot: the Hopeful Interventionist', *The Economist*, 26 March 2006, p. 38.

17. Christopher Hitchens, 'A Friend in Need', *The Observer*, 8 April 2007.

18. Timothy Gatten Ash, 'Like It or Loath It, After 10 Years Blair Knows Exactly What He Stands For', *The Guardian*, 26 April 2007.

19. 'What I've Learned', *The Economist*, 2 June 2007, pp. 29-31, 30.

20. Quoted in Caroline Kennedy-Pipe and Rhiannon Vickers, "'Blowback" for Britain? Blair, Bush, and the War in Iraq', *Review of International Studies*, 33/2, 2007, pp. 205-22, 215.

21. See Stephen B. Dyson, 'Personality and Foreign Policy: Tony Blair's Iraq Decisions', *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 2/2, 2006, pp. 289-306.

22. See John Kampfner, *Blair's Wars* (London, Free Press, 2003), p. 117.

23. See Paul Hoggett, 'Iraq: Blair's Mission Impossible', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 7/3, 2005, pp. 418-428; Christopher Bluth, 'The British Road to War: Bush, Blair and the Decision to Invade Iraq', *International Affairs*, 80/5, 2004, pp. 871-92; Eoin O'Malley, 'Setting Choices, Controlling Outcomes: the Operation of Prime Ministerial Influence and the UK's Decision to Invade Iraq', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 9/1, 2007, pp. 1-9.

24. See Robin Cook, *The Point of Departure* (London, Simon and Schuster, 2003), p. 311; Dumbrell, 'The US-UK "Special Relationship" in A world Twice Transformed'.
25. See Dumbrell, *A Special Relationship*, pp. 188-96.
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