

# **The Iraq War and the Special Relationship**

**How the Dynamics Between the United Kingdom and the United States were  
Challenged**

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## ***Abstract***

*This thesis will focus on the Special Relationship which was tested after 9/11 and the war in Iraq that followed. After introducing the history and concept of the Special Relationship the focus will be on the period that saw three Prime Ministers (PM) (Tony Blair, Gordon Brown, and David Cameron) and two Presidents (George W. Bush and Barack Obama), and where the relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom changed. The personal developments of the nation leaders will indicate, from their personal view, how this relationship developed and what the Special Relationship changed to. This will be put in a theoretical framework that indicates how personal relations of nation leaders may have influenced decision making before and during the war. All the relationships between the leaders that fulfilled their prime ministership or presidency at a similar time will be analysed from a timespan of 9/11/2001 to the end of the war in 2011.*

## I. Introduction

The Special Relationship is a term that indicates the relations of several aspects between the United Kingdom and the United States. The focus of this thesis will be on the dynamics of the Special Relationship during the Iraq War from the perspectives of the nation leaders. The history and concept of the Special Relationship needs some introduction and explanation to understand arguments and decision making encountered later in the thesis. The most important focus lies on political, diplomatic, and military relations, but other factors such as economics and culture are also influenced by the Special Relationship. This relationship stems forth from a shared sense of culture and history. Despite the separation of the United States from the UK, they have always maintained a certain connection. The language and history of the United States are inherently intertwined with Britain. As a result, the country the United States relates the most to, is the one that shares the same language and the one with which it has had the most intense history. The 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the introduction of the Monroe Doctrine, indicating that the US had no interest in any international dealings. The fact that Britain was overthrown as an overlord, in combination with this isolationist ideology defined US foreign affairs until the 20<sup>th</sup> century meant that the Special Relationship had yet to flourish.<sup>1</sup> The First World War meant a kindling for the relationship between the UK and the US, there was an enemy that had to be defeated. Furthermore, the internationalist convictions of Woodrow Wilson aided greatly in the decision of becoming an active part of the war. The shared sense of enemy made these allies grow closer together and activated the sense of a Special Relationship based on a shared set of values, history, and language. The reality meant that from the First World War on, the British and the Americans have considered each other on a spectrum that ranges from related to friends.<sup>2</sup>

There certainly have been ups and downs in this relationship, often depending on the current situation in the world, and whether that needed attention, or whether a president or PM was less active in foreign affairs and disliked any or too much influence from the other nation. There have been times in which the Special Relationship meant nothing more than the commonality of the English language, other times, however, the relationship bonded the countries very close. Especially when a shared enemy endangered the democratic way of life, the two nations bonded together. When there was less of a threat, there would be trade agreements, diplomatic missions, and other forms of treatment that one might consider preferential. The changes of time have occasionally also proven to be troublesome for the relationship, as the nation leaders were not always as eager to support each other in international conflicts.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps part of this occasionally troubling relationship was due to the fact that Britain and the United States switched positions as to who would be seen as the most powerful nation on Earth. Especially after the Second World War, Britain had to recognize the crown had been lost and was donned by the

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<sup>1</sup>Michael G. Fry, "The Special Relationship.", *Review of International Studies* 14, nr. 3 (1988): 237–45; "The Monroe Doctrine", *Encyclopædia Britannica*, (1923) <https://www.britannica.com/event/Monroe-Doctrine>.

<sup>2</sup> Robert D. Schulzinger, *A Companion to American Foreign Relations*. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2006): 149.

<sup>3</sup> Adam Sich, "The Ups and Downs of the Special Relationship – Video", *The Guardian*, 27 January, 2017, sec. US news, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/video/2017/jan/27/churchill-ties-to-trump-tensions-the-ups-and-downs-of-the-special-relationship-video>.

American President.

One of the major true common enemies that were faced in the 20th century was the communist regime, although this was more of a battle of ideologies between the United States and the Soviet Union. The United Kingdom was America's extension into Europe, where the US enjoyed a gateway into Europe and a powerful ally who would help keep the evil at bay. The UK profited by enjoying American protection, and both nations felt obligated to aid one another, both for the sake of democracy, and for the Special Relationship. This aid often formed in a cooperation of military forces, both for possible offense and defence.<sup>4</sup> After the collapse of the communist regime, the relation between the UK and the US continued and the UK pledged the largest force of European troops in order to aid in the Gulf War.

Especially in the sense of the Special Relationship this war was a great success, a quick war, in which the set goals were accomplished, and the UK and the US could look back on an effective cooperation. On the other hand, a bitter aftertaste was felt, especially by the British population after nine British soldiers were killed by US troops in a friendly fire incident, for which answers never truly have been found.<sup>5</sup>

In 2001 all the attacks on 9/11 resulted in the War on Terror. The speech given by President George W. Bush on September 20th in 2001 clearly meant there were only two sides "Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists".<sup>6</sup> The United Kingdom was one of the first to pledge their allegiance in this War on Terror, once again proving the importance of the Special Relationship and aiming to improve the world balance by spreading the shared belief and system which often translated to democracy. This was achieved by aiming to defeat common enemies, whether that is ideological or more traditional. This period meant the start of what is a still ongoing conflict and has known many issues. While it is logical for the British forces to immediately join the cause, there were many problems that had yet to unfold. One of the major steps taken by the United States was to actively wage war on areas in the world that threatened the West. One of these wars was the Iraq War, in which Saddam Hussein was deemed a threat towards Western security and was also thought to be harbouring Taliban and Al Qaeda terrorists.<sup>7</sup> In order for this threat to be eliminated Hussein's reign had to come to an end, and the region had to be pacified and freed, while simultaneously discovering and removing any terrorists that had hidden themselves under Saddam Hussein's protection.<sup>8</sup> The war was extremely complicated, it dragged out far longer than it should have, cost far more supplies than expected, and faced Western society with the possibility that the West might be doing more

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<sup>4</sup> Michael F. Hopkins, Michael Kandiah, and Gillian Staerck, *Cold War Britain, 1945-1964: New Perspective*, Cold War History Series, (Houndmills, Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) 102-106.

<sup>5</sup> James Cooper, *Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan: A Very Political Special Relationship*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) 1-10.

<sup>6</sup> George W. Bush, "Address to the Joint Session of the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress", *Washington Post*, (September 20, 2001) [https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/specials/attacked/transcripts/bushaddress\\_092001.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/specials/attacked/transcripts/bushaddress_092001.html).

<sup>7</sup> Tony Blair, *A Journey* (Random House, 2010) 392.

<sup>8</sup> Robert Booth, "'With you, whatever': Tony Blair's letters to George W. Bush", *The Guardian* (July 6, 2016) <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/jul/06/with-you-whatever-tony-blair-letters-george-w-bush-chilcot>.

harm than good. Thousands of people had taken to the streets to protest the Iraq War. The reasons all vary, some did not see the need to endanger their own troops. Some disagreed with the justification as to why Iraq needed to be invaded in the first place, and suspected it was to secure oil. During the war, the protests continued, the narrative around the war changed, and strain was put on politicians to justify the war, while simultaneously attempting to protect their citizens from what they perceived was a security threat. The nation leaders during that time were faced with balancing the opinion of their citizens, while simultaneously aiding their counterpart across the Atlantic. The relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom was challenged and would eventually change during the course of the war.<sup>9</sup>

### **1.1 Research Question & Sub-questions**

The dynamic in the relationship between the United Kingdom and the United States will be analysed during and the events leading up to the Iraq War from 2001-2011. This will be done by focussing on these actors in the form of their government and specifically leaders, and the shifts therein. The United Kingdom had three different PMs during the period of the war: Tony Blair, Gordon Brown, and David Cameron. While the United States had two different presidents, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama, all with presumably different opinions towards the war, based on their personal opinion or varying political agendas. It will be discovered why their views of the war differed, and how it affected the relation towards another, and how that in turn affected the war. This will mainly be done through their autobiographies, and through first-hand witnesses of interactions between state leaders expressed in primary sources, for example statements from ministers or advisors. Relevant speeches and statements that have been given with regards to the Iraq War that express changes will be researched, these changes will have decisions that lead up to these outcomes and are likely to be sources or evidence of decisions or dilemma's that indicate the relationship between the UK and the US By focussing on the individuals. This gives a hardly explored viewpoint of the progression of the Special Relationship during the Iraq War. Existing research often focusses on a more umbrella approach of foreign affair politics, which includes more focus on policies and less on individuals. Examples of this umbrella approach can be seen in literature by scholars who focus on this particular subject such as Patrick Porter, Alan Dobson, and Steve Marsh, who will all be examined later as part of understanding the existing literature with regards to this subject.<sup>10</sup> Yuri van Hoef's friendship theory will be applied, which is better suited for focussing on individuals to analyse the nation leaders. Due to constraints, there will be no focus on any aftermath of the war, as there may be other factors that could influence the Special Relationship, furthermore, the Iraqi actors will have a minimal role, while still important as the war is

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<sup>9</sup> Carmen Fishwick, "'We Were Ignored': Anti-War Protesters Remember the Iraq War Marches", *The Guardian*, 8 July, 2016, <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/jul/08/we-were-ignored-anti-war-protestors-remember-the-iraq-war-marches>.

<sup>10</sup> Patrick Porter, "Last Charge of the Knights? Iraq, Afghanistan and the Special Relationship", *International affairs*, 86:2 (2010): 355-375; Alan Dobson & Steve Marsh, "Anglo-American Relations: End of a Special Relationship?", *The International History Review*, 36:4 (2014): 673-697.

fought on their soil, they are not the parties this thesis focusses on. Aspects such as public opinion, legitimacy, and controversial events, during the war will be analysed to give a good understanding of how the dynamic changed, but also how they influenced the presidents and PMs. These aspects and will be expanded further upon during the explanation of the method. The main research question will be: *How did the dynamics between the United Kingdom and the United States change during and around the Iraq War of 2003-2011 due to political shifts; and how did this affect the Special Relationship?*

The road to answer this research question lies in a division of the perspectives of the nation leaders. The years leading up to the invasion in Iraq in 2003 are crucial, starting after the events of 9/11 in 2001. These years are shaping the justification for the invasion but also what the alliance between the UK and the US is to be, and how this alliance is constructed. What is the role division, and what does the equality of the alliance look like? Moreover, the analyses of the relation between George W. Bush and Tony Blair needs to be made. Their relation is crucial to establish a clear view of what was believed to be right by each party, and how this problem should be approached. The relationship between the two is crucial to understanding the development of the war, but also the basis of the relationship on which it started. The sacrifices that needed to be made to realize this alliance are not to be neglected if the political heritage of the nation leaders is to be understood. The first sub-question to be answered in chapter three will be: *How did the period between 9/11 2001 and the invasion in 2003 influence the relationship between George W. Bush and Tony Blair, and what key moments can be found?*

After this first analysis is made, the timeline reaches the invasion of Iraq. the assessment of the Presidents and PMs will be divided into two chapters, in which the different sets of nation leaders are discussed. In the fourth chapter the focus is on the first part of the war up until the resignation of Prime Minister Blair. This to further dive into the relation as it was set up in the previous chapter between Blair and Bush as this is the main relationship during the war, but also functions as a foundation to the later years. The Blair-Bush angle is the key angle of this thesis and challenges the literature on the SR during the Iraq War as will be analysed during the literature review and thesis itself. The start of the war knew many developments that heavily influenced this relationship and deserves a detailed analysis as it resonates strongly with the main research question in finding out what key moments changed the SR. The main question chapter four will deal with is: *How did the invasion of Iraq affect the relationship between Tony Blair and Bush?*

The fifth chapter will analyse the later British Prime Ministers Gordon Brown and David Cameron, the aspects of this alliance and Special Relationship, and the role of Obama in the last years of the Iraq War. As with the previous chapter the analyses will be made how they perceived the war and how they experienced their relationship with the US presidents, in the case of Brown and Bush a comparison will be made how the difference between Prime Ministers Blair and Brown affected the SR. The focus with the British PMs will, other than focussing on their US counterparts, strongly be on the public opinion as Britain dealt with more resistance from the population against the Iraq War. The public opinion aspect can strongly impact the fashion in which a PM may be inclined to join the US president in its exploits in Iraq. The sub-question to be answered in chapter five is: *what were the perceptions of the British Prime Ministers Brown and Cameron towards their US*

*counterparts and the Special Relationship; and how did they change?*

The sixth and final chapter will conclude the difference in the dynamics of the Special Relationship before and after the Iraq War. What significant changes has the relationship undergone. By looking at the previous chapters and examining what has happened, and how the relation has changed from the perception of the nation leaders. Key points will be discussed to form a concise timeline of crucial changes to the justification, or progress of the war, and the reaction by the nation leaders at these changes. A final assessment of the Special Relationship will be made as to reflect how it was in 2011 at the end of the war. Furthermore, the changing relationships of the PMs and presidents will be assessed and formed in a concise summary.



## 2. Theoretical Framework, Literature Review & Research Method

### 2.1 Theoretical Framework

As the key angle of this thesis will be the individual relations and the result of the decisions of these individual opinions and relations, the theory that has been selected is a friendship theory as described by Yuri van Hoef<sup>11</sup>. This theory will indicate the framework in which the relationship between the nation leaders will be analysed and will thus be very focused on personal relations. This will be accompanied with liberalism, as liberalism can give an overarching explanation and supporting arguments such as: why the UK felt obligated to join the war effort. Meaning liberalism gives more of a bird's eye view of why a government felt the reason for a certain decision.<sup>12</sup> Van Hoef gives a brief and concise description of the five key components that help identify a political friendship being:

an (1) equal and (2) reciprocal bond between two or more individuals, which (3) imposes moral obligations upon them, has (4) emergent properties, and has at its foundation (5) a shared (grand) project.<sup>13</sup>

These five components will be used to establish the relationship that existed between the nation leaders and how that influenced their political agendas, but also how it changed as presidents and PMs shifted. Van Hoef continues to explain how these components can be used to study a political friendship. He underlines that there is a difference between a partnership and a friendship which can be found through searching for the key components equality and reciprocity. If these are lacking in a relationship, but the key component of having a shared objective is present, one may be more inclined to speak of a partnership instead of a friendship. These components cannot only be used to study and establish the level of partnership or friendship, they may be "operationalized" as well.<sup>14</sup> This is done by combining Van Hoef's key components and Mark Bevir and R. A. W. Rhodes' Interpretive Political Science (IPS). IPS has the capability of showing the individual effect of friendship between state leaders through interpretation of decisions made by the actors. The core idea of IPS shows how especially dilemmas can be telling of friendships and their influence on the outcome. The decision of a dilemma can indicate how the friendship between two actors is present. IPS takes into account the background and agency of actors, if a decision deviates from this agency during a dilemma in which the supposed friend desires a different outcome, it proves that a friendship has been stronger than the agency of the deciding actor and has thus influenced the outcome of a potential political decision. As humans differ in their nature, none of them will have exactly the same opinion of an

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<sup>11</sup> Yuri van Hoef, "Leadership Through Friendship: The Dangers and Advantages of State Leaders Establishing Close Personal Relations", *Journal of Leadership Studies*, 13:1 (2019): 70-72.

<sup>12</sup> Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki and Steve Smith, *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010): 95.

<sup>13</sup> Yuri van Hoef, 'Interpreting affect between state leaders. Assessing the Churchill-Roosevelt friendship'. Edited by Maéva Clément, Thomas Lindemann, and Eric Sangar, *Researching Emotions in IR: Methodological Perspectives for a new paradigm* (Palgrave Macmillan 2018): 55.

<sup>14</sup> Van Hoef, 'Interpreting affect between state leaders. Assessing the Churchill-Roosevelt friendship', 56-59.

individual as someone else does, Obama and Bush will have had different opinions of the respective British PMs and may thus have behaved differently towards the same person resulting in potentially different political outcomes.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, the emphasis needs to be made that this framework is also applicable in a triangle of people in which two are friends and one is not. As the lack of friendship and therefore the lack of applicable or differently applicable key components can prove something as well. To sketch and explain this, a hypothetical situation can be made up: the triangle consists of George Bush, Tony Blair, and Gordon Brown, hypothetically Bush and Blair are friends, Bush and Brown are not friends, and the relationship between Blair and Brown is insignificant as they do not affect each other. After analysing Bush and Blair it is determined they are friends according to the components analysed by Van Hoef. It appears that a decision in favour of Blair's agency is made by Bush who has deviated from his own agency proving friendship has influenced decision making. A similar situation occurs between Bush and Brown whose relationship lacks key components equality and reciprocity, yet Bush still has made a decision in favour of Brown's agency. This may be caused by adhering to the partnership they have established through a shared grand project. Lastly, Bush may have made a decision that opposes the agencies of Blair and Brown. In the case of the decision trumping Blair's agency, the decision was crucial enough that the proven friendship was not strong enough to invalidate Bush's own agency and is very likely to be a decision that involves more parties or is a decision that may be condemned to strongly by others. If Bush's decision trumps Brown's agency in this scenario it is clear that neither friendship nor IPS is applicable, and Bush stays in line with his nations and personal agency.<sup>16</sup> These last two scenario's tie in strongly with how a state would act according to the rational and moral aspects of liberalism.

Liberalism focuses on the morality and rational qualities of a nation rather than a person. These elements will be tested against the relations the individual nation leaders have towards others, or one other person. Furthermore, a key component of liberalism is the way to construct a more peaceful society.<sup>17</sup> One of the main reasons for the Iraq invasion is to end a dictatorship and introduce a democracy, the match is obvious as the attempt is made to improve the society of Iraq by integrating them into the world of democracy. The formation of an alliance to combat terror and to invade Iraq stems forth from a sense of security, if the West is united against the threat of terror, the security and protection rates will increase.<sup>18</sup> A major aspect of Liberalism is a rational peaceful approach which is favoured over the desire to enforce new societal structures such as democracy through war. While this is not the case in Iraq, the underlying intention is very much in line with the general concept of liberalism as the desired sense of security overrules the desire for a peaceful approach. This resonates strongly with Blair's reasoning to invade Iraq. The moral beliefs of mainly Blair but also Bush meant that they not only believed that Hussein could contribute to the terrorist threat through his weapons of mass destruction (WMD) but

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 56-59.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 56-59.

<sup>17</sup> Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki and Steve Smith, *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*, 95.

<sup>18</sup> Marc Sandalow, "Record shows Bush shifting on Iraq war / President's rationale for the invasion continues to evolve". *The San Francisco Chronicle* (September 29, 2004): <https://www.sfgate.com/politics/article/NEWS-ANALYSIS-Record-shows-Bush-shifting-on-2690938.php>.

that he also made the world less safe and that by removing him they could aid the population of Iraq and thus fulfil these liberal beliefs.<sup>19</sup> Some realist constraints must be addressed, one of these constraints is military power. It is suggested that going to war can be prevented by having a greater military strength than your opponent.<sup>20</sup> An interesting case can be made as the Western forces vastly outnumber the forces of both Iraq and terrorist organization Al Qaida, furthermore, they have access to an incredibly modernized array of weapons, the arsenal that the forces in Iraq possess are a fraction of what the West can summon, yet still war was waged. This is mainly due to the necessity of the war, to America, there was no other solution than to wage war to eliminate a danger that was prevalent despite the difference in force size. The threat of WMD and its capabilities to destroy the West proved enough reasoning for the UK and US to invade, the views of Bush who feels that he must protect his country can bluntly be seen:

‘I am just not going to be the president on whose watch it happens,’ he said. ‘I love my country and these people threaten it by their hatred for us.’<sup>21</sup>

Lastly, a distance and size constraint is mentioned in liberalist theory in what may restrict a nation’s wish to declare war with another country. While Iraq lies on the other side of the world from the US and has a hard to penetrate landscape with many possible hideouts for terrorists. The modern age has shrunk the world significantly, aircraft carriers can be anchored before the coast, tanks and infantry can be flown in with planes after a base has been set up. The utter determination of the US to flush out Saddam Hussein and possible terrorists put the logistics of modern warfare to the test. While a challenge, this constraint had certainly been overcome.<sup>22</sup>

## 2.2 Literature Review

A significant portion of the primary sources that will be used are sources that indicate shifts towards the dynamic of the war or that indicate a decision that involves the interaction of the state leaders. These will often be reflected as news articles that discuss public opinion has shifted with regards to the war, or articles discussing the impact of public opinion.

Autobiographies will be extremely helpful to research what the personal thoughts and motives were of actors, as such, they will be thoroughly analysed as they are first-hand accounts of the individuals that will be researched, and thus will give indicators of how they perceived their relations with other state leaders. They will be the primary source of analyses. The benefit of analysing these sources is that they are direct. They will be informative of changes, and why these changes are happening. The sources are thus very informative directly towards answering the research question. Furthermore, they have easy access, and are printed and published in easy to find locations. Another form of primary sources that will be used are those of individuals that also have first-hand witness accounts

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<sup>19</sup> Azubuike, Samuel. “The ‘Poodle Theory’ and the Anglo-American ‘Special Relationship.’” *International Studies* 42, no. 2 (April 2005): 130–132.

<sup>20</sup> Tim Dunne et al. *International Relations Theories*, 100.

<sup>21</sup> Tony Blair, *A Journey* (Random House, 2010) 437.

<sup>22</sup> Tim Dunne et al. *International Relations Theories*, 100-101.

of interactions between the state leaders giving the possibility to analyse the relationship from another perspective. There will be some disadvantages to take into account, however. Autobiographies and other first-hand accounts may be cherry-picked by their creators, giving us a false sense of friendship as that is what they want their readers to believe. It is therefore crucial it is identified how reliable an account or statement is and if it is agency or reality that is being depicted. An example of a relevant newspaper article is a BBC article expressing how almost half a million British citizens took to the streets to protest the war in Iraq, and what they believed Blair should do.<sup>23</sup> Another primary source focus is presidential speeches that indicate certain aspects that influence the dynamics between the two countries. Such as the speech by President Bush that indicated there were only two camps in the War on Terror, the terrorists or those who fight them.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, statements will be analysed which have been made by nation leaders that influence the war directly as a result of any of these shifts in the dynamic. For example, if soldiers are withdrawn, that needs to be analysed as to why this is, is it a result of actions of Iraq, the US, or the UK, and how does this event affect the dynamics between the UK and the US. An example of such a statement is stating that Prime Minister Brown will withdraw all troops. This is covered in a newspaper, which gives a short summary of the statement, but it continues to give a good overview as to why this happened and what the results may be.<sup>25</sup>

Some possible pitfalls that must be avoided, is that some correspondence between the UK PM and the US President may not have been recorded which could have influenced the relationship during the war. Since the focus is heavily on governments and individuals, there is a chance that something might be missed due to its non-existence as a source. Another negative could be the overwhelming number of sources published around every event. This is countered by the focus on autobiographies, there is only a very limited amount of these, meaning that there is a possibility to analyse the majority of information available in these. There is a necessity to be aware that some autobiographies on an individual are seen as having more authority than another due to their accuracy or the time in which it was written.<sup>26</sup> The selection that has been made are either the newest autobiographies that include the most recent events during the Iraq War, or the only ones written. Especially Obama has several autobiographies. The most recent autobiography has been chosen as the previous autobiographies do not span the entire war period or address other subjects as their focus. While these sources are convenient, the realization must be

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<sup>23</sup> "Protesters Stage Anti-war rally", *BBC News*, September 28, 2002, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/politics/2285861.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/2285861.stm).

<sup>24</sup> George W. Bush, "State of the Union Address", *BBC News*, January 30, 2002, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/1790537.stm>; "Blair Wins War Backing amid Revolt", *BBC News*, March 19, 2003, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/politics/2862325.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/2862325.stm); Peter Slevin and Karen DeYoung, "U.N. Chief Warns Bush over Unilateral Action", *Washington Post*, September 12, 2002, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/06/15/AR2007061501133.html>; "Thousands Join Anti-War Protests", *BBC News*, March 15, 2008, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/7298205.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/7298205.stm).

<sup>25</sup> "Britain's Brown Announces Full Troop Withdrawal from Iraq", *DW*, December 17, 2008, <https://www.dw.com/en/britains-brown-announces-full-troop-withdrawal-from-iraq/a-3882075>.

<sup>26</sup> Barack Obama, *A Promised Land* (Penguin Books Ltd, 2020); Barack Obama, *The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream* (Canongate Books Ltd, 2008); Tony Blair, *A Journey* (Random House, 2010); Gordon Brown, *My Life, Our Times* (Vintage Digital, 2017); David Cameron, *For the Record* (Harper Collins Publ. UK, 2019); George W. Bush, *Decision Points* (Crown Publishing Group, 2010).

made to not get bogged down to much around every single change that may be found in the primary sources and every secondary source written on that change, this would cost far too much time and would exceed the allowed space in the thesis. A last negative is that one needs to be aware of the possible bias of newspapers, autobiographies, and biographies. This bias may especially be true in biographies, which is why a very limited selection of biographies has been made of the already limited selection of available biographies. One of the biographies that will be used throughout the thesis is Tom Bower's *Broken Vows: Tony Blair The Tragedy of Power*, which is a biography that is a result of years of journalism in order to form a chronological line throughout Blair's prime ministership. This biography is the only complete narrative of Blair's leadership and will thus be crucial to analyse the decision making of Blair and may suggest interesting discrepancies.<sup>27</sup>

The focus for the secondary literature relies heavily on sources that address the Special Relationship, the reason why the US and the UK went to war in the first place, and the development of this war and how it affected the dynamics of the relationship.

Wallace and Philips place the SR in a perspective of 2009, this is extremely relevant and informative as it is a source directly addressing the relationship with the US from a viewpoint seemingly more from the UK, during the Iraq War. They give several understandings and a history of the Special Relationship and argue that due to the war the relationship is possibly waning and the relationship between the UK and Europe is growing. This last point has not been able to withhold the test of time as Brexit clearly indicated that European-British relations have diminished over the recent years. Furthermore, they emphasize the importance of American presidencies, as they argue Obama was welcomed more than George W. Bush. Arguments are made that the UK should not let public debate get in the way of the Special Relationship, as they hope the US would help them in troubled times. The UK has therefore always been loyal to the US, while the American portrait on the international stage may not be entirely similar to British views. They end by stating that the UK may start focussing more on Europe in the future, in the present we may argue this is untrue.<sup>28</sup>

Through his article, Patrick Porter argues that the SR is more one sided in which the United States uses the United Kingdom when needed. Such as for war in the Middle East. While the UK, on the other hand, uses the US to maintain an important and powerful position on the international stage, as if to say, nobody can touch us, without the US interfering. Porter refers to a description of Churchill, in which the relationship is described as ideological, based on a shared system of beliefs, value, Anglo-Saxon blood ties, history, and language. This is also argued in the Wallace and Philips source. The strategic aspect is also sketched in which the UK has a powerful ally, while the US had ally that would give them preferential treatment, and a body in Europe they could trust. The article ends with the question whether the UK should blindly follow the US just for the sake of the Special Relationship as decisions are made by the US that the UK has trouble following and aiding with. Again, the question is asked if the relationship can weather the storm of both the Iraq

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<sup>27</sup> Tom Bower, *Broken Vows: Tony Blair The Tragedy of Power* (Faber & Faber, 2016).

<sup>28</sup> W. Wallace & C. Philips, "Reassessing the Special Relationship", *International Affairs*, 85 (2009): 263-284, j.1468-2346.2009.00793.x.pdf.

and the Afghanistan war, and if in the future, the UK will follow the US into another such war once more.<sup>29</sup> The same issue of an unbalanced relationship is highlighted in Wallace and Philips. While this source does not necessarily focus on the Iraq War, it does give an idea as to why the UK felt the immediate need to aid the Americans. Porter refrains from predicting that the UK will integrate more into Europe as Wallace and Philips do. He does, however, question whether another such war can expect the same dedication from the UK towards America. The relevance here lies at the perceived change of loyalty and continuation of the Special Relationship. seeing as how this thesis will seek to answer how the relationship has changed during the war the suggestions and perceived opinions at the time are ideal for creating an image of the Special Relationship at that specific time. The fact that these pieces were published in 2009 and 2010 gives an indication for what the perceived state of the Special Relationship was, and what the predicted future could entail.

An interesting counter to the arguments that put Britain in a follower role and thus Blair in a role that is influenced by Americas movements, is an article published in April 2005 by Samuel Azubuike. While it has been published before the previously discussed sources, it gives a different angle to the UK in the SR. Blair had been receiving massive criticisms throughout the events that led up to and during the war, Azubuike analyses if Blair did indeed follow America as much as Porter, Wallace, and Philips suggest. Azubuike points out that Blair used to be a politician that followed the popular trend as could be seen during his election. The events surrounding the war clearly indicate he did not follow public opinion. Instead, he was led by his personal beliefs, which find strong common ground with liberalist reasoning. Blair strongly believed that while Iraq and their potential WMD formed a security threat to the West, he also believed that the despot Hussein should be removed as he was responsible for a humanitarian crisis with thousands of dead citizens and an incredibly high infant mortality rate. The intensity of his personal belief was so thorough, that even though Blair would have appreciated the justification of the war by the UN, which was indicated by Kofi Annan in September 2004 who called the war illegal, he did not need it to continue to achieve the goals he had set out with Bush. Furthermore, Azubuike argues that the Special Relationship has been shaped throughout the Cold-War with the idea that the US would be stronger than the UK and that the UK uses the US to spread their international politics. By convincing the powerful US, which is made easier through the Special Relationship, British politics on the world stage would come across stronger.<sup>30</sup>

Dumbrell has more of a theoretical approach that focuses on the relationship after the events of 9/11. The main focus is on multilateralism or unilateralism, in which in a post-Cold War world, the unilateral world order is preferred. Arguments are made that the UK follows the US in its War on Terror as they believe it to be a right cause, but as this develops so does the relation and some pain points are exposed. This in contrast to Azubuike who suggested the following could also be the other way around, yet due to the power position of the US it might seem like the UK is following the US. The arguments that follow are pretty similar to previous articles in which

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<sup>29</sup> Patrick Porter, "Last Charge of the Knights? Iraq, Afghanistan and the Special Relationship", *International affairs*, 86:2 (2010): 355-375.

<sup>30</sup> Samuel Azubuike, "The 'Poodle Theory' and the Anglo-American 'Special Relationship.'" *International Studies* 42, no. 2 (April 2005): 123-39.

the UK holds the US in higher regards than vice-versa. This is emphasized by stating that the US argues they have special relationships with several countries, such as Mexico, Canada, and South-Korea. Furthermore, the analysis is made that the UK is more and more integrationist with regards to Europe. The start of the War on Terror is argued to be a form of a revival of the Special Relationship, as the cultures had been drifting apart in the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The conclusion argues that Blair put a lot of hope into the relationship expecting a reward. Dumbrell ends with noting that a US without allies would become exposed and vulnerable and needs alliances in order to thrive in a possibly more multilateral world order.<sup>31</sup>

Dobson and Marsh focus more on the Obama presidency, the end of the Iraq War, and other conflicts in the Middle East that involves both the UK, and the US. Obama was less Europe focussed than was originally hoped for and was rotating to Asia in order to improve and maintain relations on that continent. This is conflicting with Wallace and Philips, who suggest that Obama was welcomed in the UK, evidence suggests it was not.<sup>32</sup> This led to the British House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee to announce the end of the Special Relationship in March 2010. This is part of the increased tensions between the two countries that were put in overdrive during the Iraq War and the difficulties the two countries had in finding a compromise on how to continue the war. Several other factors added to these tensions and the relationship was irreparably damaged. Thus, there is an undoubted decline of the Special Relationship until well after the Iraq War, mainly caused by said war, while it should have enforced the UK and the US relationship and alliance. Most British, however, felt like the British government acted like a lap dog to America.

In the conclusion it is argued that in the future the relationship may rise and fall more often, as there may be plenty of situations in which a mutual beneficial situation may occur, or in which one of the two may be in a position of need. The relationship is deeply ingrained and is harder to just die, than a mere proclamation of it being so.<sup>33</sup>

Bacevich is not focussed on the Special Relationship but is a guide as to why the Americans dived into the war with Iraq. The main argument given is that the US and George W. Bush wanted the world to share in their democracy, and that one of the most dangerous and arbitrary countries in the world should be neutralized. This was paired with the immense military power which the US possessed, leading to an invasion of Iraq, in which the world could see how almighty the American forces were. Bacevich goes on to argue that this militarization is a deep-rooted American aspect and that the ambition of their idea of a free world and to grant everyone democracy will not simply disappear. In other words, the invasion of Iraq may only be an event in a longer conflict in which America overthrows nation leaders to invoke a democracy.<sup>34</sup>

Furthermore, academic viewpoints translating the motives of individuals will be

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<sup>31</sup> John Dumbrell, "Working with Allies: The United States, the United Kingdom, and the War on Terror", *Politics & Policy*, 34:2 (2006): 452-472.

<sup>32</sup> Alan Dobson & Steve Marsh, "Anglo-American Relations: End of a Special Relationship?", *The International History Review*, 36:4 (2014): 673-697. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07075332.2013.836124>.

<sup>33</sup> Alan Dobson & Steve Marsh, "Anglo-American Relations: End of a Special Relationship?", *The International History Review*.

<sup>34</sup> Andrew Bacevich, *The New American Militarism: How Americans are Seduced by War*, (Oxford University Press, 2005).

used, in the case of Danchev, this is through the eyes of Tony Blair. It also examines his position with regards to this war and the comparison to the Vietnam War is made. Clearly, this has a negative connotation, as Vietnam meant disgrace and destruction for US Presidents, but also for a UK Prime Minister, Harold Wilson. Wilson who had been blamed for being an apologist for the Vietnam War and saw himself fall from grace due to trying to maintain a close Special Relationship. Wilson advised against giving in to all the needs of the United States during the early phases of the Iraq War. Blair ignored this advice, but how much of himself, and Britain, is Blair prepared to sacrifice in order to maintain a good relationship with the US and its President who seeks the backing from the UK both on the battlefield as well as in the UN. In hindsight we can conclude this damaged his reputation severely, yet it is far more interesting to analyse what the motives at the time were.<sup>35</sup> It is intriguing to combine this angle with Azubuike's arguments who takes more nuance in Blair's position. Analysing what Blair's motives were from his point of view is what will be dealt with in chapter three and four.

Dobson and Marsh have the benefit of hindsight and confirm many predictions that argued that the Special Relationship would suffer tremendously if not irreparably. There is a consensus among scholars that the UK has more to lose with the Special Relationship than vice versa. Dumbrell, however, points out that the United States might overestimate their position for a possible unilateral power position, and might need Britain's support more than it realizes to maintain recognition on the world stage. This is especially interesting to analyse when compared to Bacevich who mentions America's vast military prowess, which needed no aid whatsoever to wage war in order to be successful. Vietnam should be a testament against the fact that power can suffer more than tact in an attrition-based guerrilla war. In order to translate these different approaches to the positions of the two nations in the Special Relationship, it should be examined how the individuals that represented these countries experienced these positions themselves. Then it can be validated if the research of the secondary sources is translated by the presidents or PMs.

Personal relations of nation leaders is a historically known phenomenon, think of wars of succession where family members waged war on one another to secure their heritage, or because of family feuds which occurred in massive numbers throughout the history of Europe (and the world). One could also think of ancient kings who went to war with one another just due to bad relations with one specific person. A prime example would be Menelaus declaring war on Troye, only because he despised Paris who had stolen his wife Helena and wanted to retrieve her. In the modern era, politics have become more than one individual, entire governments are involved with changes, so too with war. Yet arguments can be made that personal relations are still crucial when it comes to decisions made with regards to foreign affairs. As described in the theoretical framework a strong focus will be on the theory by Yuri van Hoef who underlines this argument and emphasizes how relations between leaders can have a certain impact on decisions made towards one another. Van Hoef argues that especially with friendships, there is a constant deliberation

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<sup>35</sup> Alex Danchev, "Tony Blair's Vietnam: The Iraq War and the 'Special Relationship' in Historical Perspective." *Review of International Studies*, 33:2 (2007): 189–189.  
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210507007462>.



between what would benefit one's own nation, versus what would help the friendship as certainly not every decision can be a *quid pro quo* situation.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, the concept of friendship is defined by the previously five mentioned key components: affection, a mutual political project, equality, moral duty, and reciprocity can be examined with a political friendship. The research will include the angle of analysing how the presidents and PMs considered one another, if they were friends for example, during the Iraq War to find explanations for certain decisions that influenced the war.<sup>37</sup>

Christopher Bluth analyses the relationship between Blair and Bush and the comparison with the arguments made by Van Hoef can indicate what form of relation or friendship existed between Bush and Blair. Especially the concepts of personal affection and a mutual political project predominated the entire situation around Iraq. The paper accentuates the interesting choice Blair makes where the own nation's opinions, which indicate that the threat from Iraq is over-estimated by the US, are more or less waved away by Blair in order to help America in their cause. He emphasizes the threat of Iraq to justify the invasion. If the decisions made by Blair as indicated by Bluth are analysed through the lens suggested by Van Hoef, a conclusion can be made that for the sake of friendship Blair chose to side with America despite potentially hurting his own position. These arguments are very much in line with Azubuike and is another voice challenging the dominant views as suggested by Porter, Wallace, Philips and Dumbrell of the UK merely following US politics out of loyalty. During the following chapters analyses based on these suggestions will be made throughout the thesis to understand all the relations or potential friendships that existed between Bush, Obama, Blair, Brown, and Cameron.<sup>38</sup>

It is crucial to understand why Blair was eager to be of service to the United States. The history of the Special Relationship is long and convoluted, but there are some crucial events some decades before the Iraq War that heavily contributed to Blair's decision making. Twenty-four years (1982) before the event of Blair announcing that the UK would back the US in Iraq with armed forces, Britain was at war with Argentina over the Falkland isles. At that time, the US decided to aid the UK in their conflict, albeit with some doubt. It affected the Special Relationship in the sense that the UK felt the need to be ready if their help was needed during a conflict in which the US needed forces. Freedman argues that these events lead to the decision by Blair that this act may see reciprocity in the future, arguably one of the most crucial aspects of this cooperation. Unfortunately, the Falkland War was in no way, shape, or form comparable as to what would be happening in Iraq. While understandable as to why this reciprocity was important to Blair, the impact of the Iraq War was deemed too lightly, and the gambit did not pay off in the slightest.<sup>39</sup>

These sources all give great insights in as to why the relationship changed and what aspects led to these changes. It also indicated how important individual actors in the form of Presidents or PMs are. These leaders have the power to make decisions, sometimes based

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<sup>36</sup> Yuri van Hoef, "'Soulmates': De rol van affectie in politieke vriendschap tussen Kohl en Mitterand, en Thatcher en Reagan", *Historica*, 3 (2018): 28-32.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 28-32.

<sup>38</sup> Christoph Bluth, "The British Road to War: Blair, Bush and the Decision to Invade Iraq." *International Affairs*, 80:5 (2004): 871-92.

<sup>39</sup> Lawrence D. Freedman, "the Special Relationship, Then and Now." *Foreign Affairs* 85:3 (2006).

on advice, but also based on personal feelings. Especially the latter often influenced the Special Relationship, as their personal opinion of their counterpart and their nation across the ocean was extremely relevant. There are innumerable aspects to the Special Relationship, but the Iraq War was extremely significant in the majority of changes in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and is well worth to analyse if one wants to understand what happened and changed in that time period, that still sees lasting effects to this day. It is striking to see that nearly all secondary sources conclude similar aspects, such as the quest of reciprocity from Blair, how the UK holds the Special Relationship in higher regard than the US, and that the UK might perhaps become more inclusive towards Europe. Especially the addition of the angle which underlines the Special Relationship from the position of individual Presidents and PMs.

In the hindsight of 2021, it is peculiar that the United Kingdom has opted for a more independent role altogether, but with the changing of Presidents in the US, change could soon once again be on the horizon. Furthermore, there is a trend in which it becomes apparent that the UK PMs have suffered greatly from the Iraq War when one considers public support, which has diminished for PMs that were heavily invested in the Iraq War. The PMs are analysed and understood, yet their decision making is flawed according to most literary sources discussed in this chapter and have paid the price for these actions. Even though their actions at the time may have seemed to make sense, they have often fallen victim to being blinded by the imagined gains. Moreover, these sources give a great indication of how both countries see the other and what they expect of the other, giving the possibility to give a complete narrative from the changing dynamics during the Iraq War.

The majority of the literature points to the negative aspects of the war, as seen in the literature discussing the SR by for example Dobson and Marsh, and the sensitive situations it put PMs in, such as the retreat of troops. Van Hoef points out that this is similar to what happens when relationships among state leaders are emphasized. In his explanation of friendship theory, he explains that often only the negative aspects are pointed out that may have influenced certain decision making and only recently friendships between individuals are emphasized as described by Koschut and Oelsner in 2014. Before this, however, friendly relations between states were discussed, rather than individuals as indicated by Berenskoetter and Oelsner in 2007. Van Hoef goes on to show that before this “most research dealing with emotions has hitherto dealt with negative emotions”.<sup>40</sup> This is done by referring to recently published works discussing the impact of negative emotions by Löwenheim & Heimann (2008), Sasley (2011), and Scheff (2000).<sup>41</sup>

A more recent publication by Van Hoef uses the framework as previously introduced and adds another dimension in the form of Positive Peace. Van Hoef explains how based on the works of Andrea Oelsner and Johan Galtung the previously explained friendship theory framework with the five key components could lead to peace through this established friendship. It delves into the notion of how a friendship among nation leaders can dissolve tensions that existed earlier in the relationship between nations, or in time of crises. In the

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<sup>40</sup> Yuri van Hoef, “Interpreting affect between state leaders. Assessing the Churchill-Roosevelt friendship”. Edited by Maéva Clément, Thomas Lindemann, and Eric Sangar, *Researching Emotions in IR: Methodological Perspectives for a new paradigm* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018): 52.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, 52.

example illustrated by Van Hoef the relationship between Germany and France is examined. The difference between the relationship between Germany and France, and Britain and the US is that the example discusses the historical tensions between the nations themselves and reaching positive peace. With the US and the UK, the nations are already at peace but are in a crisis in an external circumstance. In this case the framework needs to be applied to nation leaders that are starting a war and are at war. It would thus be interesting to see that instead of achieving peace, there may be some sort of halting process that ensures the war does not erupt as quickly as what could have happened if the leaders had not been influenced by each other through friendship. Furthermore, the analyses can be made on how relationships between UK and US leaders during the war may have led to de-escalation. At the end of the war the relationship between the nation leaders can be evaluated and it can be determined whether peace was achieved through friendship, or if the flow of politics was not influenced by friendship due to the lack of its existence. This framework is thus an extra, a continuation of the previously sketched framework by Van Hoef, as it also builds on the notion of positive results of personal relationships of nation leaders. After the analyses of a friendship, it tries to evaluate if the positive results of that friendship have contributed to peace and de-escalation, or in the case of the build-up towards the Iraq War, the delay of escalation.<sup>42</sup>

### **2.3 Research Method**

The primary sources will be collected in the form of autobiographies, digital newspapers, documents uploaded to government websites, independent websites reporting on changes regarding the subject, statements given by surrounding personnel with first-hand witness experiences, etc. This will give a vast array of different sources and different methods to determine what the relationship might have looked like but also how it may have changed and how it influenced decision making. The ability to discuss the same subject from different political angles is extremely important, different political views have heavily contributed to changes in the dynamics between the UK and the US during the war, as seen in the works of Porter, Wallace, and Phillips. Different angles could partially eliminate the pitfall of relying on one political viewpoint only in the analysis of a relationship. This will also be one of the main focuses during the analyses of these articles. It will be ensured there is a political variety of the sources in order to get a more complete view of the motives of the governments, PMs, and presidents. By analysing criticisms, or public opinion with regards to the Iraq War and the governmental position to this war, a narrative can be created of how certain things might have changed, starting not at the government but at the public and their views of the war and the ally in this war. As indicated earlier this thesis will apply the theories Yuri van Hoef has formed surrounding friendship and his work on individual relations affecting state relations on the Special Relationship during and surrounding the events of the Iraq War. To gain the proper insights necessary,

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<sup>42</sup> Yuri van Hoef, "Positive Peace Through Personal Friendship: Franco-German Reconciliation (1974-1995)", *The Palgrave Handbook of Positive Peace*, K. Standish et al. (eds.) (Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2021).

mainly these individuals will be analysed through their autobiographies.<sup>43</sup>

By analysing the autobiographies of the political leaders of the UK and the US a unique angle can be utilized analysing how they interpreted public opinion, criticism, but also how they saw their relationship with the other political leader and how that influenced their decision making. Furthermore, Autobiographies can help understand the Special Relationship, as an analysis can be made from the perspective of a nation through the eyes of their leader, or how the nations opinion is translated through the PM or president.<sup>44</sup> By augmenting the primary focus on autobiographies with sources such as newspapers and speeches a complete narrative can be created. From the thoughts of the nation leaders, to their expression to the public, and the results of this expression. Newspapers are mostly important to understand the greater lines of the events, and what happened, speeches are important to understand sudden shifts or important changes, and autobiographies can give us an understanding of the personal agenda of someone during their period in office and see what the complications and nuances were in some situations, giving us a more complex understanding of seemingly trivial events.

While other varieties of primary sources may be used, by focussing on these three the scope can be massively reduced and give a clear structure to the thesis. This is crucial as otherwise the research would not be able to properly add to the ongoing debate from a unique viewpoint and give the thesis relevance to the field. It also ensures that not every decision is over-analysed by countless newspaper articles or statements creating a chaotic analysis and a timeline so incredibly convoluted that the main point of the relationships would be overshadowed by the vast number of arguments.

The integration of secondary sources is mainly around structuring the existing narrative of the Special Relationship prior to, during, and after the Iraq War. It is also used for constructing the proper theoretical framework that indicates the guidelines used for the analyses of individual relations and general political decisions. As indicated in the literature review, many scholars agree that Britain was more invested in the Special Relationship than the US. They felt they needed America more than America needed them. The reciprocity is thus imbalanced, which in and of itself is already noteworthy when taking into account that one of the most crucial key components of a friendship is equality and reciprocity as established during the explanation of friendship theory. By constructing a framework with what the Special Relationship looked like, in combination with the analyses of the effect of affection and friendship between nation leaders and supported by autobiographies indicating how they felt towards one another, a logical narrative is made that explains the changes the Special Relationship went through during the period of the war. Furthermore, these sources will address different aspects of the Special Relationship to underline the different levels the relationship operates at. For example, not all aspects of the Special Relationship dealt with military organization, other aspects are included such as culture.

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<sup>43</sup> Yuri van Hoef, "Leadership Through Friendship: The Dangers and Advantages of State Leaders Establishing Close Personal Relations", *Journal of Leadership Studies*, 13:1 (2019): DOI:10.1002/jls.21631.

<sup>44</sup> Barack Obama, *A Promised Land* (2020); Barack Obama, *The Audacity of Hope. Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream* (2008); Tony Blair, *A Journey* (2010); Gordon Brown, *My Life, Our Times* (2017); David Cameron, *For the Record* (2019); George W. Bush, *Decision Points* (2010).

These aspects are crucial if one wishes to reveal what may have driven people to aid or disobey one another. Commonalities such as religion or ideology may be crucial.

### 3. The Events Leading Up to the Iraq War

#### 3.1 The Promise

The conversation helped cement the closest friendship I would form with any foreign leader. As the years passed and the wartime decisions grew tougher, some of our allies wavered. Tony Blair never did.

9/11 2001 is the day that started off, amongst many other things, a new chapter in the Special Relationship. In his autobiography George Bush indicates that the day after 9/11 he arrived at his office at 7:00 A.M. and proceeded to call the nation leaders that had tried to contact him. The first state leader Bush returned his call to was Tony Blair. In his autobiography Bush relates to this moment in the statement seen at the start of the chapter.<sup>45</sup> An incredibly clear statement depicts how even after all the turmoil Blair and Bush faced in their war efforts, at the time of publishing Bush clearly considered Tony Blair to have been his friend throughout this entire time. While the period before 9/11 is heavily overshadowed by all the media that covered the Blair-Bush interactions with regards to their answer to the terrorist attacks and the invasion of Iraq, it should be noted that Blair had visited Bush in Camp David a few months prior to the attacks in February in 2001. Bush reminisces how he found Blair and his wife friendly and engaging and writes:

After dinner, we decided to watch a movie. When they agreed on *Meet the Parents*, a comedy starring Robert De Niro and Ben Stiller, Laura and I knew the Bushes and Blairs would get along.<sup>46</sup>

Clearly already from the beginning Bush considered Blair a friend. What fails to be noted by both Blair and Bush is their likeminded religious preferences which they occasionally discussed, and while the failure of that preference being addressed by either Bush or Blair may mean they did not value that similarity, it could have added to the comfort they felt with one another and may have contributed to their similar view of Islam extremists.<sup>47</sup>

This developing friendship is in contrast to what the newspaper indicates when Bush decided to visit the UK in July 2001. During this visit the newspaper describes the interactions between Blair and Bush rather business like.<sup>48</sup> However, after Blair won his election, he reminisces how Bush phoned him to congratulate him and ask him "Man, how did you do that?"<sup>49</sup> A tone that could be considered friendly, and the interesting fact that Blair felt the necessity to add only this particular comment to his autobiography regarding his winning election night, indicating it is a fond memory. That same tone is continued when Bush visits the UK in July 2001 and is confronted with protestors Blair had been dealing with surrounding a fox-hunting issue that had been going on. After explaining the situation Bush

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<sup>45</sup> George W. Bush, *Decision Points* (Crown Publishing Group, 2010) 145.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, 222.

<sup>47</sup> Tom Bower, *Broken Vows* (Faber & Faber, 2016) 209.

<sup>48</sup> "Bush Visits the Palace", 19 July, 2001, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/1446283.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/1446283.stm).

<sup>49</sup> Tony Blair, *A Journey* (Random House, 2010) 343.

commented “Whatever did you do that for, man?”<sup>50</sup> Again the same tone that may have indicated a certain sense of comfort to refer to each other with a friendly term. If these small anecdotes of Bush and Blair are put together one can clearly see that their personal relationship was quite friendly from the start. This is in contrast with the majority of the media who, certainly up until 9/11, failed to see, or had not quite gotten the opportunity to understand, that the relationship between Blair and Bush was friendly.

After the phone call on the 12<sup>th</sup> of September 2001 in which the friendship was cemented, Blair indicates that he started to rally the troops in Europe, by contacting the major European leaders and ensuring their support, before travelling to the United States on September 20<sup>th</sup>.<sup>51</sup> Here one of the major critiques on Blair with regards to his behaviour towards Bush starts to form, the power relationship between Blair and Bush is not equal. The reciprocity is not equal. In this phase this critique has not yet found its voice, and logically so, as the entire Western world rallied behind the US in support of their losses, and in support of the speech George Bush gave that indicated that there were only two choices, to either be with the US in the war against terror, or with the terrorists.<sup>52</sup> Blair was accompanying Bush during this famous speech and reminisces that beforehand Bush had wanted to know if the support from Britain was absolute, and that they would uphold their words, that they would stand shoulder to shoulder with the US in their fight against terror. After granting him this assurance Blair indicated they talked some more, where he realised that Bush truly welcomed his, and Britain’s friendship.<sup>53</sup> This is a crucial moment as this shows that Blair feels a sense of reciprocity and equality, he feels that the friendship of Britain, of him, is more important and valued than any other nation or nation leader. This is an indicator to Blair to determine he is more important to Bush than any other state leader, this is emphasized by the fact that Blair is present during the speech of Bush in which their alliance is shown to the world. The following day Blair returns to Europe determined to find whether the support of other European nations was still unwavering now that a plan of action had to be drawn up.<sup>54</sup>

These nine days have been the foundation of all US-UK interactions that are to come in the following ten years during the Iraq War and will have had a permanent effect on the Special Relationship. Blair came to the US to support America, but more importantly to support a friend, Bush wanted the support of a friend, but more importantly, the support of the Western world. In the chaos and uncertainty of what the War on Terror would be, the British PM promised President Bush that no matter what, Britain would support America in a war against the terrorists, even if that meant a ground war in the Middle East. This commitment of war to a friend is the first key moment of how friendship may influence political decision making. The absolute loyalty of Blair to Bush can be seen as a determined common goal with the defeat of terrorism as its main target, and while this is certainly a crucial aspect, it lacks the dimension of friendship. In the wake of 9/11, the Western world

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 313.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 359.

<sup>52</sup> George W. Bush, “Address to the Joint Session of the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress”, *Washington Post*, (September 20, 2001).

<sup>53</sup> Tony Blair, *A Journey* (Random House, 2010) 361.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 363-364.

truly supported the US, mostly in their losses, but also in the reaction that was needed against the terrorists led by Osama Bin-Laden. However, the immediate disregard of the possibility to solve this problem without joining America with its on-the-ground war effort, indicates that emotion had gotten the upper hand in the diplomatic decision making of Blair. In hindsight the Iraq War meant a decade of death and destruction, not a specialized military operation in which both Saddam Hussein and Al Qaida were to be dismantled. Had this been the case the Special Relationship might have thrived and the critiques on Blair would have been a fraction of what they became. Instead, due to the reality and due to the horrors in Iraq, the critiques grew louder and heavier. Eventually the Iraq Inquiry Report was released on July 6, 2016. In this report, it becomes abundantly clear that Blair is blamed for being too loyal to Bush, and not considering other diplomatic options first, which led to the ruination that was the Iraq War. Moreover, he is blamed for not recognizing there was no imminent threat from Hussein, for exaggerating the dangers in Iraq, over-estimating his influence on Bush, having the UK military face this task underequipped, have the British intelligence agencies provide flawed information and finally, that US-UK relations would not have been hurt had Blair chosen to not join the war effort.<sup>55</sup> In response Blair offered his apology to the families of all the fallen soldiers, but stood behind the decision to go to war. In his autobiography of 2010 Blair says to be alarmed by the fact the war was still ongoing, and there have been numerous protests at this point against the war. Yet he remains sure of his decision to go to war:

I hope I would have still taken the same decision, both there and in respect of Iraq. To have tried to escape the confrontation would have been a terrible error, an act of political cowardice. What I know now does not make me any less committed to the fight we began on the day of the event itself. On the contrary, it is even more clear to me that the battle has to be fought with every means at our disposal, and fought until it is won.<sup>56</sup>

What is striking is that throughout the period between 9/11 2001 and the invasion of Iraq significant developments surrounding the terrorist threat evolved and changed giving Blair possibilities and perhaps reasons to not follow through with what had become Bush's idea of protecting the Western world of the terrorist threat.<sup>57</sup> Instead the promise, and as earlier indicated key moment, made by Blair on September 20, 2001 was to be honoured. How could Tony Blair, who promised his friend George Bush to join him in his war effort, ever go back on his word, and tarnish their friendship? The days after the 9/11 attacks were perhaps simplified with regards to determination to stop and terminate the terrorist threat. The crisis was at its peak and decision making was emotional regardless of friendship. How could a Western nation not express their support in these trying times, it would have seemed as if they did not care for the suffering for America, or for the threat that was made against the Western world. This promise then, was the catalyst of Blair's decision making in the process up until the invasion of Iraq.

While there is no definite proof of that promise being a key reason for Blair to make

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<sup>55</sup> "Tony Blair: 'I Express More Sorrow, Regret and Apology than You Can Ever Believe'", *The Guardian*, 6 July, 2016, <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/jul/06/tony-blair-deliberately-exaggerated-threat-from-iraq-chilcot-report-war-inquiry>.

<sup>56</sup> Tony Blair, *A Journey* (Random House, 2010) 355.

<sup>57</sup> Tony Blair, "I Express More Sorrow, Regret and Apology than You Can Ever Believe".



the decisions he made leading up to the invasion, this chapter proves it is the single most defining factor for the errors he made in that period as everything is a direct result of this one decision. Especially if considered with the key components of Van Hoef's theory on friendship, the moment of the promise was the truest moment of friendship that Blair and Bush shared, as it was one of the only moments in the relationship where the friendship was equal, or at least, where Blair could honestly consider himself equal to Bush, while simultaneously feeling reciprocation through several expressions of friendship by Bush. Bush who soon after 9/11 identified Iraq and Afghanistan as the countries that brought refuge to the Taliban and who needed to be cleansed of terrorist threat. Iraq, however, was simultaneously led by a despot that was in and of itself also a threat towards the Western world due to his supposed access to WMD which was extremely threatening to both Bush and Blair, who due to his WMD history immediately linked the terrorist attacks to Iraq. To America, Iraq and especially Saddam Hussein carried a reputation after the Gulf War, the link with Al Qaida, Iraq, and Afghanistan was quickly made by Bush and the American administration. The War on Terror started and within a little over month Bush had troops on the ground in Afghanistan.<sup>58</sup> A commitment that was joined by Blair, who pledged British troops, and further cemented his commitment and promise to Bush.

### **3.2 Weapons of Mass Destruction**

The narrative of Saddam Hussein having WMD is older than the terrorist threat, it was part of a mission undertaken with President Clinton and Blair. Blair had indicated that he wanted Hussein removed from his seat of power, as he the possibility of Hussein having WMD, and biochemical weapons was too much of a threat against the world. During operation Desert Fox the US and the UK bombed supposed Iraqi WMD depots on the eve that the head of the United Nations Weapons Inspection declared that Saddam Hussein refused to cooperate.<sup>59</sup> Americans estimated that 75% of the weapons had been destroyed and Blair emphasized the "the risks if we do not halt Saddam's programme of developing chemical and biological WMDs".<sup>60</sup> Operation Desert Fox, which was considered a success by Blair, further cemented his, and many others, believe that Iraq was in possession of a now heavily damaged WMD arsenal. This development is crucial for the later narrative surrounding the supposed Iraqi WMD. If the criticisms would have been louder, and the fact that there was no concrete proof any WMD had been destroyed, the argument for Iraqi WMD being a possible terrorist threat would have been fickle. The connection between the attacks and Hussein would not have been made as easily as fear was a strong catalyst in deciding that Iraq should be targeted by the US and UK in their War on Terror. After 9/11 it became clear that Jihad-terrorists, who had killed 3000 people during the most lethal terrorist attack up until then, would have been more satisfied with access to means of destruction that could largely multiply that number. The threat of these terrorists having access to WMD was unthinkable to Blair and Bush, giving another reason to put Saddam

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<sup>58</sup> George W. Bush, *Decision Points* (Crown Publishing Group, 2010) 187-189.

<sup>59</sup> Tom Bower, *Broken Vows* (Faber & Faber, 2016) 135-139.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*, 139.

Hussein, who was known for supposedly having and developing such weapons, high on the list of elimination. Even though during operation Desert Fox Blair never admitted with complete certainty that Hussein was in possession of WMD, he was truly convinced Hussein had a developing programme. The finger was thus soon after 9/11 pointed at Hussein as his disdain of the West was a threat, especially if he was in league with Al-Qaeda, or even more likely, willing to sell to Al-Qaeda, which was very much in the realm of possibilities according to Bush and Blair, which would realise their greatest fear of terrorists having access to weapons of mass destruction.<sup>61</sup>

The events of 9/11 have thus caused two distinct moments which led to Blair supporting Bush in the Iraq War. This first was the key moment of the decision of the promise to join the War on Terror. This idea was supported by his belief that if he would not have done that, it would have damaged the Special Relationship.<sup>62</sup> The second was identifying the regime of Saddam Hussein who was a constant threat to the West as long as he had WMD. Through his analysis it becomes clear that the possession or threat of possession of WMD is crucial for a viable *Casus Belli*, as this is the only reason for the US and UK to invade Iraq. The population was not particularly thriving under Hussein's regime, these were domestic issues, however, and did not invite any reprimands by Blair or Bush. Exactly this narrative is what caused so many issues between the identification of Hussein as a threat in the War on Terror, and the eventual invasion of Iraq in March 2003. Blair was very much aware of this, and this is painfully shown to the world during the release of the Chilcot Inquiries, who published a secret memo from Blair to Bush that was sent in July 2002. This memo starts off incredibly striking:

I will be with you, whatever.<sup>63</sup>

A statement which sounds slightly like the start of a love-letter to a long-lost love interest, but it is also very much a reinforcement of the idea surrounding the importance of the friendship between Bush and Blair. This is a commitment that is being made, that is similar to the commitment that Blair made when promising to join the war, it appears that he has not forgotten this, and intends to honour it. Blair continues to emphasize the incredibly fickle position they find themselves in in order to legitimize an invasion of Iraq:

The planning on this and the strategy are the toughest yet. This is not Kosovo. This is not Afghanistan. It is not even the Gulf War.<sup>64</sup>

Furthermore, the issue with legitimizing the war is discussed, but the most important issue at hand, according to Blair, is the removal of Saddam Hussein, as:

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<sup>61</sup> Tony Blair, *A Journey* (Random House, 2010) 390-392.

<sup>62</sup> Tom Bower, *Broken Vows* (Faber & Faber, 2016) 254.

<sup>63</sup> "“I Will Be with You, Whatever”: Read Blair's Secret 2002 Memo to Bush on Iraq", *Washington Post*, 6 July, 2016, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/07/06/full-text-annotated-tony-blairs-2002-iraq-memo-to-george-bush/>.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

He is a potential threat. He could be contained. But containment, as we found with Al Qaida, is always risky. His departure would free up the region. And his regime is probably, with the possible exception of North Korea, the most brutal and inhumane in the world.<sup>65</sup>

Blair shows that he does not only consider Hussein as a threat but also explicitly wishes to remove him from his seat of power to try and make this area in the Middle East less unruly. This has very tight connotations to the liberalist theory that was introduced earlier. Not only should they eliminate the threat, once it has been dealt with the power void should be filled with a democracy, it should potentially be integrated more with Western world beliefs in order to eliminate anti-Western fanaticism. This, however, cannot be sold as a valid *casus bello*, the UN nor public opinion would support an invasion of a country just to impose democracy while removing a dictator. Blair realized this issue and therefore emphasized how important it was to stick to the WMD narrative and make it as believable as possible. This is shown by Blair being concerned that hardly any major European nations would be willing to support a war effort in Iraq without specific support from the UN, the only way to gain this support is to make the public, the governments of other European nations, and the UN believe that invasion is necessary due to the inevitable threat of a weapon that could kill thousands of people in the Western world. Blair suggests several solutions to convince these parties of imminent threat in Iraq. The first is to suggest that a new team of UN weapon inspectors should be sent to Iraq to analyse whether there are WMD, if they are blocked or resisted by Hussein, that is evidence enough that he is hiding either WMD or the production thereof. Blair continues to emphasize the evidence of WMD is what he needs as the public in Europe is less unconditionally supportive of an invasion of Iraq, as is the case in the US. Public opinion in the US had been so shocked by the events of 9/11 that any threat against American citizens had to be dealt with, if that threat was Hussein, then public support was not hard to gain. Moreover, Blair suggests that the link between Al-Qaeda and Hussein is added, as it could be “hugely persuasive”, as that would prove that even if the WMD would be hard to prove, if there was a possibility of Iraq being in league with Al-Qaeda, it would provide an easier to sell argument for the public to believe.<sup>66</sup>

Lastly, it appears that Blair has already been briefed by his military advisors on invasion strategies as he suggests certain approaches, like stabilizing the Kurds in order to possibly gain allies, to secure the southern oil fields in order to halt Hussein’s resources, and troop numbers necessary in order to set up a successful invasion. Normally, one could argue that it is not unlikely to plan military strategies on beforehand regardless of whether the invasion will actually be continued, if only to give the invading party a longer timespan to plan said invasion should they choose to advance with it. From this document, however, it becomes very clear that Blair sees no other option than to invade Iraq, and what the best way of doing this will be, while simultaneously ensuring support from the Western and Arab world.<sup>67</sup> He ends the note with:

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Eli Lake, “Blair Didn’t Lie His Way Into Iraq. Neither Did Bush.”, *Bloomberg*, 6 July, 2016, <https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2016-07-06/blair-didn-t-lie-his-way-into-iraq-neither-did-bush>.

We would support in any way we can. (...) On timing, we could start building up after the break. A strike date could be Jan/Feb next year. But the crucial issue is not when, but how.<sup>68</sup>

This not only shows a very supportive side of Blair, but also one that takes initiative in order to make the Iraq invasion go over as smooth as possible. The Chilcot Inquiries blame Blair to follow Bush too closely and to not be able to influence him enough in order to stray away from an offensive against Iraq. This memo is incredibly damning in Blair's insistent expressions of being certain that there was a WMD programme in Iraq, as this memo proves that even if there was no programme, Hussein should still be removed from his seat of power in order to improve the world. Blair had gotten a continuous stream of criticism against the WMD narrative as nothing could be proven other than that Hussein refused to cooperate, as to why he did this, Blair reminisces in his autobiography that he did truly believe there was a WMD threat from Saddam. The intel that he received all assumed Hussein had a chemical and biological programme, this was strengthened by the fact that during the unanimously passed UN resolution 1441 in 2002 the issue of the programme was discussed and accepted. This was based on the fact that the Iraqi regime had used biochemical weapons before on the Kurds in 1988 killing over 100,000 people.<sup>69</sup> Still there was no evidence that could truly prove Hussein's possession of these weapons, and the memo proves that Blair is accepting of this possibility. That Blair tried to realize the WMD claim saw its fruition in the September dossier, a dossier that was published on the 24<sup>th</sup> of September 2002, approximately three months after Blair had sent his voice of concern to Bush. This dossier was also heavily criticized by the Chilcot Inquiries due to the reason that it proved Blair's necessity of proving the WMD threat, but also the many cumulative failures that were produced by the MI6 and the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC). The failures included blunders such as the description of the chemical weapons, and their ability to strike British troops within 45 minutes. The disastrous misinformation that was addressed in Chilcot's report as follows clearly shows how significant these errors were:

the report describes a source providing details about spherical glass containers allegedly filled with chemical weapons at an establishment in Iraq. (...) MI6 at the time defended the authenticity of the source and the material, according to the Chilcot report. "However, it drew attention to the fact that the source's description of the device and its spherical glass contents was remarkably similar to the fictional chemical weapon portrayed in the film *The Rock*,"<sup>70</sup>

Co-Scriptwriter of *The Rock*, David Weisberg, expressed his astonishment at how a supposedly expert bureau could not recognize the impossibility of having a nerve gas agent in a glass sphere. Weisberg added that anyone in the community surrounding weapons and poison gas should immediately know how far of the truth such a statement was. Breaking one of the spheres would be a major safety hazard. In reality nerve gas will be concealed with thick metal casings designed to be exposed on impact or through a detonation

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<sup>68</sup> "I Will Be with You, Whatever": Read Blair's Secret 2002 Memo to Bush on Iraq", *Washington Post*, 6 July, 2016.

<sup>69</sup> Tony Blair, *A Journey* (Random House, 2010) 388-390.

<sup>70</sup> Ewen MacAskill, "MI6 Stood by Bogus Intelligence until after Iraq Invasion", *The Guardian*, 6 July, 2016, <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/jul/06/mi6-stood-by-bogus-intelligence-until-after-iraq-invasion>.

mechanism.<sup>71</sup> The agent that was informing on the biochemical weapons had some sort of crisis to turn to such fantastical alternatives. Two possibilities can be deduced as to why the informant, which the MI6 clearly strongly trusted to go ahead with seriously accepting the intel as fact, fed his superiors with misinformation. The first is that the informant had absolutely no intention of telling the truth because he either did not support the cause in the first place or wished to hand over a bogus story so that those who published it and supported it would be made to look like their intel was to be mistrusted. The second, and closer to reality, reason is that the informant was expected to deliver information as the lack of information would have been disastrous to the political agenda Blair had been running for a while, an agenda which needed proof of at least some form of a biochemical weapons programme. The informant panicked and shared information of what he thought to be believable, just so that he could please his superiors and fulfil his assignment to secure his own job.<sup>72</sup> While a large share of the blame is most certainly attributed to the intelligence service, Chilcot puts Blair forward as the man responsible for the September Dossier, which through these blunders gained the nickname the "Dodgy Dossier".<sup>73</sup>

Not only was Blair responsible for giving the parliament the idea this information was solid through expressing his thorough support in this information in the dossier, he is also blamed for ingraining the intelligence service with the believe that the WMD had to and needed to exist. If the intelligence service could not come up with any proof, they would have failed their PM, hence why they did not stop the bogus information when it was fed to Blair, from an agent who shared the agency's same sensibility for not wishing to fail their superior.<sup>74</sup> Blair's strong conviction of Hussein having WMD could have been halted on many occasions, several reports from the JIC indicated that there was not any hard evidence of Iraqi possession of hidden WMD or a biochemical weapons programme. Blair relied on the information of the MI6, which were no longer capable of supplying accurate information as they lacked experts in Baghdad or agents who could give fool proof information, MI6 chief Richard Dearlove could only speculate and did so with Blair in seclusion. By doing so Blair lacked or ignored critical information as he trusted the MI6 over the JIC and chose to ignore voices such as Cabinet secretary Robin Butler who wanted "'to provide the counterbalance to the enthusiasm of the heads of the agencies, to prevent the PM from being misled.'"<sup>75</sup>

Lastly, the MI6 and Blair had been dancing around the Iraqi possession of WMD for several years. After the supposedly successful bombings during operation Desert Fox, WMD seem to have been destroyed, giving Blair the sense that his intuition had been right regarding Hussein's arsenal and the believe that the intel of the MI6 had been right, giving him reason to believe them on this matter in the future. Just after the events of 9/11, on the 20<sup>th</sup> of September 2001, Dearlove informed Blair that he was convinced their intelligence pointed to Hussein's possession of WMD. This caused the MI6 informants to feel the necessity to fabricate proof two years later, as Blair was now certain that there were

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<sup>71</sup> Catherine Shoard, "'It Was Such Obvious Bullshit': The Rock Writer Shocked Film May Have Inspired False WMD Intelligence", *The Guardian*, 8 July, 2016, <http://www.theguardian.com/film/2016/jul/08/it-was-such-obvious-bullshit-the-rock-writer-shocked-film-may-have-inspired-false-wmd-intelligence>.

<sup>72</sup> Peter Taylor, "Iraq: The spies who fooled the world", *BBC News*, 18 March, 2003, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-21786506>.

<sup>73</sup> "'I Will Be with You, Whatever': Read Blair's Secret 2002 Memo to Bush on Iraq", *Washington Post*, 6 July, 2016.

<sup>74</sup> Ewen MacAskill, "MI6 Stood by Bogus Intelligence until after Iraq Invasion", *The Guardian*, 6 July, 2016.

<sup>75</sup> Tom Bower, *Broken Vows* (Faber & Faber, 2016) 244-245.

weapons to be found. Which in turn gave Blair the confidence to share this information with the parliament to gain the approval for the war to support America.

### 3.3 The Protests

After the September Dossier was shared with the parliament the narrative of the WMD programme of Hussein was cemented, Blair had invested his entire political integrity on the fact that Hussein had WMD and was a threat to the Western world, and thus had to be stopped which could be achieved by aiding the US in their war on Iraqi territory. There was no longer the possibility for Blair to go back on his word, and the English parliament provided the support for the invasion which he was aiming for. The resistance to the war, however, was ever growing. Every day the world moved away from 9/11 2001, they moved away from the shock and awareness of the threat of terrorism. Furthermore, despite Blair's and the UN's reports that were supposed to convince the world of Hussein's access to WMD, the public remained wary of the other incentives that were being suggested, such as Bush going to Iraq to profit from their incredibly massive oil supply and justified this invasion through fearmongering. This was reflected in the, at that time, world's largest series of protests over a weekend in human history.<sup>76</sup> Blair answered a 750,000 strong protest by not again hammering down on the WMD argument but tried to appeal to the sensitive side of the masses by giving examples of the terrible infancy death rates and general horrific living conditions of the Iraqi people and especially children.<sup>77</sup> Compared to previous speeches, this statement really showed why Blair truly wanted to remove Hussein from his seat of power. Previously, statements had been more in line with the American message in which Hussein was made out to be the destroyer of the West and used a tactic of fearmongering to gain support in the war. The statement also showed that the WMD argument no longer rang true for the vast majority of the population. UK citizens had seen that the UN and Blair continuously failed to prove their existence and had the feeling they were lied to in order to start a war over ideology instead of security. The moral rebuttal of Blair fell on deaf ears as he argued with his Cabinet secretary that if he would start a political campaign with the UN to authorize military action his time as a PM might prematurely end, but also was a necessary opportunity to gain more public support:

I asked Alastair what he thought my chances were of having to resign. 'Around twenty per cent,' he said. 'More like thirty per cent,' I replied, 'and rising.'<sup>78</sup>

The last month that led up to the Iraq War was incredibly tumultuous for both Blair and Bush, as shown from the examples, Blair was met with significantly more resistance and urged his friend George Bush that gaining UN political and military validation for their war would be a certainty for the UK to be able to pass the vote to go to war in Iraq. From Bush's autobiography it becomes clear he had lost all faith in the UN and their resolutions and was going to attack Iraq no matter the circumstances, but Bush rather invaded Iraq with Blair. Bush thus continued to try and achieve UN approval for military action against Hussein but

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<sup>76</sup> "Millions Join Global Anti-War Protests", *BBC News*, 17 February, 2003, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2765215.stm>.

<sup>77</sup> Tony Blair, *A Journey* (Random House, 2010) 427-428.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid*, 431.

did so mostly to aid his friend: “As I see it, the issue of the second resolution is how best to help our friends,”<sup>79</sup> The pressure on Blair had mounted even further after the February protests, and Bush felt even more inclined to push for a second resolution. The times of his friend were dire and would do much to help, even lose his partner in the war if that meant Blair would keep his seat.

I called Tony and expressed my concern. I told him I’d rather have him drop out of the coalition and keep his government than try to stay in and lose it.

“I said I’m with you,” Tony answered.

I pressed my point again.

“I understand that, and that’s good of you to say,” he replied. “I absolutely believe in this. I will take it up to the very last.”

I heard an echo of Winston Churchill in my friend’s voice. It was a moment of courage that will stay with me forever.<sup>80</sup>

If Blair would have lost the vote on the Iraq War in British parliament, he would resign, and Britain would no longer be part of the military force invading Iraq.<sup>81</sup> The dynamic in the month leading up to the war between Blair and Bush is rather unique. It also marks a third and final key moment in the relationship in the period before the war. Both parties repeatedly expressed their friendship and support in the period that would prove to involve vast amounts of attempted diplomacy, strategies, and criticism. The sacrifices made by Bush were significantly smaller than those made by Blair to be able to attack Iraq as a military coalition, this is the result of the far more solid position America was in with regards to opposition to the war. The US did not need the UN’s approval, nor did they see public resistance that could threaten the presidential position. In Chilcot’s report Blair is blamed for being too loyal to Bush and focussing too much on the relationship with the US.<sup>82</sup> At this stage, without the knowledge of how horrific the war would be, the decision making by Blair was most certainly out of loyalty to Bush, but in form of loyalty as found in a friendship where at this point the personal level of loyalty and trust was equal. It is simple to analyse and deduct that Blair made much more sacrifices for Bush than vice versa and was more of a lackey rather than an equal, this analysis, however, omits to include the difference between geopolitical equality and personal equality. The third key moment is when Bush gives in to try and forge a second UN resolution while Blair decides to go ahead with the vote to go to war with Iraq and risking his prime ministership. Both decisions show dedication for one another. Bush had no particular reason to try and form another resolution as he had lost faith in the support from the UN for his goals.<sup>83</sup>

Blair continued to show the unwavering support he had offered after 9/11 and had, up until this point at least, no reservations about his decision which was shown through his perseverance, but also by his multiple expressions of loyalty towards Bush. the major discrepancy in the friendship are these expressions by Blair towards Bush, there are no such expressions of unwavering loyalty towards Blair from the American President. There are several possible reasons for this, the first and foremost is that America is the one targeted by 9/11 and they are the ones initiating the War on Terror, it would be logical for someone

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<sup>79</sup> George W. Bush, *Decision Points* (Crown Publishing Group, 2010) 235-236.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid*, 236.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid*, 242.

<sup>82</sup> John Chilcot, *The Report of the Iraq Inquiry*, Volume 6, 6 July, 2016, 572-597.

<sup>83</sup> George W. Bush, *Decision Points* (Crown Publishing Group, 2010) 235-236.

to pledge allegiance to America than it would have been vice versa. There is no possibility to be certain about what would have happened, should the terrorist attacks of 9/11 have occurred on British soil. There is a significant possibility the US would have pledged their allegiance to Britain. Because America is geopolitically much more powerful than Britain, these pledges of allegiance are often interpreted as the small soldier pledging his aid to a powerful warlord as seen by the indication of an unfair distribution of power by the literature analysed in the literature review. The psychology behind this argument is understandable, but it forgets the point that if the soldier and the warlord would have been friends in the first place it is far less humbling for the soldier to pledge allegiance, instead he would help his friend. A similar trend is seen with Blair and Bush, and Blair is blamed for this approach. Bush's relief is thoroughly expressed in his autobiography after he hears of Blair's clear victory with the vote, and knows that the war, and the strategies he and Blair have been planning for months can continue, as the war in Iraq started approximately two days later.<sup>84</sup>

Throughout this chapter the friendship between Blair and Bush has been examined, and how that may have affected decision making. Three key moments have been pointed out in which crucial decision making was influenced by that sense of friendship. The first one being the statement made by Blair that he would stand with America whatever it takes to end the threat of terrorism. The second being that it was decided to continue with the WMD narrative as it was hoped that this would shift the general opinion on the war against Saddam Hussein. And the last being that Blair could have opted out one month before the start of the invasion after incredible resistance from the public, and the denial of approval by the UN. The second and third key moment are heavily influenced by the first, and it is crucial to underline the importance of this first promise as this remains the silver lining for decision making after the war has started. The decisions made by Bush are not truly as ground-breaking as Blair's decision to join America in its war but do certainly show that his friendship with Blair affected certain decisions such as trying to win over the UN on several occasions. Furthermore, the friendship that Bush reciprocated towards Blair needs to be emphasized, this reciprocation in expressions of friendship towards both him, and the people surrounding Bush are significant. In the decisions to barter with the UN for a new resolution, Bush ignores the advice given to him by his National Security Council and opts for the request his friend asked of him. Admittedly there was not much to lose for Bush with these decisions, but it shows a certain sense of respect that is expected in an equal friendship with reciprocation of friendship in both directions. Despite the analysis that gives and understanding of why certain political decisions were made out of friendship rather than trying to please a more powerful nation, it should be considered that the criticisms that followed on Blair's political agenda are extremely valid. Blair wanted to aid his friend, decidedly so, and did so in a way that he justified so that it fit within his own moral perspective as expressed through the speeches that indicated the monstrous acts of Hussein, and his genuine belief in the existence of WMD. However, these decisions mean that they fit Blair's perspective and do not reflect what the public of Britain supported, and what in hindsight, ended up being a bloody and gruesome war. This proves that through Van Hoef's framework, individual friendships of nation leaders can undoubtedly influence decision making. All the factors necessary have been identified and using the framework the key decisions have been highlighted. This gives the Blair-Bush narrative a unique angle,

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid, 242.



despite this, the media and the Chilcot Inquiries heavily criticized Blair for this selfish approach in the events that led up to the war.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> "Tony Blair: "I Express More Sorrow, Regret and Apology than You Can Ever Believe"", *The Guardian*, 6 juli, 2016, <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/jul/06/tony-blair-deliberately-exaggerated-threat-from-iraq-chilcot-report-war-inquiry>.

## 4. The Relationship of Blair and Bush during the Iraq War

### 4.1 The First Months

The goals of the war were very clear, invade Iraq, eliminate the threat of Saddam Hussein, dismantle any WMD or biochemical weapons or means of production and lastly, provide humanitarian aid to the population of Iraq. One point that Blair and Bush had not yet come into complete agreement with was what was to happen after Hussein had been removed. If put in the framework by Van Hoef this indicates an interesting development of the relationship as one of the key components has been changed. There is no longer a clear shared grand project. It was clear that democracy should be introduced, but how that exactly was going to take place, or what the role of the military would be in the case of insurgency, was unclear.<sup>86</sup> The shared grand project is similar, but not completely the same, Blair focusses strongly on the social justice for the Iraqi people as a start, whereas Bush is mainly focussed on hunting down Saddam Hussein and his sons in order to free the Iraqi people. The shared project has thus not fully evaporated but a discrepancy has spawned in the way the shared project and its goals are perceived. The start of the war indicates a moment that makes the friendship between Blair and Bush so vastly different than before the war. The sheer force of American soldiers in Iraq meant that Bush could push for his own agenda far easier and was not bound by any British chains. Up until the invasion in Iraq, there had not been any major disagreements about the usage of force, and the removal of the Taliban government in Afghanistan had been relatively successful.<sup>87</sup> If there was going to be different agendas in Iraq, and there were, Blair could no longer use the power of friendship to change the agenda of not only Bush but the entire American government. The aspect of equality had been eliminated in the friendship, and while the individual relationship between Blair and Bush may have still considered a friendship by themselves, if this relationship is analysed through the lens provided by Van Hoef, the friendship had been demoted to a partnership. This means that there not all five key elements were present, as before.<sup>88</sup> the developments of the early stages of the war had thus eliminated some key components of the friendship. Now it becomes clear why several authors, such as Porter and Dumbrell, argue that there was a power imbalance between the UK and the US. It has been explained in previous chapters there had truly been equality between Blair and Bush, on a personal level, which transcended their professional position at times. The goals of the War on Terror had become too important to the US and the lack of WMD indicated the fragility of the equality of the relation between Bush and Blair. The lack of success indicated that equality was only real during the time in which Bush and Blair were completely likeminded in their goals during the war.

Blair expresses a weakness of the Western psyche in that we wish our battles to be short and successful. If this does not happen the Western will falters, meaning that mistakes or rash decisions will be made. The facts of war hit reality, casualties, and the lack of achieving the perceived goal grew on the public and on the government that is waging the war.<sup>89</sup> This was palpable after Saddam was removed from his seat of power, the power void

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<sup>86</sup> Tom Bower, *Broken Vows* (Faber & Faber, 2016) 330-331.

<sup>87</sup> Tony Blair, *A Journey* (Random House, 2010) 369-370.

<sup>88</sup> Yuri van Hoef, "Interpreting affect between state leaders. Assessing the Churchill-Roosevelt friendship". 56-59.

<sup>89</sup> Tony Blair, *A Journey* (Random House, 2010) 397.

that occurred afterwards and the insurgency that would accompany it, were misjudged by the US and the UK. From the onset Blair and Bush had different agendas, Bush wanted to remove Hussein, and fight the terrorist troops in Iraq, while simultaneously establishing a democracy. Blair also wanted to establish a democracy and eliminate the terrorist threat but also wanted to topple Hussein's entire regime and give the Iraqi people the aid they needed, and get the war justified by the UN. While the conquest of Iraq was successful, the aftermath was a disaster. This is also the start of a key moment in the US-UK relationship as Blair makes a decision that needs US approval, namely, that after Hussein's removal the process of rebuilding Iraq should be led by the UN. Blair was convinced he could convince the US of doing so. The development in Iraq took several stages, Blair had started his initiative of convincing Bush and his advisors of the necessity of involving the UN, Hussein's regime had been toppled halfway through April, and the search for WMD could now actively be started, something that was needed to give justification to the world for the invasion.<sup>90</sup>

Hindsight confirms how crucial this aspect of the war really was. The fact that Hussein was removed and that the horrendous living conditions in Iraq could be improved was beneficial, but if WMD had been found the whole narrative would have changed. Not only would the war have been just, but the world would also have encouraged a much more thorough search for terrorist hideouts, and to find the leaders of the regime and the jihad. Furthermore, public opinion would likely have rotated and supported the invasion with great support from nations all around the world, instead the news and media covered what at times seemed to be a wild goose chase. That goose chase became a reality. No WMD were found, in fact, evidence of the opposite had. Blair reminisces how the Iraq Survey Group Report concluded that there were no WMD nor an active WMD programme in Iraq in 2003 and eventually published in September 2004. He continues to recognize how this "seemed to disintegrate the *casus belli*".<sup>91</sup> The media pressure mounted while the war was starting to shift from a successful invasion to fighting of insurgency. Moreover, the success Blair had by involving the UN in the conflict was extremely short-lived. On 22 May the UN received a major part in all ongoings of the rebuilding of Iraq, including: establishing a democracy and protection of the Iraqi citizens from left over Baath party members or others who wished ill upon Western or UN forces in Iraq such as Al-Qaeda. This was reversed after a car bomb from Al-Qaeda killed twenty UN staff members, including top UN operative Sergio Vieira de Mello who was the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The UN retreated their on-the-ground presence, effectively failing Blair's promise that the UN would be involved in the entire process of rebuilding Iraq.<sup>92</sup> The Chilcot report blamed Blair to not have enough power of persuasion over the Americans. Not including the UN was part of this promise by Blair as it would justify the invasion and give the world the idea that the Americans were not in Iraq for their own gain. The pressure on the relationship between Bush and Blair mounted with each day no WMD were found. Massive pressure from the UK were building up on Blair. Internal affairs drained the UK treasury while the troops in Iraq had a demonstrable lack of resources to combat the leftover Baathists and other groups that resisted the Western invasion.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid, 442-446.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, 382-385.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid, 453-467.

<sup>93</sup> Tom Bower, *Broken Vows* (Faber & Faber, 2016) 374-377.

## 4.2 The Final Years

The contrast between the first few months in Iraq and the last four years of Blair's prime ministership is incredibly stark when it comes to his friendship with George Bush. The mounting pressure, the division in agendas, and America's determination to dismantle Saddam Hussein's entire regime which could only be ended by his capture and the capture or death of all his sons, changed the relationship significantly. So much so, that attempting to understand how they interacted with one another during the period of the summer 2003 to Blair's resignation in 2007 from their own point of view becomes increasingly difficult as the frequency of any interaction described, strongly decreases. In Bush's autobiography Tony Blair is hardly mentioned after the fall of the Hussein regime in the spring of 2003, there is one mention when Blair calls him and congratulates him on his re-election in 2004. After this event Bush mentions Tony Blair once in a very professional manner when discussing what is to be done about Iran's nuclear programme. Blair is mentioned in the same breath as Merkel and Putin who are all showing support, he is no longer singled out as a partner in politics or a friend, but a colleague.<sup>94</sup> There is no mention of Blair's re-election in 2005 neither is there any mention of Blair's resignation which would be affecting his partnership in Iraq, nor a notion of sadness to no longer have a friend in the position of PM. The striking difference with the friendly and admiring tone used for Blair versus the omission of his name when discussing the later years of Bush's presidency give some indication on how closely, or rather distant, Blair and Bush were cooperating in these years. The single most expressive piece of evidence is the contrast between the moment of the victory over the toppling of Saddam Hussein's regime, and the capture of Hussein himself.

I was at the NATO Summit in Istanbul on June 28 when I felt Don Rumsfeld's hand reach over my shoulder. He slipped me a scrap of paper with Condi's handwriting: "Mr. President, Iraq is sovereign. Letter was passed from Bremer at 10:26 a.m., Iraqi time." I scrawled on the note, "Let freedom reign!" Then I shook hands with the leader on my right. In a fitting twist of history, I shared the moment with a man who had never wavered in his commitment to a free Iraq, Tony Blair.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> George W. Bush, *Decision Points* (Crown Publishing Group, 2010) 282, 398.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid*, 342.



*Figure 1: Blair and Bush share a moment of victory after making Iraq sovereign.<sup>96</sup>*

The moment that the Western forces had freed Iraq from Hussein, needed to be shared with the man whom Bush had planned with for years, and could now share in a moment of victory together. The moment of Saddam Hussein's capture on 13 December 2003 was entirely different. Bush describes it as a victory of the US and especially the US army. The members of the team who captured Saddam were invited to the White House and shared the moment of victory, similar as to Blair had done a few months earlier.<sup>97</sup> However, only American troops are mentioned, and while this operation was completed by American operatives, Bush made no effort to contact Blair to share this news even though the toppling of Hussein was a common goal. The capture of Hussein meant a more definitive end of the regime, which could have been another moment of victory between Blair and Bush. The fact that neither of the individuals nor any of the biographies used in the research that described this period indicated a direct form of communication between Blair and Bush, indicates a deteriorated friendship where personal victories of this size are no longer enough to be shared with one another. It becomes apparent that neither Blair nor Bush need each other anymore for anything in particular, and the shared common goal has also deviated from its previous similarity.

The friendship has reached the stage where neither of the parties need one another for anything, resulting in an extreme decline in communication. Both George Bush's autobiography and the biography on Tony Blair by Tom Bower stop mentioning personal non-professional interactions, with the exception of Tony Blair congratulating Bush on his

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid, 343.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid, 258-259.

re-election in 2004. Tony Blair however does not stop mentioning Bush and does so in the manner he had been doing leading up to and during the start of the war, with endearment. One example that is illustrated by Blair as a friendly encounter with Bush during the G8 summit in St Petersburg in 2006 is the 'Yo, Blair' incident. Blair explains it as a light-hearted style Bush used to greet friends, which continues with a conversation which halted when they realised they could be heard as the microphones in the meeting room were on. Blair relates to the greeting as something of "total intimacy" while the news and media in Britain had interpreted the greeting as condescending or patronizing, proving their view of how Bush used Blair as a lackey.<sup>98</sup> Something that had evolved in the narrative as a result of the failure of finding WMD in Iraq, as reflected in the Chilcot inquiry. It even became the title of a book written by Geoffrey Wheatcroft who used to book to criticize Blair, particularly his relationship with Bush.<sup>99</sup> the continuous flow of negative media had ensured a significant decrease in Blair's popularity, even though Blair managed to win the 2005 elections (for which he received no recorded personal phone call or other form of congratulations from Bush, indicating the deteriorated friendship).

This incident was the last significant Bush-Blair interaction. It had ended with the trend that can also be seen throughout the past two chapters: Blair experiencing it as a friendly exchange without seeing much harm, and especially not with himself being lesser than Bush, while the media continued with their criticisms of Blair needing Bush's permission and being a lapdog. Blair resigned on 27 June 2007 to be followed by Gordon Brown after increasing pressures, but also for another intriguing reason. There is a rather interesting dynamic when it comes to friendship and decision making, as Blair and Brown had made a deal in 1994 granting Brown prime ministership should Labour win three times consecutively provided that Brown would not oppose Blair during the second election. Brown reminisced as follows in his autobiography, in which the pact was confirmed for the first time:

I had a further meeting with Tony. But my mind was already made up. I would accept his assurances. He would give me control of economic and social policy and would stand down during a second term. Unwilling to see the party divided in a way that would endanger the prospects for reform, in the days leading up to 30 May I informed those closest to me of my intention not to stand.

The rest was a formality. On 31 May, I sat down again with Tony near his home in London, at a restaurant called Granita.<sup>100</sup>

Popularly referred to as the Granita pact, named after the restaurant. Something that seemed highly speculative had partially come to fruition 13 years after the pact had been made. Blair did not grant Brown his prime ministership exactly after the second term had ended and the third re-election had been won, but eventually Tony Blair honoured the agreement. Perhaps not as discussed, but Blair and Brown's political views had drifted apart quite significantly over the years, causing Blair to hold on for a bit longer. Depending on how Brown behaved, Blair decided whether he would resign sooner or later than the midway point he had set in his mind.<sup>101</sup> Eventually there was no holding back as the pressure from

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<sup>98</sup> Andrew Rawnsley, "It wasn't the 'Yo' that was humiliating, it was the 'No'", *The Guardian*, 23 July, 2006, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2006/jul/23/comment.politics>.

<sup>99</sup> Geoffrey Wheatcroft, *Yo, Blair!* (Methuen Publishing Ltd, 2007).

<sup>100</sup> Gordon Brown, *My Life, Our Times* (The Bodley Head, 2017) 109.

<sup>101</sup> Tony Blair, *A Journey* (Random House, 2010) 572-575

Brown became too much to bear, Blair refers to it as a coup as he suspected that Brown thought Blair would not resign. It becomes apparent that Blair had significant doubts about Brown's new Labour approach and states:

I genuinely thought I had the right policy agenda for Britain's future, and thought that Gordon didn't.<sup>102</sup>

Regardless of these doubts, the changes what the future of the Labour party should look like, and the pressures and tactics used by Brown to force Blair's resignation, Blair honoured his agreement. It is comparable with the promise Blair made to Bush with standing by his side, whatever. Encountering countless obstacles and obstructions on the path to the result still did not result in Blair dismissing his promise. Brown, however, disagrees and shortly after his anecdote in Granita, writes:

Long into the future, the focus of the 1994 leadership race would wrongly remain on what was said at Granita. The restaurant did not survive; and ultimately neither did our agreement.<sup>103</sup>

#### 4.3 Framework Analysis

The history of the friendship between Blair and Bush could, if analysed superficially, be understood as a *quid pro quo* relationship, as the friendship thrived the most when dire situations occurred where Blair or Bush required something from the other. In this last section of chapter four the main decisions and key moments of the last two chapters are put in the framework of Van Hoef, extended by the framework that suggests positive peace as described earlier. In order to prevent any divisions and due to the fact that pre-war decisions influenced decisions during the war both chapters will be put into the analyses in this section. Afterwards both chapters will be compared to literature that has been reviewed earlier which does not take into perspective the personal motives of Blair and Bush as formed through their relationship.

The single most important moment in the relationship between Bush and Blair is Blair's response to the events of 9/11. This has been indicated earlier and must be underlined again. There is no single moment that defined the relationship as much as Blair's promise to stand by the US and especially by Bush. This decision influenced much to come but had in and of itself also already been influenced by the relationship Bush and Blair had formed in the short time that Bush had been president leading up to the events of 9/11. It is striking to see that both Bush and Blair valued their first meetings as much as they did, both emphasizing that not only they, but their wives getting along as well.<sup>104</sup> While it may seem obvious, but had the introduction gone any different Blair might have responded differently to America's call against the terrorist threat. When linked to the framework by Van Hoef, the literature provided by the nation leaders clearly indicates that the five key components suggested are met. Affect, grand project(s), altruistic reciprocity, moral obligations, and equality are all met on a personal level. The affect is clearly shown by both individuals on several occasions and is even shown in the criticized 'Yo, Blair' moment, which to Blair and

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid, 614.

<sup>103</sup> Gordon Brown, *My Life, Our Times* (The Bodley Head, 2017) 109.

<sup>104</sup> Tony Blair, *A Journey* (Random House, 2010) 399; George W. Bush, *Decision Points* (Crown Publishing Group, 2010) 222-223.

Bush was a moment of endearment instead of a condescending greeting. This indicates that the affect part of the relationship had remained from the first meeting throughout Blair's prime ministership. The moral obligations are identified with attempting to make the world a better place by eliminating the terrorist threat and by making Iraq a safer place by toppling the despot Hussein. These have strong connotations to the shared grand projects but nevertheless indicate the moral goals both parties want each other to achieve. The grand projects started of as an incredibly clear, shared, common goal. It was the foundation of the cooperation between the US and the UK. There was a terrorist threat, potentially even a threat involving WMD provided by Saddam Hussein which had to be stopped. In chapter three the importance of the WMD narrative is underlined several times to show how important the suggestion of dismantling the programme was. Both nation leaders vehemently believed there were WMD to be found, even though this would eventually result in being one of the main points of criticism and public disapproval as indicated in chapter three as well. By both sticking to this narrative, while also both wishing to topple the regime of Hussein to make Iraq a safer place for both the people living there, as decreasing its potential security threat, the shared project was unequivocally shared. Only after the war had begun and the failure to find WMD had become apparent did the shared grand project change.

Previously it has been described that the shared project had changed and that this affected the relationship as a shared project is one of the factors that differentiates a normal friendship and a political friendship.<sup>105</sup> This change in the relation was added on by a simultaneous shift in the equality aspect of the friendship, which was influenced by the changing shared objective. It was explained that due to the changing shared objective, the inequality became apparent. This inequality had always existed but was never relevant to the relationship as the inequality was mainly found in military power, which had not defined the relationship up until the war. The difference in political power could be made as an argument of inequality, yet there is no evidence of the US using its political power to overpower or overshadow British political power, essentially eliminating this point. Now that the shared objective had changed, and due to the division of the troops in Iraq, the difference in power did become very visible. The effect of this on the relationship is visible through the analyses of the altruistic reciprocation in the relationship, as this greatly diminished. It was indicated that the 'Yo, Blair' incident was the last endearing encounter between Blair and Bush, but it had also been the first one for quite some time. Neither Bush nor Blair reminisces about any pleasant events shared together after the 16<sup>th</sup> of July 2003. On this day Blair gave a speech in which the moral obligation of the UK and the US became apparent once more:

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<sup>105</sup> Yuri Van Hoef, Interpreting affect between state leaders. Assessing the Churchill-Roosevelt friendship. In M. Clément & E. Sangar (Eds.), *Researching emotions in IR: Methodological perspectives for a new paradigm* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018): 55-56.



This is a battle that can't be fought or won only by armies. We are so much more powerful in all conventional ways than the terrorists, yet even in all our might, we are taught humility. In the end, it is not our power alone that will defeat this evil. Our ultimate weapon is not our guns, but our beliefs. (...) The spread of freedom is the best security for the free. It is our last line of defence and our first line of attack. And just as the terrorist seeks to divide humanity in hate, so we have to unify it around an idea. And that idea is liberty. We must find the strength to fight for this idea and the compassion to make it universal.<sup>106</sup>

This was followed by a dinner shared between Bush, Blair, and their wives in which Blair perceived their hosts to be gracious and welcoming, while himself feeling relaxed and victorious over Saddam Hussein. Simultaneously, the UN was still present in Iraq at this point as the car bombing had not yet occurred, which was one of the ethical victories of Blair. This shifted tremendously through the death of David Kelly who had written the dossier of the assessment of the JIC which resulted in the publication of how the intelligence of Iraqi WMD was bogus, which meant a blow for both Blair, and Bush but especially Blair.<sup>107</sup> Due to these pressures and evidence that was presented, the WMD narrative eventually collapsed causing the shared project to be shifting. The previous shared goal of removing Hussein had been achieved and Iraq had slowly started to improve with regards to safety and resources that could be accessed by citizens.<sup>108</sup> The last common goal that the UK and the US wanted to achieve together was to find and dismantle the suspected WMD or a programme developing them and it was shattered.

Due to this shift in the shared project, and the changing equality dilemma the reciprocity had changed as well, no longer were visits made that were reminisced about pleasantly in the autobiographies, nor were there any shared victories to be had after this moment. A strong indicator of the failing reciprocity, but also perhaps proof of Blair fulfilling his accused position of investing more into the relationship than Bush, was the failure of Bush congratulating Blair on his re-election. Blair had congratulated Bush in November of 2004, yet Bush failed to do the same five months later. While it may seem like a small change or event in the grand scheme of things, the shift in behaviour is a strong indicator of the deteriorated friendship, but also of what was hidden beneath the surface of the friendship. As long as Britain had nothing to offer, the friendship did not really matter. This does not mean that there was not any friendship, it means that Bush did not put in an effort to keep the personal friendship alive if there were no political projects the US and the UK could work on together. Like one might find himself distanced from a friend as soon as they are no longer part of the same education or cooperative working environment. That does not mean the friendship is over, it has just diminished and has become distant. It also does not devalue the friendship that was previously had. Which ties into the media trend and literature that covers the Special Relationship of the period Blair-Bush.

The 'Yo, Blair' incident is a great example to showcase the media trend that illustrates Blair as 'America's Poodle', a term that was thrown at Blair by critics as a way of insulting him as a lackey to America.<sup>109</sup> From the moment Blair decided to go to war in Iraq and supporting the Americans this trend had been around. Blair indicates that he believed

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<sup>106</sup> Tony Blair, *A Journey* (Random House, 2010) 458.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid*, 459-461.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid*, 464.

<sup>109</sup> Rob Watson, "Tony Blair: The US Poodle?", *BBC News*, 31 January, 2003, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/2711623.stm>.

most media to be anti-Blair as of 2005.<sup>110</sup> The media trend had thus a large part of the responsibility of depicting Blair as a lackey to the US and doing George Bush's bidding. This is also seen in the literature surrounding this subject. In the literature review it was indicated that mainly Porter, Wallace, Philips, but also Dumbrell argue a similar trend. While Focussing more on the Special Relationship rather than calling Tony Blair derogatory terms, the conclusions indicate that the UK follows the US in its international politics, due to the clear inequality in political and military power. Throughout the last two chapters we can see that reality may be less obvious and that the arguments by Azubuiké and Christopher Bluth find resonance with arguments made in the previous two chapters. Furthermore, the liberalist arguments also find resonance with the arguments and they share similarities. The main similarity indicated is that Blair truly believed to help the world by toppling the Hussein regime. Even if there were no WMD and even if there was no justification of the invasion by the UN. Blair still supported the invasion and indicated so on several occasions, as seen in his apology in which he indicated he was sorry, but he would do it again and thus ultimately stood behind his decision.<sup>111</sup> The decisions by Bush also resonate with liberalist theory in the sense that the protection of his country, and this security threat, was enough reason to not stand idly by.<sup>112</sup> Throughout the chapters it has been described how incredibly confident Bush and Blair both were that a WMD or programme was going to be encountered, eventually this would be their undoing, yet the reasoning, as explained, was completely logical. Both had intelligence guaranteeing WMD, and neither had any substantial reason to doubt that intelligence. The criticisms on Blair for following Bush too blindly are logical, especially in the context of the 'Yo, Blair' incident where it is pointed out that not the 'Yo, Blair' greeting is most offensive, but the fact that Blair asks Bush to be his Middle-East envoy, and is rejected.<sup>113</sup> This confirms a narrative that had existed a few years, but the narratives of Azubuiké and Bluth, which indicate that Blair was realizing his own moral beliefs in Iraq, carry strong arguments that are reflected in the past two chapters as well.

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<sup>110</sup> Tony Blair, *A Journey* (Random House, 2010) 571.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid*, 355.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid*, 437.

<sup>113</sup> Andrew Rawnsley, "It wasn't the 'Yo' that was humiliating, it was the 'No'", *The Guardian*, 23 July, 2006.

## 5. Gordon Brown, Barack Obama, and David Cameron

### 5.1 Gordon Brown and George Bush

The relationship between Gordon Brown and George Bush as nation leaders was not particularly long, none of the relationships in this chapter are, nor do any of them carry the same friendship value as the previous Blair-Bush relationship. Despite this, the analyses need to be made if there were any decisions made due to personal relationships or if any were influenced by the sense of the Special Relationship. To start the chapter, the relationship between Gordon Brown and George Bush needs to be researched. Brown had always operated in Tony Blair's government, and due to Blair's friendship with Bush, one could expect a similar relation with Brown and Bush. One can also very quickly find out this is not the case. In Bush's autobiography Brown is mentioned once:

At the end of the debate, Prime Minister Gordon Brown of Great Britain leaned over to me and said, "We didn't give the MAPs, but we may have just made them members!"<sup>114</sup>

This does not seem particularly unfriendly, but it also does not seem extremely relevant when trying to find a personal relationship between the two nation leaders. The fact that Bush needs to indicate that Brown is a PM, shows his expectation of people reading the book to not instantly know who Gordon Brown is. Whereas Bush often refers to Tony Blair as just Tony due to the frequency that he is discussed. These small details can give a good idea of how close someone is, Bush clearly did not have too many dealings with Brown, or any personal anecdotes. Brown's recapitulations of events with himself and Bush are a little more frequent. All anecdotes point to the same result, that their interactions were professional, and focussed on discussing important matters. This is indicated by the first anecdote of Brown who explains that after he had become PM, he had phone calls with the world leaders:

My first call was to US president George W. Bush, whom I spoke to for ten minutes, mainly about Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>115</sup>

There was a sense of importance to speak with the President of the US, being that he was the first to be called. However, there is an interesting continuation of this anecdote as Brown had followed the call to Bush by calls with Sarkozy and Merkel:

During these latter two calls, I was sensitive to the fact that I had to get the right balance in our relationships with Germany and France – both were equally important to our European policy.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> George W. Bush, *Decision Points* (Crown Publishing Group, 2010) 410.

<sup>115</sup> Gordon Brown, *My Life, Our Times* (The Bodley Head, 2017) 206.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid*, 206.

Immediately a connection with Dumbrell's argumentation can be made, earlier it was pointed out that Dumbrell argued that the UK was focussing more on integration with Europe. An interesting sidenote is that Dumbrell published his article in 2006 while Brown became PM in 2007, partially confirming his prediction. The immediate implication of the importance of a good relationship with major European nations reveals Brown's intention to work on that relationship should that be necessary in the future. Furthermore, it reveals Brown's industrial nature with the drive to keep meetings that could be informal rather business-like. Brown's visit to President Bush was not different. Bush invited Brown to Camp David, as he had done with Blair, in order to be less formal than the White House. Brown, however, wished to be seen by the people while they were working on delicate issues such as Iraq. Brown continues to reminisce that the dinner was friendly but filled with political issues. During this visit Brown ensured Bush of the importance of the SR and Britain's plans to stay loyal to that alliance, this reassurance was needed as two of Brown's ministers had been reported to imply that the SR was no longer as important as it once was.<sup>117</sup>

Simultaneously, the goals of the war in Iraq started to shift. The US and the UK agreed that there was a common goal, which entailed leaving Iraq in phases, and shifting the focus on Afghanistan as the War on Terror had shifted there. Brown describes that while this agreement was in place, the strategy involved differed, as the UK wished to retreat rather quickly while the US pledged 20.000 more soldiers. Cooperation and agreements may have been the foundation of the slow retreat from Iraq in order to give control back to the Iraqi people, the UK clearly had an own agenda it wished to achieve. By mid-2009 Brown wished to have ended all UK military tasks in Iraq.<sup>118</sup> The last year of the Bush-administration was hardly focussed on the Iraq War as the main discussions Bush and Brown had covered how they should cope with the financial crisis they had found themselves in. Blair and Bush often retreated and discussed decisions with just the two of them, when the autobiographies of Bush and Brown are studied there is no evidence they shared the same comfort. Only multilateral and national decisions are made when it came to the financial crisis discussed at international meetings. Moreover, Brown tried to block out the crisis that had started in the US, in order to keep Britain from sinking. Brown describes how they saved the Barclays bank by blocking a deal with Lehman in the US.<sup>119</sup> The Special Relationship was hardly relevant if it meant a collapse of one of the major British banks.

## 5.2 Gordon Brown and Barack Obama

Just before Obama entered his office, but already after his victory in the elections, Gordon Brown made one of the biggest announcements since the start of the invasion in 2003. On 17 December 2008 Brown announced that military personnel would be leaving Iraq and that all military operations would be terminated by May 31. Only a few hundred Navy troops would remain in order to train Iraqi forces so that they would be able to assume control and protect themselves. Instead, the UK would send a small group to aid US forces in Afghanistan.<sup>120</sup> The war had shifted from Iraq to Afghanistan, with only 300 troops in Iraq, the war in Iraq was practically over to the UK in May 2009, and with that the

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid, 218.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid, 268.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid, 307.

<sup>120</sup> Nicholas Watt, "Brown: British military to withdraw from Iraq", *The Guardian*, 17 December, 2008, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2008/dec/17/gordon-brown-iraq>.

remnants of Tony Blair and George Bush's large cooperation. The personal relations of Blair and Bush that had been so influential after the events of 9/11 had petered out. The relationship between Brown and Obama was nowhere near as intimate, and other than a few compliments in their autobiographies, the main mentions of one another are in a professional setting attempting to get the financial crisis under control at G8s and G20s. Other than that there is a repeated mention of Obama's terrible relation with the UK press, resulting in a feeling of a declined relationship between the UK and the US due to his depiction to the UK people.<sup>121</sup> No longer are there any shared intimate moments between the President of the US and the PM of the UK, this means that the framework by Van Hoef is no longer applicable. There may be a shared project, such as Afghanistan and trying to combat the financial crisis, but these projects are shared with several other countries. There is no true shared project that is just between the US and the UK. Perhaps this has to do with Dumbrell's suggested European integration in which the UK is no longer part of a tandem. Or perhaps this has to do with a growing dislike of American ignorance of British politics during Blair's prime ministership as indicated by Dobson and Marsh, worsened by Obama's continuation of this trend.<sup>122</sup> The inequality had been a problem longer, and the polls reflected in the article by Dobson and Marsh indicate that there has been no improvement with regards to the sense of equality by the British people.<sup>123</sup> Most importantly, there is no longer a clear sense of affection between the two nation leaders, essentially eliminating the most crucial aspect of any friendship. Without the applicability of Van Hoef's framework or any evidence of friendship and intimate interaction in the autobiographies or other sources, there is no longer any possibility to determine whether personal relationships could have affected any decision making as it so clearly had with Bush and Blair. Due to this development it is not strange that suggestions of British integration into Europe are being made. Earlier on, this thesis eluded to the end of the Special Relationship when the British Foreign Affairs Committee declared it to be over in 2010 just at the end of Brown's term. This does not mean that the alliance it insinuated was over, but that the meaning had shifted. Throughout the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the criticisms of Britain following the US too much had become synonym with the term Special Relationship. Hence why the declaration of the end of the Special Relationship did not mean the end of an alliance, but the end of the UK in a following role of the US.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Gordon Brown, *My Life, Our Times* (The Bodley Head, 2017) 28, 286, 326, 329, 339; Barack Obama, *A Promised Land* (Penguin Books Ltd, 2020) 181, 364, 375, 569; Alan Dobson & Steve Marsh, Anglo-American Relations: End of a Special Relationship?, *The International History Review*, 36:4 (2014).

<sup>122</sup> John Dumbrell, "Working with Allies: The United States, the United Kingdom, and the War on Terror", *Politics & Policy*, 34:2 (2006): 452-472; Alan Dobson & Steve Marsh, Anglo-American Relations: End of a Special Relationship?, *The International History Review*, 36:4 (2014).

<sup>123</sup> Alan Dobson & Steve Marsh, Anglo-American Relations: End of a Special Relationship?, *The International History Review*, 36:4 (2014).

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

### 5.3 David Cameron and Barack Obama: The Final Year

The last duo to meet in the role of nation leaders during the Iraq War was in the form of Conservative Party leader David Cameron and Barack Obama.

I knew that getting my relationship right with Barack Obama was essential. So many of the things I wanted to achieve in foreign policy – from bringing an end to the conflict in Afghanistan to pushing for progress on climate change – would depend on the approach taken by the US.<sup>125</sup>

Cameron goes on to emphasize how their developing relationship was instant due to the shared values they carried. Obama shared this sense of a good relationship as even when they disagreed, Obama implied that he still liked Cameron, but above all, that Cameron was a good partner on several key international issues.<sup>126</sup> Already a massive change can be seen in how Obama and Cameron treated one another, versus how Obama and Brown, or Brown and Bush treated each other. In both relationships it became clear that Brown was constantly pushing to get things done, while the air surrounding Obama and Cameron has some informality. Not as much informality as was enjoyed between Blair and Bush, but there is a certain sense of affection. One of the first major issues dealt with by Blair and Obama was the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. Cameron indicates that US officials (including Obama once) kept emphasizing ‘British Petroleum’, even though that had not been the name of BP since 2000, and that it had become a showdown between the UK and the US. Cameron continues to compliment Obama on his skills and common sense, but also had trouble with sensing if he and Obama were on the same page that the only one truly responsible was neither the UK or the US but BP.<sup>127</sup> When looking at this issue from Obama’s perspective, the struggle with the UK is not mentioned once, and it is very clearly implicated that BP was the one that would be covering all the costs to this ecological disaster.<sup>128</sup> Furthermore, US ambassador Louis Susman underlined that Obama had not tried to be diplomatic with his expressions and had a general warm conversation with Cameron in which not only the BP disaster was discussed, but also the Afghan War.<sup>129</sup>

As with Brown, the attention of foreign military affairs had shifted to Afghanistan. One of the biggest events during the War on Terror occurred on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May 2011 when Osama Bin-Laden had been shot and killed by American special forces. The War on Terror started a decade earlier by Bush and Blair saw another victory with the death of Al-Qaeda leader Bin-Laden. First Obama placed calls to former Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush in which Obama emphasized this was the result and moral victory of the process which Bush had started. The US ally across the Atlantic also deserved credit:

Though it was the middle of the night across the Atlantic, I contacted David Cameron as well, to recognize the stalwart support our closest ally had provided from the very beginning of the Afghan War.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> David Cameron, *For the Record* (Harper Collins Publ. UK, 2019) 174.

<sup>126</sup> Obama, *A Promised Land* (Penguin Books Ltd, 2020) 567.

<sup>127</sup> David Cameron, *For the Record* (Harper Collins Publ. UK, 2019) 175.

<sup>128</sup> Obama, *A Promised Land* (Penguin Books Ltd, 2020) 614-615.

<sup>129</sup> “BP oil spill: Obama comments ‘not anti-British’”, *BBC News*, 13 June, 2010. <https://www.bbc.com/news/10303619>.

<sup>130</sup> Obama, *A Promised Land* (Penguin Books Ltd, 2020) 748.

Obama could have referred to the entire War on Terror instead of just the Afghan War, with which he would have also accredited Tony Blair on his commitment to the US. However, this immediate need to directly call Cameron implies the close bond that had been formed throughout the process. However, it was nowhere near as close as the Bush-Blair relationship.

These were last two main events before the UK indefinitely withdrew all remaining troops from Iraq in May 2011, soon to be followed by the US in December 2011 officially ending the Iraq War. This also meant the end to the project originally set out by Blair and Bush and a period in which the alliance between Britain and the US saw significant stress.

#### 5.4 Framework Analysis

Throughout the fifth chapter one main change can be found as opposed to chapters three and four. There is a significant lack of a clear friendship. During chapter five the relationships have been sketched so that a clear conclusion can be made that the friendship framework by Van Hoef is hardly or not applicable, which automatically means that the extension of the framework, the positive peace aspect, is not applicable either. Instead the focus was on the dynamic of the Special Relationship, which had been extremely prevalent in the two chapters before. The main trend was that the UK had started to shed of the identity of a US follower, an identity it was still very much struggling with during the Blair years. Brown's industriousness and wish to be seen to be talking business with Bush is a very clear example of trying to shed this identity. By showing the world Britain is taking initiative and not succumbing to the informal role of a friend, they can not be seen as a follower, or 'poodle'. Furthermore, Brown's wish to focus more on European relations confirms Dumbrell's predictions of Britain integrating into Europe under Brown's leadership. Brown clearly had an entirely different vision than Blair had, and did not adhere much value to the legacy or process that Blair and Bush had started in Iraq.<sup>131</sup> Instead Brown was far more pragmatic in shifting his attention to the War on Terror that had been justified by the UN and announced to pull all military personnel to leave Iraq. Brown, who had accompanied Blair through his entire leadership, saw how Blair was criticized, and decided he was not to fulfil the same role. This was emphasized by withdrawing British troops from Iraq, regardless of how that made the US look in international press.<sup>132</sup> He was, however, responsible for Britain's management during the financial crisis. A period where bilateralism was no longer an option if the UK was to be protected, multilateralism was the only option. Under Browns prime ministership, the call for the end of the SR was made. A culmination of the efforts that Brown had made. It meant the end of the UK as a follower to the US, while still honouring a strong alliance.

While Cameron had a significantly better relationship with his US counterpart, there still was not enough affection and intimacy to apply Van Hoef's friendship theory. Neither were there any major decisions that had been heavily influenced by one another. Cameron's commitment to send more troops to Afghanistan was not necessarily following the US, even though they asked. It was the result of a discussion and clear necessity of more troops in Afghanistan as argued by Cameron.<sup>133</sup> The UK continued to refuse to take a position in

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<sup>131</sup> John Dumbrell, "Working with Allies: The United States, the United Kingdom, and the War on Terror", *Politics & Policy*, 34:2 (2006) 452-472.

<sup>132</sup> Gordon Brown, *My Life, Our Times* (The Bodley Head, 2017) 268.

<sup>133</sup> David Cameron, *For the Record* (Harper Collins Publ. UK, 2019) 174.

which they relied on the US or where they followed US foreign policy, solidifying the so-called end of the Special Relationship. The change in that aspect has been quite significant in the four years after Blair's resignation. It should be mentioned however, that the end of the Special Relationship as proclaimed in 2010, has not been completely accepted as there are still media coverages who proclaim the same type of ending of the SR in 2020, over a decade after the previous declarations.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Sean O'Grady, "The end of the special relationship? Joe Biden could be very bad news for Boris Johnson's Britain", *Independent*, 19 October, 2020, <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/joe-biden-us-elections-boris-johnson-brexit-trade-deal-barack-obama-b1153791.html>.



## 6. Conclusion

The Special Relationship developed after the Second World War and carried a hefty value to the US and the UK. Throughout the literature review, a division could be seen of mainly two camps. The first one being the more traditional literature surrounding the SR, where the UK has more of a following role and the power division has never been equal. This argument is supported by authors such as Porter, Dobson, Marsh, Wallace, Phillips, and Dumbrell. On the other hand, is the camp that suggests that the UK was aware of the power division but found themselves supporting the same arguments as the US. These arguments are supported by Christopher Bluth and Samuel Azubuike. Interestingly enough there are hardly any arguments that suggest the US and the UK were truly equal in power during the entire period after the Second World War. The camp that suggests that the UK or the UK PM that had the same motives as the US, can also be linked to a liberalist worldview. In an attempt to make the world a better place, certain dramatic actions had been taken, in response to immense perceived threats by the US and the UK.

The framework that has been used as created by Van Hoef is the key angle to this thesis. Affect, equality, reciprocation, moral obligations, and a shared project are the five components necessary to establish a political friendship, that also carries a personal value. By applying this to a relation between two, for example, nation leaders, and affirming this is applicable, one can find if the relationship may have influenced any form of decision making.

The vast majority of the chapters has been dedicated to the relationship of Tony Blair and George Bush, as they have a relationship that brought forth many key decisions, but also one on which the framework is applicable. From the sources used surrounding Blair and Bush, with specific focus on their autobiographies, an intimate friendship was identified. The introduction of Blair and Bush already established their friendship, they had been friendly with one another from the get-go. This was cemented after the events of 9/11 in which Blair promised Bush in a key moment to stand by America under all circumstances. This narrative created a vast amount of criticism for Blair, but the analysis shows that Blair did not follow the US, but joined the US in a cause he truly believed in. Bush was not only his friend, but someone with the power to realize his moral beliefs, and for the majority, Bush shared these beliefs. This confirms that they influenced each other, and that their friendly relationship not only heavily impacted their decision making but tried to achieve a positive peace as suggested in the extension of Van Hoef's framework. The absolute most important decision was to invade Iraq together, and Blair's commitment to his friend. The likelihood of this happening with a partnership of Bush and Brown would have been very low. The friendship between Bush and Blair is what realized their plans throughout all the setbacks.

They both vehemently believed that Saddam Hussein was a threat to the world and that the world would be a better place without them. The fact that he possibly possessed WMD which he could share with terrorists made him an even larger threat. It has been established that the intelligence available to Blair and Bush suggested that he had WMD or a programme to produce them. Blair did, however, put himself in a weaker position when a classified memo he sent to Bush surfaced in which he pledged himself to Bush in a manner that suggested inferiority: "I'll be with you, whatever".<sup>135</sup> Not only this, but he suggested

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<sup>135</sup> "'I Will Be with You, Whatever": Read Blair's Secret 2002 Memo to Bush on Iraq", *Washington Post*, 6 July, 2016.

the possible non-existence of WMD, which could point to the fact they may have doubted their intelligence after all. The last point is difficult to nuance, as there has been ample evidence to guarantee Bush and Blair were convinced there were WMD, on the other hand, the lack of WMD in Iraq caused such a massive storm of criticism, it would be extremely convenient if they could convince the world they never knew the intelligence was false. This thesis concludes that both Blair and Bush did not know the intelligence was false, and truly believed they would encounter WMD, justifying their interpretation of Hussein as a threat to the Western world. This validates the key moment of Blair and Bush to continue their invasion plans. Furthermore, this thesis concludes that the friendship between Blair and Bush was equal up until then point of the invasion, and that Blair, in accordance with the arguments of Bluth and Azubuike cooperated with the US to realise his own goals. After the invasion, their goals started to drift apart, especially after the integration of the UN into Iraq failed after the ghastly attack that killed 20 UN staff members. Blair's promise to integrate the UN failed, and the criticism from outside blamed him even more for his incapability to influence the US government, despite their agreement to UN involvement. After the falling apart of their shared objective, so did their equality. Bush become involved with achieving his own goals in Iraq and stopped being as involved with Blair as before. Through anecdotes this was illustrated in chapter four. Blair and Bush grew apart as two friends who took different paths in life and with it, the close bond between the US and the UK. From this point on the literature that suggests that the UK valued the SR more than vice versa, such as Dumbrell, Dobson, and Marsh, is more in line with the truth than Bluth and Azubuike's arguments

This drift continued with Brown, who never came to be as close with Bush or Obama as Blair had. Furthermore, his philosophy was entirely different in which he wanted to express how much the UK could make their own decisions and was not influenced by the US. In that sense, the friendship of Blair and Bush affected Brown, as he did not want to repeat what he considered to be Blair's mistakes. On the other hand, he did not use the US to realize his own goals, indicating a definite failure to influence the US presidents. This was ultimately expressed by Brown's Foreign Affairs Committee who considered the Special Relationship dead, where the UK had followed the more powerful US, but would do so no longer. Their alliance stood, but as equals in international politics.

In the year that was analysed, Cameron and Obama had a relationship that was more or less similar with how Brown and Obama treated one another. One clear difference is that Obama and Cameron seemed more attracted to each other on an individual level and had no problem expressing their admiration for each other, nor the importance of a successful international cooperation between the US and the UK.

The process of the Iraq War had thus been formed around the friendship of Bush and Blair, and the decision making influenced by that friendship. This friendship diminished and Blair's successors saw Blair's weakness as perceived by the media. In an attempt to not make the same mistakes, they tried to establish a different, more formal, relationship with the US. Simultaneously, they emphasized the importance of the alliance should there be an effort that required cooperation, or even an opportunity for the UK to work their politics through the US as Blair had done.

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