

The Special Relationship between the United States of America and the United Kingdom

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Bachelor's Thesis
2024



Tomas Bata University in Zlín
Faculty of Humanities

Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně
Fakulta humanitních studií
Ústav moderních jazyků a literatur

Akademický rok: 2023/2024

ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE (projektu, uměleckého díla, uměleckého výkonu)

Jméno a příjmení:	Nela Nováková
Osobní číslo:	H21813
Studijní program:	B0231P090005 Anglický jazyk pro manažerskou praxi
Forma studia:	Prezenční
Téma práce:	Zvláštní vztah Spojených států amerických a Velké Británie

Zásady pro vypracování

Shromáždění materiálů k tématu
Studium odborné literatury
Formulace cílů práce
Analýza vztahu mezi Spojenými státy americkými a Velkou Británií
Vyvození a formulace závěrů práce

Forma zpracování bakalářské práce: **tištěná/elektronická**
Jazyk zpracování: **Angličtina**

Seznam doporučené literatury:

- Burk, Kathleen. *Old World, New World: Great Britain and America from the Beginning*. New York: Grove Press, 2009.
Marsh, Steve, and Alan P. Dobson. *Anglo-American Relations: Contemporary Perspectives*. London: Routledge, 2013.
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Xu, Ruike. *Alliance Persistence within the Anglo-American Special Relationship*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.

Vedoucí bakalářské práce: **Mgr. Helena Kaňková, Ph.D.**
Ústav moderních jazyků a literatur

Datum zadání bakalářské práce: **1. února 2024**
Termín odevzdání bakalářské práce: **6. května 2024**

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ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce představuje koncept zvláštního vztahu, a to konkrétně mezi Spojenými státy americkými a Spojeným královstvím. Hlavním cílem práce je probádat vývoj tohoto vztahu spolu s výzvami a překážkami, kterými si zvláštní vztah musel projít v průběhu let. Práce se konkrétněji zaměřuje na vztah Ameriky a Británie v době během studené války a také období po jejím skončení, ale také zkoumá stávající situaci, ve které se vztah nachází. Za účelem vyhotovení bakalářské práce bylo využito množství sekundárních zdrojů. Na začátku je práce zasazena do historického kontextu Ameriky i Británie, dále práce poukazuje na vývoj tohoto vztahu v období první a druhé světové války. Důraz je kladen na období studené války, během níž si zvláštní vztah prožil různé vzestupy a pády. Práce také zkoumá vztah v období po studené válce a na jeho vývoj ve 21. století. V rámci této práce bylo zjištěno, že vztah Ameriky a Anglie byl skutečně významným aspektem během důležitých mezinárodních událostí, a i dnes je často skloňovaným pojmem. Avšak tento zvláštní vztah již není tak pevný a mocný, jako kdysi býval.

Klíčová slova: Amerika, Británie, zvláštní vztah, studená válka, 21. století

ABSTRACT

The thesis introduces the concept of the “special relationship” in connection to the relationship between the United States of America and the United Kingdom. The aim of this thesis is to explore the development of the relationship and the challenges and obstacles both nations have been through. The thesis mainly focuses on the Anglo-American relationship during the Cold War era and its aftermath, as well as it examines the current relationship. With the aim of writing the thesis, a number of secondary sources was analyzed. The thesis begins with the introduction of the historical background of the relationship and later it presents the development of the relationship during the First and the Second World Wars. The thesis emphasizes the Cold War era, and it explores the ups and downs of the relationship during this era. The thesis also presents the post-Cold War era and the 21st-century relationship’s development. The thesis proved that the relationship has been present throughout important international events and is still present nowadays. Nevertheless, the relationship is not as strong and influential as it used to be.

Keywords: America, Britain, Special Relationship, Cold War, 21st century

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis would not have been possible without my supervisor Mgr. Helena Kaňková, Ph.D. Her support, guidance, patience, and expertise throughout the process of writing the thesis were incredibly helpful. A special thanks goes to my family, friends, and my boyfriend for their encouragement during my studies.

I hereby declare that the print version of my Bachelor's thesis and the electronic version of my thesis deposited in the IS/STAG system are identical.

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of the so-called special relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom became a highly popularized concept in the 20th and 21st centuries. The starting point was during the Second World War and ever since then, the so-called special relationship became an important part of Anglo-American foreign policy. Despite discussion about whether the relationship is just a rhetorical phrase, the Anglo-American relationship proved to work closely during multiple worldwide crises. The term special relationship could be perceived as a complex cooperation on political, military, economic, and cultural level.

The thesis dives into the overall description of the relationship, as well as the closer examination of the current stage of the Anglo-American special relationship. The thesis aims to examine how was the special relationship transformed by events and how the closer alliance formed. The main part is focused on the era starting with the Cold War and its aftermath and the current Anglo-American relationship. The main question is then how well the Anglo-American relationship overcame current challenges and obstacles and its persistence.

The opening chapter briefly describes what the term special relationship means. It also provides a historical background to understand the context and the origins of the Anglo-American relationship. This chapter starts with the topic of colonialism and British supremacy over the American colonies. However, with growing tensions in American colonies, things escalated in the American Revolution and America declared its independence from Britain. Another wave of conflicts emerged during the Napoleonic Wars and the War of 1812, so-called the Second War of Independence.

The following chapter observes the roots of the formation of the extraordinary relationship. The era of the Second World War became notorious for the speech delivered by Winston Churchill, highlighting the importance of the special relationship that the United States and the United Kingdom developed. The Cold War era was perceived as a strategic conflict fought through a series of proxy wars. The chapter revolves around the Anglo-Americans negotiating and understanding each other at times of mutual distrust, strains, and different strategic attitudes. The milestone of the special relationship came with the establishment of the UK-US Mutual Defence Agreement, which finally enabled the sharing of nuclear power research and development between the United States and the United Nations. The special relationship flourished after Thatcher and Reagan took over the office

and started to develop a relationship based on not only political, strategic, and economic level, but also on the level of their personal affection.

Finally, the subsequent chapter examines the Anglo-American relationship during the 21st century. It attempts to answer the question of whether the special relationship was still present during the most important events and challenges that the United States and Great Britain experienced. The 9/11 terrorist attack in the United States brought the nations together after some times of strained relationship. The special relationship became greatly discussed and perceived negatively after Blair decided to blindly follow Bush to the war in Afghanistan and later to Iraq and embroiled Britain in these conflicts. America then developed a new foreign strategy focused on the Asia-Pacific area. While Britain worried about their role in American foreign politics, a few years later it took a courageous and controversial step to exit the European Union, a step known as Brexit. Nevertheless, after this unstable period of Donald Trump's presidency, current President Joe Biden established a well-working and strong relationship and ensured that he would work towards the persistence of the Anglo-American special relationship.

1 EXPLAINING THE TERM SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP

The term special relationship refers to an unordinary and significantly close alliance between nations.¹ This thesis describes the special relationship between America and Great Britain. From a contemporary perspective, this term is well-known and commonly used, but it was not always this way, since America and Britain did not begin their relationship on the best terms. The transition from America being a British colony to becoming the strongest ally is surreal and the relationship had many different phases, whether it was a hostile period in which America had to fight for its independence.² Or the period in which both nations realized the convenience of the relationship and worked towards the success of their alliance during the Second World War and after it. Notably the relationship flourished at the beginning of the Cold War period. But despite all the ups and downs of the so-called special relationship between America and Great Britain, nobody could ever deny the importance of these nations working together during the most important events influencing the whole world.³ Also, the Anglo-American relationship became unusually close based on shared ideology, language, and culture. Moreover, the United States and Great Britain share information among intelligence services which is crucial for their security.⁴

So, what does the term special relationship mean since it can mean something a little bit different to every single person? Many professionals define this term as being close or significant and important to the other party. Others describe the special relationship in terms of quality or positive judgment. But there is no unified definition of the term special relationship.⁵ In America, this term has been used quite often throughout history. The special relationship was acknowledged between America and many other nations, however, most importantly between America and Britain.⁶ But was the relationship ever that strong for it to persist until today?

¹ Ruike Xu, *Alliance Persistence within the Anglo-American Special Relationship* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 4-5.

² B. J. C. McKercher, *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship since 1941* (London: Routledge, 2017), 3.

³ *Ibid*, 6-7.

⁴ Michael Smith, *The Real Special Relationship: The True Story of How the British and US Secret Services Work Together* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2023), 487.

⁵ Ruike, *Alliance Persistence within the Anglo-American Special Relationship*, 4-5.

⁶ *Ibid*, 2.

2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In the beginning, Britain established colonies on American territory and enslaved local inhabitants.⁷ Afterward, America revolted and fought for its independence to have more control over its territory.⁸ After the war America grew economically and that also led to establishing its position.⁹ This period made America more stable and influential, and the first signs of the Anglo-American relationship occurred, even though it was weak and unstable. Nevertheless, Britain was slowly but surely losing its superpower status and America was replacing Britain's position.¹⁰

2.1 Establishing Colonies

The first colony that the English attempted to establish was the colony at Roanoke Island in 1585. However, this colony did not have all the necessary resources to survive and failed.¹¹ Britain had to try to re-establish colonies later, after the year 1600. There were four new attempts to establish a successful colony to make money or spread religion. Colonies formed later followed the steps of the previous, successful colonies.¹²

Colonies had to share the same values, governmental system, and philosophy as the British. These values stemmed from traditional documents such as Magna Carta, the document from 1215, or the later established Bill of Rights from 1689.¹³

After 1689, the British and French commonly clashed over the ownership of the colonies or the status these nations had in Europe. Four preceding wars in 1689, 1697, 1702, and 1739 escalated in the Seven Years' War. This was the first Anglo-French war focused mainly on colonies rather than the status nations had in Europe.¹⁴

In general, the relationship between the British and the American colonies was very unstable.¹⁵ At the beginning of the 18th century, Britain implemented a new policy of "salutary neglect" which was the opposite of the strict British rule that Britain implemented commonly. Salutary neglect was a policy that allowed very little participation and interference in the government of the colonies. They, to some extent, could develop their

⁷ Kathleen Burk, *Old World, New World: Great Britain and America from the Beginning* (New York: Grove Press, 2009), 24.

⁸ Sylvia Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2009), 4.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 7-9.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹² Burk, *Old World, New World: Great Britain and America from the Beginning*, 24.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 92.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 95-98.

¹⁵ H.T Dickinson, *Britain and the American Revolution* (London: Routledge, 2014), 3-4.

political institutions, and specify their rights and liberties. However, that later helped the American colonies detach from Britain and establish their independent nation.¹⁶

2.2 Seven Years' War

Things escalated in 1756 when the Seven Years' War began. This war was also called the French and Indian War or the French War.¹⁷ The Seven Years' War was a conflict in which Great Britain, Prussia, and Hanover fought against Russia, Poland, Sweden, Saxony, France, and Austria. But the battles took place almost all over the world. The Seven Years' War was a conflict that was preceded by other conflicts mainly between the United Kingdom and France and was focused more on colonies and land ownership than any other before.¹⁸ Although Britain left some of its colonies on their own, Americans did not really trust its mother country.¹⁹ This time it was different when Britain decided to implement a new system of paying American soldiers contributing to the war called the Royal Americans.²⁰ Both France and Britain wanted to take control over North America and its resources, mainly because of the trade to build wealth and they realized the importance of the rich Ohio Valley. This led the British to the decision to declare war on France in 1756. Despite the fights in Europe, Britain had to prioritize this war and decided to spend the men and the money to win it. Because of the amount of soldiers Britain had in comparison to the French, they won this war in 1763. It was not only about soldiers but also about the number of weapons and equipment that helped them win. They confirmed their status as a superior mainly in shipping.²¹ All the wars lasting from 1698 to 1763 caused Britain's huge debt to pay for the war spending, therefore leading to more taxation in colonies and later, in connection to that, to the American Revolution.²²

2.3 American Revolution and Independence

2.3.1 The War for American Independence

American colonies were a source of important and valuable goods, such as tobacco or cotton. After the British won the Seven Years' War in 1763, common misunderstandings between

¹⁶ Ibid, 6.

¹⁷ Burk, *Old World, New World: Great Britain and America from the Beginning*, 95.

¹⁸ Ibid, 100.

¹⁹ Ibid, 98.

²⁰ Ibid, 100.

²¹ Ibid, 99-101.

²² Ibid, 101.

Britain and America escalated. It was not just a conflict between Britain and her American colonies, but also it was a conflict between Americans themselves. In terms of the conflict with Britain, the political intentions were questioned.²³ For example, who should own the colonies, and who should govern them? In terms of war between Americans themselves, it was a conflict between the Loyalists and Patriots (also known as rebels).²⁴

A series of events took place to show disagreement with British rule. In 1765 a Stamp Act was passed by the British government,²⁵ used to tax everything with the stamp on it.²⁶ That included all the printed papers, such as newspapers, documents, or cards.²⁷ In protest to the Stamp Act, a well-known slogan “no taxation without representation” was used by Americans, meaning that without American representatives in government, they should not be taxed. That was a crucial step against British taxation.²⁸

Nevertheless, later in 1773 American Patriots attacked three ships carrying tea in the Boston Harbor, an event known as the Boston Tea Party. Since the taxes on tea delivered to the colonies were extremely high, Americans destroyed the tea carried by the ships and threw it into the sea.²⁹ This was an extremely costly incident for the East Indian Company and the British government decided to pass the Intolerable Acts, also called the Coercive Acts in 1774.³⁰ Four laws served as a manual for the colonies to behave according to the British rule and to force them to pay taxes without any rebellions.³¹

After the Boston Tea Party, all ports in Boston were closed until the cost of the tea was paid off to the East Indian Company. Also, the safe shipping on the sea was questioned due to the Boston Tea Party.³² Passing the Intolerable Acts made American colonies very upset, and it was perceived as even more threatening to their freedom.³³

²³ Burk, *Old World, New World: Great Britain and America from the Beginning*, 109.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 109.

²⁵ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 208.

²⁶ Burk, *Old World, New World: Great Britain and America from the Beginning*, 119.

²⁷ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 208.

²⁸ Burk, *Old World, New World: Great Britain and America from the Beginning*, 109.

²⁹ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 65.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 65.

³¹ Gabriel Furnuzachi, “The Intolerable Acts,” (March 2017): 5, DOI: 10.31235/osf.io/wvmkc.

³² Burk, *Old World, New World: Great Britain and America from the Beginning*, 139.

³³ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 65.

2.3.2 America Declared Independence

In 1775 the heated relations between America and Britain resulted in a series of battles.

In 1776 the Declaration of Independence was signed, and America officially declared its independence from Britain.³⁴ In 1778 France, Spain, and the Dutch joined the United States in the war, and together they defeated Britain. The Treaty of Versailles signed in 1783 ended the long-term disagreements that led to the War of Independence between America and Britain. The 13 colonies were considered independent from Britain.³⁵ The U.S. Constitution came into force later in 1787.³⁶ Newly established America needed also a new leader, therefore George Washington became the first elected U.S. president.³⁷

At the turn of the century, Britain got into another battle with their long-term rival, France. The U.S. passed the Neutrality Act to prevent itself from embroiling in this conflict. Fighting was prohibited in American ports. Until that point, the Anglo-American relationship was recovering from a long period of British domination over America. Moreover, this conflict was destroying all the attempts to establish good relations.³⁸ Then, in 1794, the Jay Treaty agreement was signed to create a border between America and Britain, mainly in terms of navy and territory, but also financial terms that were not established by previous events.³⁹

American weak economy made President Washington wonder how to make ties with the great overseas power represented by Britain. Even though America did not want a stable ally, America and Britain were economically on the same page due to their mutual trade cooperation, in which American farmers were dependent on British markets requesting mainly cotton and tobacco.⁴⁰

2.4 Napoleonic Wars and the War of 1812

At the beginning of the 19th century, not long after the last big conflict between Britain and France ended, another significant battle started. America passed a Neutrality Proclamation to not be biased toward any of the nations.⁴¹ Although France helped America during the American Revolution, by signing a Neutrality Proclamation Americans showed a lack of

³⁴ Ibid, 4.

³⁵ Ibid, 228-229.

³⁶ Ibid, 232-233.

³⁷ Ibid, 5.

³⁸ Ibid, 110.

³⁹ Ibid, 142.

⁴⁰ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 5.

⁴¹ Jeff Broadwater, "Madison, Hamilton, and the Neutrality Proclamation of 1793: debating presidential power and foreign affairs," *The Historian* 83, 2 (2021): 172, DOI: 10.1080/00182370.2021.1933703.

gratitude towards the French act.⁴² Washington thought of the Neutrality Proclamation as a duty to stay neutral.⁴³ Moreover, America became independent a while ago and if it stayed neutral, the nation could benefit economically from trade with the fighting countries.⁴⁴ American neutrality was not respected, so steps had to be taken to protect America from the possible impact of the war.⁴⁵ Britain was not thrilled about America's trade with France. Another act threatening Anglo-American relations was the Louisiana Purchase made by Americans in 1803. They purchased Louisiana from Napoleon and America grew significantly in size of its territory.⁴⁶ Later in 1807, the period in which American neutrality was still not respected, the Embargo Act was passed prohibiting any possible trade with other countries. Americans were convinced that their supplies were important especially to Britain and France that it might stop them from fighting.⁴⁷ The American economy became weak due to no trade, and they decided to re-establish trading with other countries but with Britain and France, the so-called Non-Importation Act.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, the French still attempted to embroil Americans into the war and so did the British.⁴⁹

In 1812, American president Madison with the support of Congress declared war on Britain, also called the "Second War of Independence"⁵⁰ emerging as a side effect of the Napoleonic War.⁵¹ American nationalism grew rapidly.⁵² Americans wanted to expand their territory and therefore they decided to expand onto Canada, then owned by the British, but this attempt failed.⁵³ Since the war did not seem to have any outcome, both nations ended up signing the Treaty of Ghent in 1814.⁵⁴ Britain won the battle with Napoleon in 1815.⁵⁵

During this period the Anglo-American relationship became strained and unfriendly because of the attempts to embroil America into the European conflict, while America kept

⁴² Ibid, 181.

⁴³ Broadwater, "Madison, Hamilton, and the Neutrality Proclamation of 1793: debating presidential power and foreign affairs," 176.

⁴⁴ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 170.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 170.

⁴⁶ Piero Gleijeses, "Napoleon, Jefferson, and the Louisiana Purchase," *The International History Review* 39, 2 (2017): 237–255, DOI: <https://doi.org/proxy.k.utb.cz/10.1080/07075332.2016.1196383249>.

⁴⁷ William Chazanof, "The War of 1812," in *Joseph Ellicott and the Holland Land Company: The Opening of Western New York*, Syracuse University Press (1970): 112–113, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv64h6xr.11>.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 114-115.

⁴⁹ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 170.

⁵⁰ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 6.

⁵¹ Ibid, 231.

⁵² Ibid, 6.

⁵³ Ibid, 231.

⁵⁴ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 6.

⁵⁵ Gunter E. Rothenberg, "The Origins Causes, and Extension of the Wars of the French Revolution and Napoleon," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 18, 4 (Spring 1988): 791, <https://doi.org/10.2307/204824>.

resisting. Therefore, President James Monroe figured that the United States should remain neutral. America also feared the possible clash with Europe over the ownership of colonies on American territory. In 1823 Monroe publicly announced that the United States would not interfere in European matters if Europe would not interfere in the matters of the United States. Any act of interference would be perceived as a possible threat to the United States. This announcement was well-known as the Monroe Doctrine.⁵⁶

2.5 American Civil War

The Civil War was a conflict among the American population, namely conflict between the North and the South. Around the 1860s, the South (the Confederacy) was pro-slavery and was using slaves for agricultural purposes – to produce cotton. On the other hand, the highly industrialized North (the Union) wanted to abolish slavery.⁵⁷

In 1861, different attitudes led to the outbreak of the war.⁵⁸ Britain decided to stay neutral because of the resources important to them from the North and South.⁵⁹ After four years of fighting, that is in 1865, the Confederation gave up to the Union. This result was more or less expected since the Union had more resources than the Confederation.⁶⁰ After the Civil War, the relationship with Britain entered a better period.⁶¹ America gained Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Philippines, and Guam after they defeated Spain in the Spanish-American War in 1898,⁶² which was a conflict that started after rebellions in Cuba because of American sugar taxation, also known as the American Tariff Act.⁶³ This led to American expansion in terms of naval power.⁶⁴ Moreover, due to the spread of industrialization from the North, America experienced immigration and urbanization, which led to the American economic boom and its growing power.⁶⁵

⁵⁶ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 167.

⁵⁷ Susan-Mary Grant, *The War for a Nation: The American Civil War* (London: Routledge, 2014), 5.

⁵⁸ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 35.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 7.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 35.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 7.

⁶² McKercher, *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship since 1941*, 15.

⁶³ Burk, *Old World, New World: Great Britain and America from the Beginning*, 411.

⁶⁴ McKercher, *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship since 1941*, 15.

⁶⁵ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 8.

3 ANGLO-AMERICAN RELATIONSHIP IN THE 20TH CENTURY

When the First World War emerged at the beginning of the century, Britain was alone in the war without American support. Americans decided to give Britain a hand during the financial crisis and later joined the war. In the post-war era, Britain owed a huge amount of money to America, which caused the relationship to strain.⁶⁶

That changed during the Second World War. The relationship was improving mainly on a political and military level. America was supporting Britain, while still not participating in the war. However, if America and Britain ever wanted to avert the German and Japanese threat, they had to join the “Big Three” alliance with the Soviet Union.⁶⁷

Despite their alliance, the Soviet Union became their biggest enemy during the Cold War era. A series of wars and conflicts, mutual nuclear power sharing, and political comprehension made Anglo-American cooperation extremely powerful.⁶⁸

3.1 The First World War

After many years of conflicts, it seemed that both nations finally entered a more peaceful phase.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, not only Britain and America but also the whole Europe experienced this calmer period. It was the British victory against France in 1815 that started a period of relative peace known as Pax Britannica. Britain’s huge naval power permitted Britain to establish an order in the European world. The purpose of Pax Britannica was to shield legal and humane trade while banning piracy, slave trade, or other unethical practices.⁷⁰ This era lasted until the beginning of the First World War in 1914.⁷¹ This war was ignited by a series of events. The main event was the murder of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, which caused a huge European conflict to emerge.⁷² European nations gradually formed two big alliances. On one hand, Britain together with France and Russia formed the Allies. On the other hand, Germany together with Austria-Hungary formed Central Powers. This conflict spread also to Asia and Africa.⁷³ America, under the leadership of Woodrow Wilson, decided to remain neutral. One of the reasons was the large number of German Americans who did not support

⁶⁶ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 241-243.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 244-246.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 85-86.

⁶⁹ McKercher, *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship since 1941*, 15.

⁷⁰ Barry Gough, *Pax Britannica: Ruling the Waves and Keeping the Peace before the Armageddon* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), Preface- para. 3.

⁷¹ McKercher, *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship since 1941*, 15.

⁷² David E. Kaiser, “Germany and the Origins of the First World War,” *The Journal of Modern History* 55, 3 (September 1983): 466, <https://doi.org/10.1086/242517>.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 16.

the intervention of Germany. America ensured well-working relations with the fighting nations based on the established trade.⁷⁴

The war continued, and Britain realized the importance of a strong ally. The army needed support and America, in the role of a forming superpower, seemed to be a good option to ask for help.⁷⁵ Britain gradually got into a financial crisis due to supplying the British army and the extra expenses connected to that. The economic crisis in Britain together with Britain's attempts to embroil America into the war caused tensions between America and Britain once again.⁷⁶

America resisted getting involved in the war until the discovery of the Zimmerman telegram, which led to the decision to declare war on Germany in 1917. In 1918 the Allied powers won the war after Germany surrendered.⁷⁷ To formally end the war, the Versailles Treaty was signed, and Germany was forced to pay for its behavior during the war.⁷⁸

After the First World War, Britain owed a large amount of money to America which was not adding to the already weakened relationship. Both nations were trying to establish a superpower status and were expanding.⁷⁹ Their relationship started improving with the signing of a Trade Agreement in 1938. This agreement should serve for the establishment of strong Anglo-American relations preventing the threat that Germany and Japan represented.⁸⁰

3.2 The Second World War

The Second World War became a threshold for starting a valid and powerful Anglo-American cooperation. It was based on the ties of two important politicians from both nations, namely Winston Churchill from Britain and Franklin Delano Roosevelt from America.⁸¹

In 1939 Britain declared war on Germany, which was caused by Germany attacking Poland and then rejecting to leave the attacked country.⁸² The first stage of the conflict was known as the Phony War. During this stage, America was not participating in the war, however, it was supporting Britain. American non-involvement and support of Britain

⁷⁴ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 10.

⁷⁵ Burk, *Old World, New World: Great Britain and America from the Beginning*, 437.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 439.

⁷⁷ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 243.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 229.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 11-12.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 13.

⁸¹ McKercher, *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship since 1941*, 23.

⁸² Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 244.

seemed to be a safer option since Britain was already fighting and America did not have to participate itself.⁸³ However, later America wanted to prevent itself from getting involved in the conflict mainly between European nations, and passed a couple of Neutrality Acts between the 1930s and 1940s.⁸⁴ These acts ensured that America could not provide any war material to the fighting nations.⁸⁵ The change came between 1939 and 1941 when the Cash-and-Carry program and Lend-Lease program were implemented. Cash-and-carry was a program that used American harbors for trading with fighting nations in exchange for money, however, the nations had to transport the goods themselves. This was a disadvantage for Germany since they were not as capable on the sea as other nations.⁸⁶ Lend-Lease was a program allowing the Allied nations to obtain war material from America while America could remain neutral.⁸⁷

Prime Minister Churchill asked President Roosevelt for a loan that would help Britain's poor financial situation. Roosevelt decided to help Britain by accepting the British offer.⁸⁸ Around 50 older American destroyers were provided to Britain in exchange for a 99-year lease of the British land⁸⁹ that would be used for American naval and air bases.⁹⁰

In 1941 Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. America declared war on Japan and after that, Italy and Germany also declared the war on America. That was the breaking point for America to enter the war.⁹¹ America and Britain also formed the "Big Three" alliance together with the Soviet Union.⁹² The world war ended after Americans bombarded Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.⁹³

America and Britain were fighting side by side which helped to form a strong relationship and close partnership on many different levels, for example, military or political.⁹⁴ America became more confident and slowly but surely was outrunning Britain and taking over Britain's superpower status.⁹⁵

⁸³ McKercher, *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship since 1941*, 25.

⁸⁴ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 244.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 172.

⁸⁶ McKercher, *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship since 1941*, 24-25.

⁸⁷ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 154.

⁸⁸ McKercher, *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship since 1941*, 25-26.

⁸⁹ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 93.

⁹⁰ McKercher, *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship since 1941*, 26.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁹² Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 246.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁹⁴ McKercher, *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship since 1941*, 30.

⁹⁵ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 15.

3.2.1 Post-War Situation

Right after the end of the Second World War, Britain was losing its status as a superpower and America was taking over. The war and post-war era were very difficult to manage financially, especially for the British. This fact was also securing America's new role.⁹⁶

In 1946, a year after the end of the war, American Congress agreed on the fact that the research and development of nuclear weapons would not be shared with other nations. The same went for Britain, America's ally in the process of development of nuclear weapons during the Second World War. This newly passed act was called the McMahon Act.⁹⁷

3.3 Cold War

The "Big Three" alliance, existing during the Second World War and consisting of America, Britain, and the Soviet Union, broke after the end of the war. It was almost inevitable for the Russians and Americans to clash at some point since they had too much in common. They were two superpowers with resources and a big population.⁹⁸ Both nations were also very ideologically focused, although they strongly opposed each other's ideology. That was the main reason for the outbreak of the Cold War.⁹⁹ The Soviet Union was now perceived as a big threat to the Americans together with the British as the main American ally.¹⁰⁰ The Anglo-American relationships had to grow in power to protect themselves against the threat that the Soviet Union represented.¹⁰¹

In 1946, the UKUSA agreement was formed.¹⁰² This agreement was based on sharing intelligence or men, furthermore, cooperating on the development of systems between the United States and Great Britain, together with other nations that are members of the Commonwealth.¹⁰³

In 1947, President Truman decided to make an important step in American foreign policy known as the Truman Doctrine. The doctrine was revolving around the nations under the threat of authoritarianism. America would provide financial and economic help to these nations. At this point, the main focus was on Greece and Turkey¹⁰⁴ since Britain could no

⁹⁶ Ibid, 15-16.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 165.

⁹⁸ Michelle Getchell, *The Cuban Missile Crisis and the Cold War: A Short History with Documents* (Indianapolis; Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2018), 5.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 5-6.

¹⁰⁰ McKercher, *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship since 1941*, 41.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 41.

¹⁰² Xu, *Alliance Persistence within the Anglo-American Special Relationship*, 7.

¹⁰³ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 224.

¹⁰⁴ Burk, *Old World, New World: Great Britain and America from the Beginning*, 580.

longer provide a shield against the communistic Soviet Union and asked America to take responsibility for the protection of these nations.¹⁰⁵ However, other nations also needed the support of America, such as France or Italy.¹⁰⁶ Taking this step, America declared a Cold War on the communistic Soviet Union.¹⁰⁷ This war was mainly a strategic and ideological conflict, intertwined by a lot of significant, as well as dangerous events.¹⁰⁸

In 1948 the Marshall Plan, also known as the European Recovery Plan, was supposed to help the European economy recover with the help of America. Not only sixteen European nations would benefit from this plan, but it would also help Americans because they would be able to establish a strong and sustainable market for the exportation of American goods.¹⁰⁹ This plan was perceived by the Soviet Union as an American attempt to establish good relations with Europe while restraining Soviet influence from spreading in the area.¹¹⁰

Also in 1948, it was the first time that American and British military forces cooperated since the Second World War.¹¹¹ Berlin was blockaded by the Soviet Union and Anglo-American military forces were providing Berlin with vital resources, such as food for about nine months.¹¹²

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization was established in 1949. The preceding events, namely the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, and the Berlin Blockade, helped to create NATO. Besides many founding members of NATO such as Belgium, Canada, France, and Italy, there was also Great Britain and the United States.¹¹³ Many other nations later joined the former nations throughout the years, including Greece and Turkey which were also involved in the Truman Doctrine.¹¹⁴

3.3.1 Korean War

Several wars, which were not fought directly between the conflicting nations, were rather fought through the proxy powers.¹¹⁵ Since the Second World War, the Anglo-American relationship became increasingly stronger, although, there were a series of events threatening

¹⁰⁵ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 221-222.

¹⁰⁶ Burk, *Old World, New World: Great Britain and America from the Beginning*, 580.

¹⁰⁷ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 84.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 85.

¹⁰⁹ Burk, *Old World, New World: Great Britain and America from the Beginning*, 581.

¹¹⁰ Getchell, *The Cuban Missile Crisis and the Cold War: A Short History with Documents*, 11.

¹¹¹ Xu, *Alliance Persistence within the Anglo-American Special Relationship*, 7.

¹¹² Burk, *Old World, New World: Great Britain and America from the Beginning*, 591.

¹¹³ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 175.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, 175.

¹¹⁵ Mc KERcher, *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship since 1941*, 41.

the relationship. The first event was the Korean War that broke out in 1950,¹¹⁶ which was a conflict between Southern and Northern Korea. In June of 1950, North Korea decided to attack South Korea. The division was primarily based on different attitudes in terms of political ideology.¹¹⁷ The northern part of Korea was pro-communist and the Southern part, on the other hand, was anti-communist.¹¹⁸ Because of the Korean War, the Cold War became not only a European but also an Asian conflict.¹¹⁹

America, with the influence of the United Nations, quickly responded with military support.¹²⁰ Despite Britain's worries, British troops were sent to Korea as well.¹²¹ This specifically Asian conflict became extremely dangerous for the Anglo-American relationship. Americans viewed the war as imminent and the British were afraid to be dragged into another huge conflict that would eventually harm them. Moreover, the British were afraid of the potential use of atomic weapons by Americans.¹²² By that point, Britain started to question whether their biggest concern was the Soviet Union or current American behavior.¹²³ Atlee, the Prime minister of Great Britain, flew to Washington to discuss these concerns with Harry Truman, the U.S. President at that time.¹²⁴ Even though things became significantly better on a political level, anti-Americanism and distrust towards America spread among the British population and occurred commonly.¹²⁵

Later, China became involved in the war as well after General of the United States MacArthur encouraged them to do so. In 1951, approximately a year after the beginning of the war, North Korea took over Seoul, which was the capital of its southern enemy. Later that year, nations started to discuss a peaceful solution. United Nations, China, and North Korea signed an agreement in 1953, which ended the war.¹²⁶

3.3.2 Suez Crisis

Not only was the Anglo-American relationship affected by the Korean War, but also by another dangerous event that was ahead. However, it was probably one of the most important

¹¹⁶ Xu, *Alliance Persistence within the Anglo-American Special Relationship*, 7.

¹¹⁷ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 149.

¹¹⁸ McKercher, *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship since 1941*, 53.

¹¹⁹ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 149.

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, 149.

¹²¹ *Ibid*, 149.

¹²² Burk, *Old World, New World: Great Britain and America from the Beginning*, 594.

¹²³ *Ibid*, 595-596.

¹²⁴ Xu, *Alliance Persistence within the Anglo-American Special Relationship*, 7.

¹²⁵ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 150.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, 150.

events in the British history¹²⁷ because it changed Britain's status and influence.¹²⁸ The crisis was caused mainly by the Egyptian step to nationalize the Suez Canal Company, whose main shareholders were divided between Britain and France.¹²⁹ Moreover, Nasser wanted to detach from Europe, primarily from the remaining signs of British colonialism, and the British troops were slowly but surely leaving the country.¹³⁰ The act of nationalization was based on the decision of Britain and America not to finance the Aswan dam.¹³¹ The Suez Canal was significant for the British economy and losing possession of it would break British trading relations. That led to the decision to offer partial ownership of the Suez Canal Company to Nasser, the Egyptian leader, however, he refused the proposal.¹³²

Three nations, specifically Britain, Israel, and France, decided to create an alliance to defeat Egypt.¹³³ The nations perceived Egypt as growing in power in the Arab world.¹³⁴ First, Israel attacked Egypt by itself, and then Britain and France joined the fight. Britain and France used almost all the forces possible to win the war, including bombarding Egypt.¹³⁵ There were two things vital for the British economy, and that was the currency and the oil supplies. Egyptians were aware of this fact and decided to take advantage of it, they closed the canal and stopped the oil supplies.¹³⁶

By acting without consent, or at least a consultation with America, strong allies Israel and Britain were not that trustworthy anymore to the newly elected President Eisenhower. America perceived the British behavior as dangerous and damaging¹³⁷ and gave the British an ultimatum. Britain either stopped fighting or America would devalue another important thing for the British except for the oil, and that was the British pound.¹³⁸ If they chose to fight, Britain would get no financial support from America, which would be detrimental to the British economy. Under the threat of financial disaster for the British, they decided to withdraw their soldiers from Suez.¹³⁹

¹²⁷ Xu, *Alliance Persistence within the Anglo-American Special Relationship*, 8.

¹²⁸ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 213.

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, 212.

¹³⁰ Warren Bass, "The Suez War, 1956," in *A Surprise Out of Zion?: Case Studies in Israel's Decisions on Whether to Alert the United States to Preemptive and Preventive Strikes, from Suez to the Syrian Nuclear Reactor*, RAND Corporation, (2015): 6-7, DOI: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/j.ctt19w73b6.7>.

¹³¹ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 212.

¹³² *Ibid*, 212.

¹³³ *Ibid*, 213.

¹³⁴ McKercher, *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship since 1941*, 62.

¹³⁵ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 213.

¹³⁶ Burk, *Old World, New World: Great Britain and America from the Beginning*, 601.

¹³⁷ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 213.

¹³⁸ Burk, *Old World, New World: Great Britain and America from the Beginning*, 601.

¹³⁹ *Ibid*, 602.

The Suez Crisis was a representation of what the British situation looked like back then. They could not act without American consent and cooperation.¹⁴⁰ That was proved later around the 1960s when America provided support for the unstable British currency during the crisis.¹⁴¹

3.3.3 UK-US Mutual Defense Agreement

Since 1946, by passing the McMahon Act,¹⁴² also known as the Atomic Energy Act,¹⁴³ America restricted sharing of nuclear power research and development.¹⁴⁴ Even though the British had the knowledge that sped up the whole development of nuclear weapons, Americans were slowly but surely restricting the process to others, until they decided that Britain would be restricted as well.¹⁴⁵ After this decision, the British decided to build a bomb by themselves. Since Britain lost its superpower status, obtaining the nuclear power status became a priority.¹⁴⁶ Another reason to build a bomb was to protect Britain against possible attack, not only by the Soviet Union but also by other nations, surprisingly considering the Americans. British perceived Americans as traitors for not sharing the nuclear power research. Moreover, the British thought that if they did not have their bomb, America would consider them a weak nation and would not pay that much attention to them. Later Britain, the Soviet Union, and America, all tested their first nuclear weapons.¹⁴⁷

Despite many levels of cooperation and support between America and Britain throughout different events, nuclear power was still a matter that they would not cooperate on. Things changed later in 1958.¹⁴⁸ It seemed that Britain was ahead of America in terms of nuclear power development and that led Eisenhower and Macmillan to agree on cooperation once again. In 1958 Britain and America signed a Mutual Defense Agreement, which included information exchange, as well as the sharing of material. On the other hand, it also meant that Britain would become more dependent on American resources.¹⁴⁹ However, sharing nuclear development shifted the relationship onto another level and ensured mutual trust and a very tight bond.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 602.

¹⁴¹ Steve Marsh, and Alan P. Dobson, *Anglo-American Relations: Contemporary Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2013), 135.

¹⁴² Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 165.

¹⁴³ Burk, *Old World, New World: Great Britain and America from the Beginning*, 603.

¹⁴⁴ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 165.

¹⁴⁵ Burk, *Old World, New World: Great Britain and America from the Beginning*, 602-603.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid 602.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, 603-604.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, 602.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, 606.

Another part of the agreement clarifies conditions under which the two nations could exchange information and material.¹⁵⁰ Britain and America agreed to develop Skybolt missiles, capable of defeating Russian missiles. This operation was canceled later in 1962.¹⁵¹ In 1963 Polaris Sales Agreement was in process because of Britain's fear of American nuclear power.¹⁵² The 'dual key' technology was developed, which would ensure that both nations would have to agree before firing the missiles. Britain wanted its own nuclear weapon, therefore America decided to sell Polaris to Britain to keep the relationship stable.¹⁵³

3.3.4 Cuban Missile Crisis

The cooperation of Britain and America was much closer and the whole relationship was getting stronger, also thanks to the Mutual Defense Agreement. However, the approaching crisis in Cuba, happening in 1962, required a very close alliance and trust among nations.¹⁵⁴

America gained Cuba during the Spanish-American War of 1898 and has had military control over Cuba since then.¹⁵⁵ In 1902, America decided to free Cuba from its domination and establish diplomatic relations with them.¹⁵⁶ Later, starting around the 1940s, Cuban military officer and politician Batista took over and started cooperating more closely with Americans. America was thriving economically because of the illegal activities and corruption in Cuba, all organized by Batista.¹⁵⁷

However, things changed during the Cuban Revolution in 1959, when Cubans overthrew Batista from power and replaced him with Fidel Castro, who was the leader of the whole rebellion.¹⁵⁸ The reorganization of the government required new alliances, so Cuba decided to cut ties with America and create a new alliance with America's enemy, the Soviet Union.¹⁵⁹ Americans decided to place an embargo on Cuba, but that decision did not meet with positive feedback from Britain since the British were highly dependent on overseas trade.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁰ Xu, *Alliance Persistence within the Anglo-American Special Relationship*, 124.

¹⁵¹ McKercher, *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship since 1941*, 77.

¹⁵² Xu, *Alliance Persistence within the Anglo-American Special Relationship*, 125.

¹⁵³ McKercher, *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship since 1941*, 77.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁵⁵ Getchell, *The Cuban Missile Crisis and the Cold War: A Short History with Documents*, 2.

¹⁵⁶ Dalia Antonia Muller, *Cuban Émigrés and Independence in the Nineteenth-Century Gulf World* (UNC Press Books, 2017), 1.

¹⁵⁷ Getchell, *The Cuban Missile Crisis and the Cold War: A Short History with Documents*, 1-2.

¹⁵⁸ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 89.

¹⁵⁹ Getchell, *The Cuban Missile Crisis and the Cold War: A Short History with Documents*, 4.

¹⁶⁰ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 89.

Despite disagreements about the Cuban situation, they had to react to the news from the CIA. The missile site was spotted on Cuban territory and the Anglo-American alliance had to discuss what the next step should be.¹⁶¹ Missiles in Cuba seemed to be a Soviet response to American missiles in Turkey.¹⁶² British Prime Minister Macmillan and American President Kennedy were discussing the whole situation and became close during the crisis. Disagreements appeared over how to handle the situation. Even though nuclear war was around the corner between America and the Soviet Union, Britain preferred a diplomatic solution.¹⁶³

Finally, after a couple of days, American and Soviet leaders, Kennedy, and Khrushchev, agreed on the fact that the consequences of the nuclear war would be detrimental. They decided to remove their nuclear bases in both nations, in Turkey, and Cuba. The mutual agreement probably saved the whole world from the nuclear crisis and things were relatively peacefully resolved.¹⁶⁴

3.3.5 Anglo-American Relationship Under Thatcher and Reagan

After many years of crises and finding mutual trust repeatedly, Anglo-American relations seemed to become very intimate on many levels. The relationship remained solid, despite many disagreements and issues (for example, Britain suffered from sterling crises between 1964 and 1967 under Wilson's government).¹⁶⁵ The nations realized that even a close ally would not automatically agree with everything that was proposed. For example, when Americans were refused by Britain to help battle the Soviets in Vietnam. The British refused to send soldiers to help fighting with the Americans already involved in the war. But at least they offered to supply American soldiers with weapons and intelligence.¹⁶⁶

The Yom Kippur War of 1973¹⁶⁷ caused an oil shortage and high prices of fuels, which led to another economic crisis in Britain. The implementation of the "three-day week" hindered productivity and the national economy, too. Gradually, Britain became overwhelmed by the situation, and the consequences, such as stagflation, a slow economy, or unemployment, were extremely hard to manage.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶¹ Getchell, *The Cuban Missile Crisis and the Cold War: A Short History with Documents*, 4.

¹⁶² James A. Nathan, *The Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 15.

¹⁶³ Burk, *Old World, New World: Great Britain and America from the Beginning*, 608.

¹⁶⁴ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 91.

¹⁶⁵ Xu, *Alliance Persistence within the Anglo-American Special Relationship*, 10.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁶⁷ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 45.

¹⁶⁸ McKercher, *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship since 1941*, 87.

Around the 1980s' the Anglo-American relationship was in its remarkable period because of the unordinary relationship between British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and American President Ronald Reagan. Their relationship was sometimes referred to as "political soulmates."¹⁶⁹ They shared the same values and ideologies, such as less state intervention.¹⁷⁰

The year 1979 became significant for Britain because the first female Prime Minister. That woman was Margaret Thatcher, a Conservative Party member.¹⁷¹ She became a very controversial but also very important figure during her career mainly during the Cold War. She believed in a long-term relationship with America and the intimacy and persistence of this relationship. Ever since she delivered her famous speech, which centered on Russian political ideology, she was called an 'Iron Lady'.¹⁷² Moreover, she supported individualism and privatization and less intervention from the state.¹⁷³ Her government also managed to lower inflation and helped to make changes across the labor market.¹⁷⁴ The worsened economic situation of both nations and their attitudes toward its rejuvenation bonded them.¹⁷⁵

During the elections in 1981, Ronald Reagan became the new American President.¹⁷⁶ He was a member of the Republican Party.¹⁷⁷ After Thatcher took important steps in terms of the British economy's prosperity, he decided to take similar steps in America. However, America was already much more managed. By the 1990s' both nations had similar opportunities and conditions in terms of economy and market.¹⁷⁸

During the Thatcher and Reagan period, the Anglo-American relationship was at its best.¹⁷⁹ Their similar ideology, possible mutual affection, and respect contributed to a closely working relationship.¹⁸⁰ They both supported the idea of anti-communism, Thatcher showed her attitude when she delivered the 'Iron Lady' speech.¹⁸¹ Reagan started his presidential career by calling the Soviet Union an "evil nation."¹⁸² These were acts that publicly pointed out a mutual commitment that America and Britain had.

¹⁶⁹ Burk, *Old World, New World: Great Britain and America from the Beginning*, 630.

¹⁷⁰ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 188.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid*, 215.

¹⁷² McKercher, *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship since 1941*, 92.

¹⁷³ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 215.

¹⁷⁴ Marsh and Dobson, *Anglo-American Relations: Contemporary Perspectives*, 141.

¹⁷⁵ McKercher, *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship since 1941*, 93-94.

¹⁷⁶ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 188.

¹⁷⁷ Burk, *Old World, New World: Great Britain and America from the Beginning*, 630.

¹⁷⁸ Marsh and Dobson, *Anglo-American Relations: Contemporary Perspectives*, 141.

¹⁷⁹ Xu, *Alliance Persistence within the Anglo-American Special Relationship*, 11.

¹⁸⁰ Burk, *Old World, New World: Great Britain and America from the Beginning*, 630.

¹⁸¹ McKercher, *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship since 1941*, 92.

¹⁸² Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 189.

3.3.6 Falklands War

The strength of the Anglo-American relationship was tested in 1982 when Britain was entangled in the conflict with Argentina, specifically the Falklands War.¹⁸³ The war started over the Falkland Islands that the British occupied since 1832, but since the islands were a part of Argentinian territory,¹⁸⁴ they protested about British domination.¹⁸⁵ Also, the Argentines still felt like a British colony, which was disliked by many of them.¹⁸⁶ There were speculations over oil sources in Argentina important for Britain and that this might have been a possible reason for them to keep it.¹⁸⁷ America attempted to stay in a neutral position. Moreover, America was concerned that two of its allies wanted to start a war.¹⁸⁸ On one hand, they had a strong and stable ally, the British. On the other hand, they had ties with Argentina which was perceived as an influential nation in the battle against the Soviet Union.¹⁸⁹ Helping the British would definitely cut off Argentina as one of the American important allies. Thatcher refused to give up on the Falkland Islands and her government prepared ships with troops to take over the island and was determined to reach this goal. Later, America decided to support the British, mainly with military and intelligence sources and ended its neutrality.¹⁹⁰ Almost three months later since the war broke out Argentina surrendered, and the Falkland Islands remained under British rule.¹⁹¹ Thatcher gained a huge number of supporters because she decided to take a very important step for the sake of her nation.¹⁹²

3.3.7 American Invasion of Grenada

A year later after the Falklands War, in which America decided to give up on its ally in Argentina, Britain was caught by surprise. In October 1983 Britain was informed about the attack planned by Americans on the island of Grenada in the Caribbean.¹⁹³ Grenada used to be under British rule but since 1974 was an independent nation.¹⁹⁴

¹⁸³ McKercher, *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship since 1941*, 97.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 97.

¹⁸⁵ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 105.

¹⁸⁶ David C. Gompert, Hans Binnendijk, and Bonny Lin, "Argentina's Invasion of the Falklands (Malvinas), 1982," in *Blinders, Blunders, and Wars: What America and China Can Learn*, RAND Corporation (2014): 151, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/j.ctt1287m9t.20>.

¹⁸⁷ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 105.

¹⁸⁸ Burk, *Old World, New World: Great Britain and America from the Beginning*, 633.

¹⁸⁹ Gompert, Binnendijk, and Lin, "Argentina's Invasion of the Falklands (Malvinas), 1982," 158.

¹⁹⁰ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 106.

¹⁹¹ Burk, *Old World, New World: Great Britain and America from the Beginning*, 637.

¹⁹² Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 106.

¹⁹³ McKercher, *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship since 1941*, 101-102.

¹⁹⁴ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 118.

America was concerned about the spread of communism in the Caribbean and about the possibility of Grenada creating an alliance together with Cuba and the Soviet Union. Also, there were many American students on the island of Grenada and America did not want them to become hostages.¹⁹⁵ Under Cuban influence, Grenada was able to build a new airport that was reported to be for tourism purposes. However, Americans perceived this action as a possible intrusion of the Soviet influence into the area.¹⁹⁶

The main issue was that Grenada, although it was no longer dependent on Britain, was still a member of the Commonwealth. Therefore, the British felt surprised and fooled by the Americans, since they were not informed about the invasion in advance.¹⁹⁷ Despite this fact America, together with the military help of smaller islands, invaded Grenada. Nevertheless, not long after the start of the invasion, America was forced to leave.¹⁹⁸

After this event, the relationship entered an uneasy period.¹⁹⁹ Americans expected British support because of their help during the Falklands War. However, the British preferred a diplomatic solution which they believed was possible.²⁰⁰ Steps taken by America made Britain wonder whether Anglo-American ties were still that reliable.²⁰¹

3.3.8 Strategic Defense Initiative

Since nuclear weapons entered the world, they were feared to cause a nuclear world war. Ronald Reagan, the U.S. President, decided to protect his country from the possible threat of missiles by implementing the Strategic Defense Initiative, the so-called Star Wars program.²⁰² This research focused on the development of a laser technology in space that would be able to shoot down the dangerous missile before reaching its target.²⁰³

Britain feared that this step would cause Americans to become a nuclear superpower, which was Britain's aim, and that Britain would not be a useful ally to cooperate with anymore. However, America did not agree with this opinion and claimed that they were not trying to use the Strategic Defense Initiative to gain nuclear power status.²⁰⁴ The opinions of both nations differed. The European countries, including Great Britain, feared that Reagan

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, 118.

¹⁹⁶ McKercher, *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship since 1941*, 102.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, 102.

¹⁹⁸ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 119.

¹⁹⁹ Xu, *Alliance Persistence within the Anglo-American Special Relationship*, 11.

²⁰⁰ Ibid, 119.

²⁰¹ McKercher, *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship since 1941*, 102.

²⁰² Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 209.

²⁰³ Craig Snyder, *The Strategic Defense Debate* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 4.

²⁰⁴ McKercher, *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship since 1941*, 103.

might consider using nuclear forces against European nations.²⁰⁵ However, Thatcher then publicly expressed her support for the Strategic Defense Initiative project, and Britain joined the project in 1985.²⁰⁶ By taking the step to support the project, Britain showed Russia that the Anglo-American relationship still exists, and it is powerful and capable of fighting them. Nevertheless, the project was canceled despite the huge amount of money spent on it.²⁰⁷

In the meantime, America started negotiations with the Soviet Union about the withdrawal of nuclear weapons. Russia hesitated to agree on the elimination of nuclear weapons for a long time.²⁰⁸ Nevertheless, they finally reached a consensus, and they agreed on the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty of 1987. America had to withdraw nuclear weapons from Europe, including Great Britain's territory.²⁰⁹

3.3.9 The First Gulf War

In 1989 Ronald Reagan was replaced by George Bush. During his presidency, Anglo-American relations lacked a sense of partnership.²¹⁰ Bush publicly admitted Germany to be one of America's closest allies and he did not seem to respect the long-term relationship with Britain.²¹¹ Nonetheless, they had to work together to avert a possible threat that might emerge from a conflict between Iraq and Kuwait.

Iraq became an independent nation in 1932 and ever since then wanted to take over Kuwait. Kuwait became independent later in 1961 with a huge natural harbor and oil sources in which Iraq was interested.²¹² If Iraq was able to possess Kuwait's oil sources, it would become a major oil possessor in the world. Iraq had many reasons to invade Kuwait, and that was exactly what they did.²¹³

In 1990 Iraq invaded Kuwait. Bush had a meeting with Thatcher and besides other important things, they had to tackle how to resolve and react to the conflict. Since Britain had ties to the Gulf, Thatcher thought that military action might work under these circumstances.²¹⁴ She insisted on placing an embargo on Iraq to stop Iraq's oil trade.²¹⁵

²⁰⁵ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 209.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 209.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 210.

²⁰⁸ McKercher, *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship since 1941*, 104.

²⁰⁹ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 22.

²¹⁰ McKercher, *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship since 1941*, 108-109.

²¹¹ Burk, *Old World, New World: Great Britain and America from the Beginning*, 638.

²¹² *Ibid*, 638.

²¹³ *Ibid*, 638-639.

²¹⁴ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 121.

²¹⁵ Burk, *Old World, New World: Great Britain and America from the Beginning*, 639.

After the discussion, America and Britain decided that sanctioning would not work and decided to send more military forces to Kuwait.²¹⁶ American and British society both supported the opinion that Kuwait was worth the war. Since Iraq had a very strong military base, it was not an easy task to defeat them. In 1991 Iraq was invaded by aircraft, followed by a ground attack. Nevertheless, Bush decided to end the war also based on the opinion of public that disliked the way aircraft was used during the war.²¹⁷

America became less dependent on Britain since Americans were able to produce high-quality missiles and their political activity in international affairs increased. However, the long-term connections with Britain and well-handled cooperation during crises were culturally and politically grounded in America.²¹⁸ So, the question emerged, would the so-called Anglo-American special relationship persevere?

3.4 Post-Cold War Era

The long-lasting Cold War finally reached an end in 1989. It was not only one event that ended this conflict, but it was a series of events lasting from 1989 to 1991. After Bush took over the office in 1989, Thatcher immediately established well-working relations with the new American President despite their different perception of the domestic economy.²¹⁹ However, they were on the same page in terms of foreign policy and they agreed that security is still a priority.²²⁰ Nevertheless, the relationship was not as close as with Reagan and America continued to cooperate also with other nations besides Britain.²²¹

In the post-Cold War era, the United States and Great Britain still shared the same values such as democracy or global and national security. The term special relationship was still common, however, both nations started cooperating more closely with other nations and organizations such as NATO. At this point, the relationship was no longer a unique Anglo-American cooperation, but other factors and nations started to play a significant role. Nevertheless, the U.S. became a sole superpower with military power, a stable economy, and cultural and political influence.²²² Despite American superpower status, it needed solid allies and Great Britain was still the most reliable ally America ever had.²²³

²¹⁶ Ibid, 640-641.

²¹⁷ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 121.

²¹⁸ Burk, *Old World, New World: Great Britain and America from the Beginning*, 643.

²¹⁹ McKercher, *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship since 1941*, 108.

²²⁰ Ibid, 108.

²²¹ Burk, *Old World, New World: Great Britain and America from the Beginning*, 638.

²²² Xu, *Alliance Persistence within the Anglo-American Special Relationship*, 59.

²²³ Ibid, 60.

3.4.1 Bosnia Crisis and Kosovo Crisis

Despite many conflicts that the Anglo-American relationship has been through, the Bosnian war and the following war in Kosovo emerged as a big obstacle.²²⁴ Ethnic conflicts, such as in Bosnia and Kosovo, tested the durability of the post-Cold War Anglo-American relationship.

Conflict in Bosnia was preceded by Yugoslavia's break up in 1991, driven by attempts of Serbian leader to make Serbia a dominant power.²²⁵ Moreover, Croatia, Slovenia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina declared independence from Yugoslavia.²²⁶ Britain believed that sending troops to Bosnia would resolve the conflict, while America did not want to enter the war as a leading nation, since it was perceived as a European conflict.²²⁷ That changed when Bush was replaced by Clinton. He came up with a strategic plan of "lift and strike" which did not meet with positive feedback because he did not want to send soldiers that would be fighting on the ground.²²⁸ By that time, the Anglo-American relationship was at a very low point because of disagreements over handling the crisis.²²⁹ The humanitarian crisis in Bosnia worsened, and America took things into its own hands and helped to resolve the conflict. Britain decided to optionally follow American steps since America proved to be capable of successfully resolving the issue.²³⁰

In 1999 Kosovo seemed to be a place of conflict. Prime Minister Tony Blair came up with the idea of implementing the Doctrine of International Community. This doctrine would allow intervention in other nations if there was a threat of genocide.²³¹ While Clinton tried to make the air bombing campaign work, Blair tried to persuade America to send ground troops to Kosovo together with British soldiers.²³² Clinton finally agreed to cooperate with Britain and sent the ground troops. This act was perceived as a big threat to Serbian leader Milošević. Serbs were forced to withdraw the troops from Kosovo, and the Kosovo war approached an end.²³³ It was partly the Anglo-American cooperation and the support of

²²⁴ Xu, *Alliance Persistence within the Anglo-American Special Relationship*, 70.

²²⁵ Burk, *Old World, New World: Great Britain and America from the Beginning*, 645.

²²⁶ *Ibid*, 645.

²²⁷ Xu, *Alliance Persistence within the Anglo-American Special Relationship*, 70.

²²⁸ *Ibid*, 70.

²²⁹ Burk, *Old World, New World: Great Britain and America from the Beginning*, 646.

²³⁰ Xu, *Alliance Persistence within the Anglo-American Special Relationship*, 72.

²³¹ Burk, *Old World, New World: Great Britain and America from the Beginning*, 646.

²³² Xu, *Alliance Persistence within the Anglo-American Special Relationship*, 72-73.

²³³ *Ibid*, 73.

NATO forces that stopped the war.²³⁴ But also, Blair's determination to intervene in the Balkan, even though this idea was not a priority for the previous British politicians.²³⁵

²³⁴ McKercher, *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship since 1941*, 118.

²³⁵ Burk, *Old World, New World: Great Britain and America from the Beginning*, 647.

4 ANGLO-AMERICAN RELATIONSHIP IN THE 21ST CENTURY

After the end of the Cold War, the Anglo-American relationship changed, and the post-Cold War era became a period of different attitudes of both nations. Even though their cultural ties remained, strategically it seemed that they gradually grew apart.²³⁶ The United States had to face the 9/11 terrorist attack in the United States after which Great Britain proved to be America's strongest and most reliable ally.²³⁷ Later, Britain experienced the terrorist attacks in London.²³⁸ The period of concerns and strained relations appeared during the new American foreign strategy known as a pivot to Asia.²³⁹ The Brexit period and its aftermath's biggest question was whether Britain is still a valuable ally and whether the Anglo-American relationship would persist.²⁴⁰

4.1 Anglo-American Relationship under Tony Blair, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush

In 1997 the Labour Party won the election and Tony Blair became the new Prime Minister.²⁴¹ His victory was an outcome of his decision to transform a political agenda and change the program of the Labour Party during the elections. So-called New Labour focused on for example social policy and more importantly on foreign policy. By keeping in touch with other nations, Britain could preserve its important position after the Cold War. Blair intended to prioritize the Anglo-American relationship because together with America, Britain would be more resilient to crises.²⁴² Nations such as China that were newly coming to power could be also harmful to Britain, however, the Anglo-American alliance could protect both nations from Chinese influence.²⁴³ Blair developed a firm relationship with the United States and especially, a closely working relationship with American President Clinton based on shared values.²⁴⁴ The values focused on liberalism, regulation of the nation's spending, and equal treatment of people from different backgrounds. They developed a close connection because they were from the same generation and shared a similar point of view.²⁴⁵ Britain governed

²³⁶ McKercher, *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship since 1941*, 108.

²³⁷ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 24.

²³⁸ Mark Sageman, *The London Bombings* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019), 1.

²³⁹ Clive Blount, "Staying in Step: The US 'Pivot' and UK Strategic Choices," *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 7, 2 (2013): 148, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26270769>.

²⁴⁰ Benjamin Martill, and Uta Staiger, *Brexit and beyond: Rethinking the Futures of Europe* (London: Ucl Press, 2018), 1.

²⁴¹ McKercher, *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship since 1941*, 118.

²⁴² *Ibid*, 118.

²⁴³ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 25-26.

²⁴⁴ McKercher, *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship since 1941*, 60.

²⁴⁵ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 60.

by Tony Blair believed that whenever an issue connected with security or safety occurred, NATO should be in the middle of things and should intervene.²⁴⁶

In 2001 President Clinton was replaced by George W. Bush in the office. He, in contrast to Clinton, was not a supporter of the Anglo-American relationship. Rather, he focused on domestic politics because he had to re-establish order after events such as the 9/11 terrorist attack²⁴⁷ that influenced the whole nation.²⁴⁸

4.2 9/11 and the War on Terror

After another turbulent era in the Anglo-American relationship during the Bosnia and Kosovo crises, an event came that shook Americans and left them marked. In September 2001 America suffered from a terrorist attack by al-Qaeda, based in Afghanistan.²⁴⁹ Three American airplanes were stolen by the terrorists and then two of the airplanes crashed into the World Trade Center located in New York. The other one's target was the Pentagon in Washington.²⁵⁰ The terrorist attack was motivated by several factors. One of them was the presence of American soldiers in Saudi Arabia since it was surrounded by the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. Moreover, different attitudes on democracy, and human rights, especially women's, also contributed to attacking America.²⁵¹

4.2.1 Anglo-American Invasion of Afghanistan

Tony Blair in the name of Britain immediately offered help to wounded America. Not only Tony Blair but also the British and American public, including the British Queen, expressed their concerns and showed sympathy.²⁵² Although America experienced such a terrifying event, the Anglo-American relationship started to flourish again, because Britain proved their commitment to the relationship. Tony Blair and George W. Bush developed a strong and close relationship also due to this hard-time support.²⁵³

Since the terrorist attack was backed by Afghanistan's extremist group Taliban,²⁵⁴ America supported by Britain decided to carry out a military invasion²⁵⁵ and oust the Taliban

²⁴⁶ Xu, *Alliance Persistence within the Anglo-American Special Relationship*, 66.

²⁴⁷ McKercher, *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship since 1941*, 119.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 119.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 119.

²⁵⁰ McKercher, *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship since 1941*, 119.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 119.

²⁵² Burk, *Old World, New World: Great Britain and America from the Beginning*, 647-648.

²⁵³ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 32.

²⁵⁴ Burk, *Old World, New World: Great Britain and America from the Beginning*, 647.

²⁵⁵ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 32.

from power.²⁵⁶ Blair intended Britain to become a crucial ally in the invasion.²⁵⁷ Britain was one of the largest providers of military support for the invasion of Afghanistan, bigger than any other of America's allies.²⁵⁸ However, Britain was not the only one to give a hand to America. Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, and other nations offered to help with the invasion.²⁵⁹ Joined forces started air bombing attacks on the Afghanistan territory.²⁶⁰ The mutual effort of NATO members during the Afghanistan invasion became one of the main reasons for defeating Afghanistan²⁶¹ and overthrowing the Taliban from power.²⁶²

Starting from the period around 2001 to approximately 2010, both Britain and America invested a huge amount of money into military forces and its development.²⁶³

4.3 Invasion of Iraq

After the 9/11 terrorist attack the focus of the "war on terror" now shifted from Afghanistan to Iraq. Following the First Gulf War in 1991, Iraq was obliged to destroy all weapons of mass destruction programs, including nuclear weapons. Around 2002, America together with its allies, including Blair's government, believed that Iraq failed to complete this task.²⁶⁴ The questions over weapons of mass destruction and the desire to overthrow Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein were the main catalysts for the invasion of Iraq.²⁶⁵ Nevertheless, Blair followed Bush even though at the beginning of 2002 researchers found zero evidence about the possession of weapons of mass destruction.²⁶⁶ Moreover, Iraq opposed the assumption of developing such programs.²⁶⁷ America feared the possible attack on their allies like Israel.²⁶⁸ Bush chose to invade Iraq, although the American and British public greatly criticized the decision. It became one of the most disliked and controversial decisions of that time, opposed not only by the public but also by other nations, such as France and Germany. At that point, some critics referred to Blair as "Bush's poodle" since he would listen to Bush's orders.²⁶⁹

²⁵⁶ McKercher, *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship since 1941*, 119.

²⁵⁷ Burk, *Old World, New World: Great Britain and America from the Beginning*, 648.

²⁵⁸ Xu, *Alliance Persistence within the Anglo-American Special Relationship*, 74.

²⁵⁹ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 32.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 32.

²⁶¹ McKercher, *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship since 1941*, 119.

²⁶² Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 32.

²⁶³ Marsh and Dobson, *Anglo-American Relations: Contemporary Perspectives*, 189.

²⁶⁴ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 136.

²⁶⁵ McKercher, *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship since 1941*, 120.

²⁶⁶ Burk, *Old World, New World: Great Britain and America from the Beginning*, 651.

²⁶⁷ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 136.

²⁶⁸ McKercher, *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship since 1941*, 120.

²⁶⁹ Xu, *Alliance Persistence within the Anglo-American Special Relationship*, 76.

Later in 2002, Blair spoke about the possibility of Iraq possessing weapons of mass destruction and that intelligence services found a piece of evidence.²⁷⁰

To legitimize the invasion, Blair requested the United Nations to support it.²⁷¹ United Nations weapons inspectors searched for weapons of mass destruction but found no evidence leading to Iraq having or developing any. That way the United Nations would not cooperate on the Iraq invasion.²⁷² America then decided to take things into its own hands and in 2003 announced that it was about to invade Iraq.²⁷³ Blair was searching for alternative solutions to the situation and was facing an important decision. Either Britain will go into the war led by Americans and that would significantly revitalize the Anglo-American relationship. Or Britain would remain out of the war and listen to the public opinion while standing for international values. However, the Anglo-American relationship was a number one priority for Blair, and he chose to embroil Britain into the war to support the Americans.²⁷⁴

Before the invasion, Bush gave Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein a couple of days to leave the country, or he would face the war himself. After this opportunity, the Anglo-American alliance intervened in Iraq, taking over Baghdad first. A month of fighting later, Bush announced that the main part of the invasion was over and done. Saddam Hussein was later imprisoned for crimes against humanity. In the aftermath of the Iraq war America had to deal with several attacks around occupied Baghdad and so the extra 30,000 American troops were sent to the area. On the other hand, Britain decreased the number of soldiers in Iraq.²⁷⁵ The war and later peace-compelling attempts lasted until 2011 when all troops from both, Britain, and America, withdrew from Iraq and this act was perceived as the end of the Iraq War.²⁷⁶

The whole invasion was extremely judged and protested about by people, but also by other nations.²⁷⁷ In the aftermath of the invasion, the British public called for Blair's resignation, which happened later in 2007²⁷⁸ when Blair was replaced by Gordon Brown. His relationship with Bush was not as close as with Blair, but they developed a working relationship on a political level. However, both politicians focused more on their domestic

²⁷⁰ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 137.

²⁷¹ *Ibid*, 653.

²⁷² Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 137.

²⁷³ Burk, *Old World, New World: Great Britain and America from the Beginning*, 654.

²⁷⁴ Xu, *Alliance Persistence within the Anglo-American Special Relationship*, 76.

²⁷⁵ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 138.

²⁷⁶ Xu, *Alliance Persistence within the Anglo-American Special Relationship*, 78-79.

²⁷⁷ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 139.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 62.

issues.²⁷⁹ Domestic policy became a number one priority since America was still recovering from the 9/11 terrorist attack and the focus was on the subsequent “war on terror” during which many anti-terrorism practices were implemented.²⁸⁰ Britain became a target of a terrorist attack later in 2005 when the bombing of London Underground’s Network Control Center and London Metropolitan Police Headquarters shook the city.²⁸¹ However, this was not the only terrorist attack that happened in Britain in that period, there were five of them. Britain also had to shift the focus mainly on its national issues.²⁸²

Unlike Blair, Brown believed that Britain’s strategy and actions should not be determined by America, but the Anglo-American relationship should remain an important matter.²⁸³ The change came with the new President Barack Obama. The so-called “pivot to Asia” policy was a new foreign policy implemented by Americans. America decided to concentrate on the Asia-Pacific region to protect themselves from Chinese rising power.²⁸⁴

4.4 The Pivot to Asia

While the situation in Iraq was slowly but surely settling, American President Bush was replaced by his successor Barack Obama in 2009. Bush was strongly opposed when he left the office for his actions considering mainly the Iraq War and his means of handling foreign policy. However, Obama, from the beginning of his presidency, tried to highlight the importance of the Anglo-American special relationship. Also, Barack Obama tried to face serious economic problems rather than following the path of Bush to fight the “war on terror”.²⁸⁵ He had to deal with the consequences of the economic recession during 2007-2009 and the biggest economic slump of 2008, which was caused by increased poverty and unemployment based on the economic changes over time.²⁸⁶ Moreover, Russia and China were slowly getting into the position of leading world powers threatening the American superpower status.²⁸⁷ Barack Obama was a big surprise for everybody because ever since he

²⁷⁹ McKercher, *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship since 1941*, 123.

²⁸⁰ Mark Sageman, *The London Bombings* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019), 2.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 1.

²⁸² *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁸³ McKercher, *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship since 1941*, 123.

²⁸⁴ Xu, *Alliance Persistence within the Anglo-American Special Relationship*, 190-191.

²⁸⁵ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 25-26.

²⁸⁶ Howard J. Sherman, *The Rollercoaster Economy: Financial Crisis, Great Recession and the Public Option* (London: Routledge, 2010), 3-5.

²⁸⁷ Ellis, *Historical Dictionary of Anglo-American Relations*, 25-26.

entered the presidential seat, he started to act. He aimed, for example, to boost the economy or reform healthcare.²⁸⁸

While America remained a superpower even under Obama, China was approaching and starting to have a bigger impact on global issues.²⁸⁹ For the sake of the world, America and China had to learn how to respect each other, otherwise, their clash would mean another conflict similar to the Cold War. Nevertheless, they still had to be cautious about each other actions.²⁹⁰

Since Obama took over the office in 2009, he recognized that rising China should be tackled.²⁹¹ Not only China but also India was trying to compete with America and the European Union for its place in terms of trade or commodities, such as metals.²⁹² Shifting focus onto China could strain the Anglo-American relationship because America had much more to offer to the Asia-Pacific region than Britain. Nevertheless, Obama still wanted to remain close to Europe.²⁹³ Britain's relationship with America was crucial for security and a stable economy of Britain.²⁹⁴ But rather than considering the American pivot as a threatening act for the British, it should be perceived as an opportunity to grow and prosper.²⁹⁵

In 2011 America officially announced the pivot to Asia strategy.²⁹⁶ However, the term "pivot" was not very successful for its negative connotations. Later, America replaced this term with the term "rebalance". Americans took the step into the Asia-Pacific region to preserve their dominance worldwide and protect themselves from China's growing power.²⁹⁷

4.5 Brexit

Americans took a crucial step when they decided to shift their focus onto the Asia-Pacific area. Britain did not wait much longer to take its very shocking and significant step. In 2016 in the referendum, almost 52% of the British population stood for Britain's exit from the

²⁸⁸ Steven E. Schier, *Transforming America* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2011), 3-4.

²⁸⁹ Chi Wang, *Obama's Challenge to China* (London: Routledge, 2016), 1.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.

²⁹¹ Dr. Douglas Stuart, "The Pivot to Asia: Can it Serve as the Foundation for American Grand Strategy in the 21st Century," *Monographs, Books, and Publications*, (2016): 1-2, <https://press.armywarcollege.edu/monographs/421>.

²⁹² McKercher, *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship since 1941*, 121.

²⁹³ Xu, *Alliance Persistence within the Anglo-American Special Relationship*, 191.

²⁹⁴ Clive Blount, "Staying in Step: The US 'Pivot' and UK Strategic Choices," *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 7, 2 (2013): 148, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26270769>.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 148.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 137.

²⁹⁷ William T. Tow, and Douglas Stuart, *The New US Strategy towards Asia* (London: Routledge, 2014), 9.

European Union, while the minority of 48% supported Britain to stay in the European Union.²⁹⁸ In 2020 Britain could formally exit the European Union and create new regulations focused on trade or migration.²⁹⁹ One of the legal documents signed was the Trade and Cooperation Agreement, ensuring Britain's relationship with the European Union after Britain left it.³⁰⁰ It was for the first time that a member of the European Union requested to exit the European Union. Since Britain was a leading European Union member, it would restrain the European Union's power and influence.³⁰¹ It also weakened the European Union's political and military power, since Britain kept the balance over other important nations.³⁰² Moreover, the decision to exit the European Union was supported by the so-called "island mentality." Britain is geographically not a part of Europe and people living in Britain developed this type of isolationism and preferred to have their own uninterrupted space. Another reason for the exit from the European Union was globalization and immigration across the European Union. The British population feared the possibility of losing their jobs and being replaced by immigrants coming into their country.³⁰³ British politicians could not agree on how to deal with the referendum. David Cameron, the leader of the Conservative Party, was against the referendum and after most people voted for Brexit, he resigned. He was followed by a few more politicians.³⁰⁴

The economic consequences of Brexit were inevitable and predictable. Britain and its main trading partners would not be as connected and the trade would be difficult to manage.³⁰⁵ Moreover, the British currency depreciated, the economy slowed, and the British economy was not at its highest point.³⁰⁶

²⁹⁸ Benjamin Martill, and Uta Staiger, *Brexit and beyond: Rethinking the Futures of Europe* (London: Ucl Press, 2018), 1.

²⁹⁹ Sophie Loussouarn, *Brexit and Its Aftermath* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2022), 1.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid*, 1.

³⁰¹ Neill Nugent, "Brexit: Yet Another Crisis for the EU." In *Brexit and Beyond: Rethinking the Futures of Europe*, edited by Benjamin Martill and Uta Staiger, UCL Press (2018): 54, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt20krxf8.11>.

³⁰² Yafei Meng, "Analysis of the Basic Causes and Min effects of Britain's Exit from the EU," *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, Atlantis Press (June 2022): 184, DOI: 10.2991/assehr.k.220504.033.

³⁰³ *Ibid*, 183

³⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 184.

³⁰⁵ Thomas Sampson, "Brexit: The Economics of International Disintegration," *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 31, 4 (Fall 2017): 167, DOI: 10.1257/jep.31.4.163.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 168.

4.5.1 Brexit and its Aftermath- Donald Trump, Boris Johnson, and Joe Biden

In 2017, American President Barack Obama was replaced by Donald Trump.³⁰⁷ Later in 2019, Boris Johnson became the new British Prime Minister. New political figures also changed the character of the post-Brexit relationship.³⁰⁸ Despite the fact that the Trump administration was pro-Brexit, he recognized the impact of Brexit on Great Britain's value for the United States, especially in terms of diplomacy and security.³⁰⁹ By developing greater influence in the Asia-Pacific region, the Anglo-American relationship could reignite, since that was a current American foreign strategy.³¹⁰ On one hand, strategically America and Britain grew apart, on the other hand, intelligence sharing and nuclear cooperation did not change at all.³¹¹

However, in 2021, Donald Trump was replaced by Joe Biden. Biden administration and the British government were growing stronger again and the relationship focused on the same values.³¹² Unlike Trump, Biden was more likely to recreate closer connections with its allies. Moreover, cooperation on global issues with Great Britain was a part of Biden's agenda. For example, dealing with climate change or the Covid pandemic. Biden noted that he finds the Anglo-American special relationship important, and he values its persistence.³¹³

³⁰⁷ Nikolas Kouloglou, "The Trump era and counter migrant smuggling: a new geopolitical order on the US–Mexico borders?" *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 48, 2 (2023): 219, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/08263663.2023.2174305219>.

³⁰⁸ Timothy Heppell, and Thomas McMeeking, "The Conservative Party Leadership Transition from Theresa May to Boris Johnson: Party Popularity and Leadership Satisfaction," *Representation* 57, 1 (2021): 62, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00344893.2020.177851262>.

³⁰⁹ Xu Ruike, and Wyn Rees, "America and the special relationship: the impact of the Trump administration on relations with the UK," *British Politics* 17 (2022): 69, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41293-021-00198-0>.

³¹⁰ *Ibid*, 70.

³¹¹ *Ibid*, 72.

³¹² *Ibid*, 72.

³¹³ *Ibid*, 73.

CONCLUSION

The thesis aimed to examine how the special relationship evolved from the period of America being a colony to the 21st century relationship. The emphasis was on the Cold War and post-Cold War era, moreover, how the United States and Great Britain handled the obstacles and challenges mainly in these eras and how both nations perceived current challenges such as the American pivot to Asia or Britain exiting the European Union.

In the beginning, the thesis defined the relationship throughout the colonial era and presented that no relationship existed. The connection between America and Britain seemed to be only on the level of trading goods. Moreover, the common conflicts made America question its position and later led to establishing the new American nation after it won the war for independence.

The subsequent chapter of the thesis explored the origins of a truly unordinary relationship. The period of the First World War and especially the Second World War became essential for the formation of the strong and persisting relationship in the following eras. The post-war financial crises in Britain caused strains in the relationship, however approaching Cold War era made them bond again and fight against the threat of communism spreading all over the world.

The thesis then pointed out some of the significant moments from the Cold War era. As the chapter progressed, the ups and downs of the relationship were perceived throughout this era. The events that the thesis introduced, such as the invasion of Grenada or the Falklands War, were exactly the moments of clash between America and Britain. Both nations had to take a step back during such important moments to stay on good terms and preserve the relationship.

As the thesis progressed, it provided an insight into the current situation, which means the condition of the relationship in the 21st century. The thesis demonstrated the shifting focus from foreign to domestic policy regarding terrorist attacks. Specifically, the 9/11 terrorist attack in America and later terrorist attacks in Britain required taking these steps to recover from such terrifying moments. The thesis also defined the different approaches to the changing world. America's so-called pivot to Asia and Britain's exit from the European Union made nations hesitate, about whether their relationship is still valuable and present. Contemporary perspective proved that the term is still well-known and used.

In conclusion, the United States and Great Britain undoubtedly became very close allies during challenging moments influencing the whole world. Throughout time the mutual

commitment became weaker, and the domestic policies of the nations were prioritized. However, the Anglo-American relationship is still commonly mentioned, and the nations are conscious of the fact that having a credible and strong ally to cooperate with is crucial for them.

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