

# The Changing Nature of Anglo-American Special Relationship and Iran

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## Abstract

The US-UK special relation has always been an attractive and important issue in international relations. The pro-American tendencies of the British and their partnership with American policies as opposed to being willing to more clearly align with the EU and other European countries, have raised various questions in the minds of scholars. Now, considering that David Cameron's Premiership is coming to an end and the next year's election in the UK and also the different challenges which Barack Obama faced in foreign affairs during his presidency along with his declining popularity in the US, this paper is going to find out whether the Anglo-American special relations have already come to an end or not. At the end, the Anglo-American dispute over Iran would be also examined. The Constructivism theory of international relations has been used here to analyze data which have been gathered from library sources and various other internet resources. It is concluded that the Anglo-American special terms which started after the Second World War and were deepened in the Cold War, have lost its strength in one way or another – especially after Bush-Blair era- and is waiting for a new shape with the change of British Premiership.

**Keywords:** Anglo-American, Special Relation, Churchill, Cameron, Obama

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## **Introduction**

Since World War II, Britain and the United States have enjoyed extremely close ties in many areas, forming what has been known as the “special relationship”. This phrase, coined by Winston Churchill, underscores the military, diplomatic and economic cooperation that has existed between them ever since their successful alliance during World War II, the shared cultural and historical identity between Britain and its ex-colony, and on a smaller scale the close personal relationships that existed between some of the leaders of both countries. Despite all this, some critics have seen it as an unequal relationship that has left the UK in a weak situation in relation to the more powerful US (Wright, 2002).

Military collaboration in the international sphere has been the cornerstone of the Anglo-American special relationship. Starting during World War II, with the victory of the Atlantic Alliance over the Axis powers, it continued during the post-war years and the Cold War (Thomson, 1990). Both the US and the UK feared the Soviet threat and the expansion of communism in Europe and beyond, so military ties between the two were strengthened. In 1946 their air forces reached “an agreement to continue their wartime collaboration in staff methods, tactics, equipment and research” (Baylis, 1977: 70). In 1947 a “further agreement was also reached on an extension of co-operation in officer exchanges for training purposes” (Baylis, 1977: 70). Both countries also gained reciprocated access to each other’s military information.

Military ties with the US however, have also led the UK towards

controversial decisions. A main example of this was the 2003 invasion of Iraq. In the period after the 9/11 attacks, the UK was against attacking any country that had no clear connection to them. However, British policy speedily changed in the face of America's determination to invade Iraq in order to overthrow Saddam Hussein's regime. The invasion was carried out despite the lack of certainty over Iraq's possession of weapons of mass destruction, and in its aftermath the view emerged that Tony Blair, then Prime Minister, decided to involve the UK in this campaign mainly to be in a position to influence the US. The Iraqi invasion is a "warning against excessive loyalty to American war agendas" (Dumbrell, 2006).

It is important, however, to avoid making generalizations based on the Iraqi invasion and concluding that the "special relationship" has made the UK a mindless follower of the US. First of all, the threat from Iraq was not completely baseless; its evasion of UN weapons inspections and previous use of chemical weapons was certainly worrying (Dumbrell, 2006). But more outstandingly, in the past, Britain has proved capable of resisting US pressure, as shown in the Vietnam War, when Prime Minister Harold Wilson refused to send military forces to help the United States (Dobson, 1995). It's important to note that the flexibility of the Anglo-American relationship has allowed disagreements like this to happen without enduringly damaging it. The focus in this article is that although the US-UK had experienced some ups and downs through recent history, especially the effect of the Blair Premiership has caused it to lose what made it special.

### **I. Theoretical and Historical Framework**

This paper finds Constructivism theory of International Relations to be the appropriate theory in explaining the probable relationship between America and Britain.

In the Constructivist account, the variables of interest to scholars—e.g. military power, commercial relations, international

institutions, or domestic preferences— as objective facts in the world are not important, but rather these scholars pay attention to them because they have certain social meanings (Wendt, 1999). These meanings are constructed from a complex and specific mix of history, ideas, norms, and beliefs which scholars must understand if they are to explain states' behavior. A focus on the social context in which international relations occur leads Constructivists to emphasize issues of identity and belief in relations between the states. The perception of friends and enemies, in-groups and out-groups, fairness and justice all become key determinant of a state's behavior. While some Constructivists would accept the mainstream theories in International Relations which emphasizes that states are self-interested rational actors, they would stress that varying identities and beliefs contradict the simplistic notions of rationality under which states pursue simple survival, power, or wealth. Constructivism is also alert to the role of social norms in international politics. They distinguish between “logic of consequences”—that actions are logically chosen to increase the interests of a state—and “logic of appropriateness”, where rationality is heavily connected with social norms (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004).

On the other hand, history is also important in a key way too often neglected by political scientists: as a field of struggle and means of interpreting and coping with the present. Historians know that their agenda is often shaped by present-day concerns, and historical arguments, for example, the special relationship which existed between the UK and the US after WWI, is important (Keating, 2009: 9).

Since WWII, the US has also played an important role in assuring the UK's security and defense. It maintained a considerable amount of troops in Europe during the post-WWII years, when economically devastated nations faced the threat of a strong Soviet Union. This helped reduce the UK's defense costs drastically (Baylis, 1984). Defense cooperation has continued even after the Cold War, with around 11,000 American military personnel still in Britain by

2005. Additionally, the UK takes part in the US Ballistic Defense program (Dumbrell, 2006), and both countries collaborate in the area of nuclear defense.

Nuclear weapons development has been an area of intense US-UK cooperation. With the adoption of the McMahon Act and the creation of the 1958 Mutual Defense Agreement, the UK gained access to American classified information and support in the development of its own nuclear deterrent (Butler, 2004). The UK at this point had already developed nuclear weapons but not an adequate delivery system. The UK faced two challenges: the heavy costs and the question of location. Therefore, a decision was made to have the US develop a missile system which would then be acquired by the UK. This was the submarine-based Polaris system, later replaced by the Trident system (Dumbrell, 2006).

Despite these benefits, nuclear cooperation also caused problems for the UK. First, the United States' sudden cancellation of the development of Skybolt, the delivery system originally ordered by the UK, due to its costly and slow development, represented a small crisis for the US-UK relationship (Dumbrell, 2006). An even bigger issue is the complete dependence of the UK nuclear defense system on US technology. However, the US being a close ally; it was considered preferable to the alternative of the UK not having a nuclear deterrent, during the Cold War against the Soviet Union.

Although military and defense collaboration have been the most visible aspects of the special relationship, the UK's economic ties to the US are also exceptionally strong. In 1945, with the British economy exhausted by war expenditures, the US gave Britain a 3.75\$ billion loans at 2 per cent interest, and wrote off the remaining Lend-Lease agreement debts. Despite this, by 1947 the UK was in a financial crisis because of "a large dollar deficit, a convertibility crisis and a downward trend in British exports" (Leigh-Pippard, 1995: 23). Therefore, the US' Marshall Plan, developed to give financial aid to European countries whose economies and infrastructure had been

devastated by the war, came at a very convenient time. No country was as favored by the US as Britain was, either through Marshall Aid, of which the UK from 1948 to 1951 received in total \$3,297 billion (almost a third more than what France, the second top beneficiary, received), or through loans outside the Plan (Leigh-Pippard, 1995; Owendale, 1998; Gardner, 2001).

Beyond the end of the Cold War and of Britain's financial crisis, economic relations between the two countries have been kept strong by trade. They are each other's main foreign investors, and US companies employ about 1.3 million workers in Britain, with the majority of American firms working in Europe having their headquarters in the UK (Raymond, 2006). Such a wide-ranging amount of trade with the world's strongest economic power has certainly helped boost Britain's own economy, and access to the vast American consumer markets has brought great profits to British industries. Besides having helped Britain get out of its postwar economic crisis, the US has proved to be a solid ally throughout the twentieth century, helping maintain its partner's competitiveness in the face of rising world economies and industrial powers such as China and Japan.

It might be possible to make the assumption that Britain has become economically dependent on and subordinate to the capitalist world power that is the United States, especially given the amount of monetary support received in the post-war period and because of their current economic relationship. However, it is important to note that despite all this, the UK has still maintained an independent economic policy, as shown by its refusal to stop trade with communists during the Cold War, its devotion to the British imperial trade preferences (later the Commonwealth preference system), the sterling monetary area, and its resistance in the face of American pressure for more European integration in the 1940-50s (Dobson, 1995). All of these policies caused friction between the UK and the US, but as noted before, the elasticity and strength of the special

relationship has permitted them to happen without serious repercussions.

Valentini (2013) has investigated different aspects of Anglo-American relationship and has written about the pros and cons of the UK-US special relationship. Also, Karimi and Mirkooshesh (2013) have written about the issue of UK-US relation in Bush and Blair's time.

The United States has been a superpower since the 1900s and is the sole superpower at the beginning of this new millennium. How long that continues depends on a number of factors. The year 1945 could be considered the beginning of the study of modern international relations because new international organizations came into existence. In the 1940s, Winston Churchill, the then British Prime Minister, manipulated Franklin Roosevelt, the US President into formulating the "Post War Order". Churchill was successful according to newly uncovered information. Then again, in the 1960s, Harold Macmillan also manipulated John F. Kennedy into nuclear "interdependency", to organize European affairs as well as international relations. Macmillan too was successful according to new information which was uncovered after three decades. In the 1980s, Margaret Thatcher too, manipulated Ronald Regan to gain US commitment in international relations to formulate "Post-War German Reunification". Due to the above facts and experiences, one may conclude that in the 2000s, Tony Blair was "manipulating" George Bush to get US foreign policy engaged in international relations to formulate a "Post-Cold War" order to create International Community.

United States was and still is a hard power. Britain plays a soft power role in international relations. Britain usually uses the American strength and resources for the benefit of Britain. For an understanding of the international politics, we must concentrate on Anglo-Saxon "interdependency" through the "special relationship" which often exists between British Prime Ministers and US

Presidents. Winston Churchill, British Prime Minister of the 1940s, Harold Macmillan in the 1960s, Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s and Tony Blair in the 2000s, all had special relationships with their US counterparts (Karimi and Mirkooshesh, 2013: 95).

## II. Special Relationship

When Churchill was asked by Charles de Gaulle, the then French President, to form a new alliance with France for European collaboration, Churchill replied “In politics as in strategy, it is better to persuade the stronger than to pit yourself against him. The Americans have immense resources. They do not always use them to the best advantage. I am trying to enlighten them, without forgetting, of course, to benefit my country. I proceed by suggestion in order to influence matters in the right direction” (De Gaulle, 1964: 727). Macmillan also once said that “We are like the Greeks in the late Roman Empire. They ran it because they were so much cleverer than the Romans, but they never told the Romans this. That must be our relations to the Americans” (Woods & Jones, 1991: 11-12). Thatcher as well stated that “We aren't worried about the abuse of American power. Our principal worry is that American troops will go home. We need to pursue policies that will persuade America to remain a European power” (Thatcher, 1992). While the term special was coined by Churchill in the aftermath of WWII, later through the Cold War, the relationship was deepened by both sides.

By January of 2001, America had a new President in the White House. It was Tony Blair who was the first foreign leader to rush to a meeting with the new President in the White House. Blair desperately worried about the isolationist tendency in some parts of the US government. When Bush came to power in 2001, the Republican expressed their willingness to concentrate on Pacific and Asian countries. Such a view was welcomed by the French because they always favored European political sovereignty from America. As France also gained American support for their European Security

Defense Policy (ESDP), British politicians remained ambivalent out of concern that the French could have an upper hand over Britain in the European security arrangement. The British knew if they could get America "engaged" in the Middle East, due to US "dependency" on British experience in the region, America will favor British ambition in installing a National Missiles Defense system (NMD) in Europe. Britain and France clashed over the presence of America in Europe. Britain wanted America to be engaged in Europe, whereas the French were against it. By installing NMD in Europe, the European countries and France in particular, for at least several decades, would be under an American security umbrella. This is exactly what the British wanted. When the US is engaged in Europe and in the Middle East, the British could easily implement their foreign policy in those regions through US (military) hard power. Experts frequently assert that the UK supports US ambitions due to their alliance, but here it seems that the opposite is true. It was Blair who decided on war and then manipulated the US administration into implementing his Doctrine of International Community. Due to public opinion and pressure from the press, the Bush administration was compelled to form a committee in the Senate to report on the pre-war intelligence assessment of Iraq. The committee's evaluation was limited to intelligence gathering and not the role of the politicians in deciding to go to war. On the basis of intelligence provided by the British Intelligence Services, President Bush accused Saddam Hussein of obtaining Uranium from Niger for nuclear weapons and claimed that Iraq could deploy weapons of mass destruction within 45 minutes. On that basis, and while ignoring international opposition, America and Britain lead a coalition of countries that invaded Iraq. Pressure for inquiry increased when it became known that the intelligence received by the White House from the British government was counterfeit. The Senate Intelligence Committee reported that US foreign policy was "manipulated" for the interest of others. It claims that "The (US) Intelligence Community relies too

heavily on foreign government services and third party reporting, thereby increasing the potential for manipulation of U.S. policy by foreign interests" (Report on the US Intelligence..., 2004:34).

Long before the Bush administration came to power in the United States, Blair had been expressing his political ideas and concerns about Europe and international politics through speeches and comments. On May 2nd 1997, the Labor Party won the general election in Britain and Tony Blair became the youngest ever Prime Minister. Within a month of him taking office in late May 1997, Blair, in a speech in Paris said "NATO has served my country well, it has served Europe well, and it remains the cornerstone of Europe's defense" (Blair, 1997). Blair's emphasis on the permanent role of NATO indicates that he favored American military commitment to European security. In 1998, Blair praised the British role in international politics as "pivotal"(Blair, 1998) and claimed that the "United States has been fundamental to British foreign policy." Blair then said that "America at its best is a powerful force for good in the world. I will ensure that the Americans are fully engaged. We remain absolutely together in our analysis of the continuing danger posed by Saddam Hussein and our determination not to allow him Weapon of Mass Destruction" (Blair, 1998).

If Winston Churchill manipulated US foreign policy for the sake of British interest in the Pre Cold War period, Tony Blair internationalized the British concept of international politics through US strength for the Post-Cold War era when he first articulated the "Doctrine of International Community" in 1999. On April 24, 1999, (over a year before the Bush Administration), Blair said that "We are witnessing the beginning of a new doctrine of international community. If anything Americans are too ready to see no need to get involved in affairs of the rest of the world. Now our actions are guided in defending the values we cherish. In the end, values and interests merge. The spread of our values makes us safer. The most pressing foreign policy problem we face is to identify the

circumstances in which we should get involved in other people's conflicts. Non-interference has long been considered an important principle of international order. But the principle of non-interference must be qualified in important respects. If we wanted to right every wrong that we see in the modern world then we would do little else than intervene in the affairs of other countries. So we decide when and whether to intervene. I say to you (the American elites) never fall again for the doctrine of isolationism" (Blair, 2003).

Step by step, Tony Blair brought US foreign policy in line with British interests in international politics. In a speech to the European Research Institute, in describing his attempt to shape US foreign policy, Blair said that "The US will continue to play a vital role, and the present crisis has proven that our relationship with the American is as strong as ever. Indeed the UK has a powerful role to play as a bridge between USA and Europe. Britain's friendship with the United States is an asset for our European partners. We want to work with an internationalist USA" (Blair, 2001).

Although British Prime Minister Gordon Brown stated his support for the United States on assuming office in 2007, he appointed ministers to the Foreign Office who had been critical of aspects of the relationship or of recent US policy. A Whitehall source said: "It will be more businesslike now, with less emphasis on the meeting of personal visions you had with Bush and Blair. British policy was that the relationship with the United States remained the United Kingdom's most important bilateral relationship" (Reynolds, 2007).

The special relationship was also reported to be "strained" after a senior US State Department official criticized a British decision to talk to the political wing of Hezbollah, complaining the United States had not been properly informed (Spillius, 2009; Landler, 2009). In August 2009, the special relationship was again reported to have "taken another blow" with the release on compassionate grounds of Abdelbaset al-Megrahi, the man convicted of the 1988 Lockerbie

Bombing, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said it was absolutely wrong to release Abdelbaset al-Megrahi, adding “We are still encouraging the Scottish authorities not to do so and hope they will not”. Obama also commented that the release of al-Megrahi was a “mistake and highly objectionable” (Hechtkopf, 2009).

In March 2010 Hillary Clinton's support for Argentina's call for negotiations over the Falkland Islands triggered a series of diplomatic protests from Britain (Whittell, Evans and Philp, 2010) and renewed public uncertainty about the value of the special relationship (Coughlin, 2010). The British government rejected Clinton's offer of mediation after renewed tensions with Argentina were triggered by a British decision to drill for oil near the Falkland Islands. The British government's long-standing position was that the Falklands were British territory, with all that this implied regarding the legitimacy of British commercial activities within its boundaries. British officials were irritated by the implication that sovereignty was negotiable (Krauthammer, 2010).

Upon David Cameron being elected as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom on 11 May 2010, President Obama was the first foreign leader to offer his congratulations. Obama and Cameron also had set out their vision for the future of the special relationship arguing that “this is a partnership based on heart, history, traditions, and shared values” (Browne, 2012). Cameron has tried to downplay the idealism of the special relationship and called for an end to the British fixation on the status of the relationship, stating that it's a natural and mutually beneficial relationship. He said, “...I am unapologetically pro-America. But I am not some idealistic dreamer about the special relationship. I care about the depth of our partnership, not the length of our phone calls. I hope that in the coming years we can focus on the substance, not endlessly fret about the form” (Chapman, 2010).

On August 30th 2013, following the defeat in the House of Commons of David Cameron's plan to lend military support to a

U.S.-initiated intervention in Syria, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry left the U.K. off a list of diplomatic ‘friends’ who were willing to support the U.S. against Assad’s regime. Instead, he referred in glowing terms to the French - “our oldest ally” - tellingly, in reference to France’s support of America against Britain in the American War of Independence that began in 1775. French President Francois Hollande had reaffirmed his country’s support for “firm” punitive action against the Assad regime following the Commons vote. Admittedly, Kerry qualified his remarks the following week at a press conference in London, saying “Our bond is bigger than one vote, it’s bigger than one moment in history, and it is about values. We have no better partner in that effort than Great Britain and we are grateful for that. Our special relationship with the U.K. is not just about Syria.” And his words were intelligent on both occasions. This has not, however, comforted worried MPs who fretted about the future of such an essential alliance. The recent vacillations and panics over the state of the Special Relationship seem to have highlighted one common perception about Anglo-American relations: that the Special Relationship is assumed to be an ingrained and intrinsic feature of UK’s diplomatic structure. Whether viewed positively or negatively – and it is an alliance which splits opinion very neatly – the Special Relationship has always been viewed in black-and-white terms, either as an instrument of almost primal, matter-of-course symbiosis, or as a puppeteering servant-and-master arrangement, designed purely to aid the U.S. at the U.K.’s expense – most famously with regard to the war in Iraq. This conflict, which unfolded during the premiership of Labor Prime Minister Tony Blair, led the influential U.S. State Department adviser Kendall Myers – subsequently charged with spying for Cuba – in a speech entitled “How Special is the United States-United Kingdom Relationship After Iraq?” delivered at John Hopkins University’s School of Advanced International Studies, to label the Special Relationship a “myth”, and to claim that Tony Blair received nothing in return for his support of George Bush’s military

invasion of Iraq.

It is not difficult to see why some commentators would argue that the Special Relationship is a mere legend. In recent years, the gradual scaling back of the authority of the United Kingdom in the partnership – a situation crystallized by the issue of Iraq – has created the impression that rather than a symbiotic alliance, the connection between the two nations is merely an excuse for the United States to exert disproportionate power over its partner nation. They might also argue that the examples given by historians and specialists of the subject to illustrate the existence of the Special Relationship, are unconnected instances specific to their own contexts, and cannot be linked into a trend. However, taking into account the importance of the wider issue of shared political values – of two worldviews developing alongside and parallel to each other – in conjunction with analyzing particular events creates the continuity which some find lacking when searching for a concrete, concerted alliance. Of course, it is easy to over-simplify the history of the Special Relationship: it did not appear out of thin air with the *Sinews of Peace* speech in 1946. But using specific case studies from the period following both world wars, and into the Cold War, alongside the development of a more theoretical socio-political outlook inherent in the characters of both the United States and the United Kingdom, is a useful and revealing way of understanding the Special Relationship. Rather than debating whether or not the Special Relationship ever existed, we should be asking ‘why’ and ‘how’.

This is an important point because it defends the concept of the Special Relationship against the view that it is purely a construct created by historians and political commentators. It is worth bearing in mind that there is an element of artifice to this particular alliance, because it implicitly devalues the significance of Anglo-American relations before the start of the twentieth century. But considering the ideological themes which accompanied the expression of the Special Relationship throughout the twentieth century, and specifically during

the Cold War, proves the deep connection between wide-spanning socio-political ideals and the events of the postwar era. It goes back to the comments Kerry made recently: “our bond...is about values.” Similarities in political structure and ideology are often more important than isolated occurrences in the context of a political relationship. Critics of the concept of the Special Relationship might point out that the term was not used purely in relation to the alliance between the United States and the United Kingdom. Indeed, by the 1960s, both nations were referring to ‘special’ relationships they had with other countries, such as the alliance between the United States and Israel, or the close relationship between the United Kingdom and Germany. This accelerated as postwar resentment and Cold War hostility and mistrust faded, and bilateral ties were linked even more strongly than ever to characteristics inherent in political institutions rather than particular events – such as Thatcher’s enthusiasm to develop closer ties with Germany within the context of the European Community, because of her belief that Germany had a more economically conservative worldview than other member nations, something which tied in closely with the structure of her own political outlook. However, this did not undermine her relationship with Reagan – the springing-up of new ‘special’ relationships did not usurp the original. And though the fact that other alliances with the same hallmarks as the Special Relationship existed, it is clear that this made the original, Anglo-American interpretation of the term more of a blueprint than one of many arising at the same time (Brown, 2012).

### III. US-UK and Iran

Although US and UK governments’ international actions together does not have a long history and started after the second World War, its effects and memories are vivid in Iranian memories. In this section of the piece like in others, the detailed Anglo-American actions in Iran is not going to be discussed extensively, only those parts of disagreement over the Islamic Republic affairs will be mentioned.

After the Revolution, and especially during Iran and Iraq war, the UK has almost always accompanied the US in their campaigns and actions against Iran, from selling arms to Iraqi forces to accusing Iran of belligerent nuclear activities. In one of their cynical cooperation, in August 2005, Britain and the US tried to foment ethnic strife in the oil rich region of Khuzestan (Information clearinghouse, 2005), in which they were not successful.

From 1992 to 2003, UK has tried to engage Iran on different levels, while the US has taken up a policy of isolation and rejected this towards Iran. British reaction to America's Iran-Libya sanctions act is an example of this dynamic, in which the UK opposed the law and called it a violation of international trading rules. Britain also declared its objection to the US using its military bases in the region to attack Iran. After the events of 9/11, the UK believed that Iran has had an appropriate and defensible performance, and Britain's Deputy Prime Minister, declared in response to Bush's charges against Iran. Britain also did not defend the US-claim that Iran has given refuge to Al-Qaeda members (Bakhtiari and Hossein Nia Salimi, 2013: 178-179). Following the imposition of heavy sanctions on Iran for its nuclear activities, and talk of military action against Iran, in one of the early disputes between UK and US over Iran, Foreign Office lawyers in the British government advised that it would be illegal to support military action against Iran. Jack Straw, the UK Foreign Minister in that time, declared military action to be “inconceivable” (Cusick and Mackay, 2006); following that a few months later, British patrols in Iraq said that, contrary to US allegations, they have found no evidence that Iran is supplying or training insurgents in Iraq (Knickmeyer, 2006).

In recent years, complaints about curbs on trade with Iran are growing louder both in the UK and other EU states as officials point out that the U.S., the author and enforcer of tough sanctions, is itself doing more business with the Islamic Republic. U.S. shipments to Iran have climbed 35 percent since 2011, compared with a 77 percent drop for the European Union. Jack Straw, the U.K.'s former foreign

secretary and current co-chair of a parliamentary group on Iran, said that there's a double standard which could "split the international community". U.S. trade with Iran rose to \$315 million in 2013, from \$234 million in 2011. During the same period, European trade fell to €6 billion (\$8.2 billion) from €28 billion. One British complaint is that U.S. companies can get waivers that aren't available to non-American businesses. Regarding that Straw said, "If you're an American trader with an American bank, you don't run into trouble; but if you're a European banker, you do" (Tirone, 2014). The same objection was also claimed at Westminster by senior politicians that, Washington is "bullying" UK banks into refusing to support legal exports to Iran, costing British companies hundreds of millions of pounds in lost sales. In this regard, British politicians have urged William Hague, then foreign secretary, to use existing legal powers if necessary to counter the US action (Parker, 2014).

In an article published in the Wall Street Journal, some influential British politicians spoke publically their disagreement over American policies in Iran and criticized the obstacles created by American sanctions to UK banks that do business with Iran. In this case also, Mr. Straw declared in a Westminster debate that "The impact of this unilateral, extraterritorial jurisdiction of the U.S. is especially discriminatory against UK-based financial institutions, because of their multinational nature" (Tehran Times, 2014).

In another dispute, after Ben Affleck's Anti-Iranian movie *Argo* was released in which the story of six American diplomats who took refuge in the home of the Canadian ambassador after Iranians took the U.S. embassy in 1979 was told, British Politicians expressed their disapproval of the film. In the movie, the six Americans claimed to have sought shelter with the Canadians after having been "turned away" by the British government (Newcomb, 2012); British politicians regarded the movie as an insult to the Anglo-American special relationship.

In spite of all that, Britain has not abandoned the US and

despite its alliances in Europe, has emphasized the role of NATO in Europe and the world. After all, despite the few UK-US disagreements over Iran, it should not be forgotten that all all of their decisions and actions have been in accordance with their own national interests and priorities. This sheds light on the fact that we should consider Britain an actor besides America which has its own influence and independent policy outlook.

### **Conclusion**

British Prime Ministers, from Winston Churchill, the architect of the "Post War Order", to Tony Blair, the architect of "Doctrine of International Community", maintained the same world order that was formed in 1945 and continued right through the end of the century and into new millennium. Of course different conceptual theories like communism and handful revolutionary governments, at different stages, unsuccessfully challenged the British concept of international relations. British Prime Ministers through interdependency and engagement successfully oriented US foreign policy in international affairs. In conclusion, the benefits received by the UK from its special relationship with the US far outweigh the costs. Since World War II, they have been partners in many successful military operations, and worked jointly in military research, development and training. The US has been a key ally for Britain in the area of security, and helped it develop its nuclear deterrent. And after contributing to Britain's economic recovery in the postwar period, became its main economic partner and a source of investment and trade. Concerns about the UK becoming excessively dependent or subservient to the US have been proven unjustified by the many occasions in which Britain's policies have gone against America's wishes without damaging the relationship. It would be worthwhile to investigate further the possibility of the European Union eventually replacing the US as Britain's main partner, and of further British integration with Europe, as it becomes a more regional power and as the US strengthens its ties

with Asia in the 21st century. Although there has been a close relationship between the two countries over the last decades and they do have many common interests, these interests have also diverged from time to time and even while pursuing the same strategic goals their tactics can be different. Finally it seems that the Anglo-American special terms which started after the Second World War and were deepened in the Cold War, have lost its specialness in one way or another – especially after Bush-Blair era – and is waiting for a new shape with the change of British Premiership as it was not very special in these past few years and both sides have thought to shift towards a more European partnerships for their close international and military alliances. And finally, in the case of Iran, it should be said that although a few Anglo-American disputes were mentioned in this paper, it should not be forgotten that these disputes do not signify support for Iran but are rather disagreements over how best these countries can best pursue their own interests.

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