British Imperialism in Afghanistan, 1839-2001

A ‘Memoire’ Submitted to the Faculty of Letters and Languages, Department of English in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master in Anglo-American Studies

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2012-2013
ABSTRACT

Britain’s foreign policy has been imperialistic and expansionist since its early formation; this can mainly be seen in its Great Empire and its outcome, the Commonwealth of Nations. In the 19th century, Britain emerged as a colonial leading power with various holds in the world. Its expansionism emerged in the period of the “Great Game” which it played with the other power, Russia. In this game, both tried to expand their empires toward the region of Central Asia. In this context, Afghanistan was seen as the perfect opportunity to their expansionist dreams. To fulfill its motivations, Britain fought brutal wars in Afghanistan. In three wars fought between 1839 and 1919, the British used all means to subjugate the country but at the end they failed to maintain a presence in the region. In the opening of the 21st century, Britain’s old motivations were still standing. They became a reality in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks when, in alliance with the USA, it launched a war against Afghanistan in 2001. The invasion of Afghanistan was justified on the ground of the right to self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter. Using 9/11 attacks and the right of self-defense as an excuse to launch a war against Afghanistan seems the perfect cover for fulfilling UK-US imperialistic objectives, mainly controlling and exploiting this strategic area of Central Asia, mainly rich in oil and other natural resources.
RESUME

La politique étrangère britannique a été impérialiste et expansionniste depuis son avènement. Cela peut se voir principalement dans son grand empire et son organisation des Commonwealth. Dans le 19ème siècle la Grande-Bretagne s'est vue comme la première puissance coloniale au monde en s'y implantant un peu partout dans le monde. Son expansionnisme s'est émergé dans la période dite "Great Game" qu'all a jouée avec l'autre puissance, la Russie. Dans ce jeu, les deux ont essayé d'élargir leurs empires vers la région d'Asie. Dans ce contexte, l'Afghanistan était vu comme une parfaite opportunité pour leurs rêves expansionnistes. Pour atteindre ces motivations, la Grande-Bretagne s'est engagé dans des guerres atroces en Afghanistan. Lors de trois guerres menées entre 1839 et 1919, les Britanniques ont utilisé tous les moyens pour envahir le pays, mais à la fin ils ont fini par maintenir une présence dans la région. Au début du 21ème siècle, les anciennes motivations britanniques étaient toujours présentes. elles sont devenues une réalité après les attentats du 11 Septembre 2001 où en collaboration avec les Etats-Unis, elle a déclaré une guerre en Afghanistan en 2001. L'invasion de l'Afghanistan a été justifié comme un droit de légitime défense sous l'article 51 de la charte des Nations Unies. Utilisé les attentats du 11 septembre et le droit de légitime défense comme une excuse pour déclarer la guerre contre l'Afghanistan paraît comme une parfaite couverture pour atteindre les objectifs impérialistes Anglo-américaines, en particulier le contrôle et l'exploitation de cette région stratégique du Centre de l'Asie qui est riche en pétrole et d'autres ressources naturelles.
ملخص

إن سياسة بريطانيا كانت إمبريالية توسعية منذ نشأتها، وهذا يمكن رؤيته من خلال شعاعة إمبراطوريتها العظمى والمتمثلة في الكومنولث. في القرن التاسع عشر، ظهرت بريطانيا كقوة استعمارية رائدة مع مستعمرات مختلفة في العالم. توسعتها الإمبريالية ظهرت في الفترة المسماة"اللغة الأكبرى" والتي كانت مع روسيا، في هذه اللعبة، كلفت الدولتين حاولت توسيع إمبراطوريتهما اتجاه منطقة أسيا الوسطى، في هذا النطاق أفغانستان كانت بمثابة الفرصة المثالية لتحقيق أهدافهما التوسعية. لتحقيق ذلك خاضت بريطانيا حروب وحشية في أفغانستان.

DEDICATION

To the memory of my dear father

To my beloved mother to whom I owe everything I am today.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge and direct special thanks to my supervisor Dr. F. Maamri. If it were not for her continual patience, guidance and encouragement along the way, this research work would not have been completed. I am thankful to her; she was very helpful and offered me great advice and direction. It was an honor to have such unique and distinguished person to help me throughout my journey in fulfilling this work. I am and I would always be very grateful to her insightful comments as well as support.

I would like to thank my family members who put their faith and dreams in me and whose love and support made this dissertation possible. Special thanks to my mother whose infinite patience and endless encouragement and love inspired me to follow and complete my goals.
# List of Abbreviations

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>AIA</td>
<td>Afghan Interim Authority</td>
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<td>BWC</td>
<td>Biological Weapons Convention</td>
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<td>CIA</td>
<td>Central Investigation Agency</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>ICC</td>
<td>International Criminal Court</td>
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<td>ISAF</td>
<td>International Security Assistance Force</td>
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<td>NATO</td>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organization</td>
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<td>OEF</td>
<td>Operation Enduring Freedom</td>
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<td>UK</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>UNSC</td>
<td>United Nations Security Council</td>
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<td>UNSCR</td>
<td>United Nations Security Council Resolution</td>
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<td>UNWFP</td>
<td>The United Nations World Food Programme</td>
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<td>USA</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
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<tr>
<td>USDD</td>
<td>United States Department of Defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTC</td>
<td>World Trade Center</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Table of Contents

Abstract .........................................................................................................................
Dedication ....................................................................................................................... ii
Acknowledgements .......................................................................................................... iii
List of Abbreviations ....................................................................................................... vi
Table of Contents .......................................................................................................... v

**General Introduction** .................................................................................................. 1

**Chapter 1: The Great Game: British Domination and Imperialism**
1. Historical Background ............................................................................................... 9
   A - Location ............................................................................................................... 10
   B- Ethnicity .............................................................................................................. 11
   C- Religion and Language ....................................................................................... 11
2. The Great Game: The British Lion and the Russian Bear ...................................... 13
3. The Middle East ....................................................................................................... 16
4. The Importance of India ......................................................................................... 17
5. The Afghanistan Story ............................................................................................. 19
6. The First Anglo-Afghan War 1839-1842 ............................................................... 24
7. The Second Anglo-Afghan War 1878-1880 ............................................................ 27
8. The Third Anglo-Afghan War 1919 ....................................................................... 28
9. Afghanistan: A Theatre of the New Great Game ................................................. 29
Chapter 2: British Foreign Policy and US-UK Special Relationship

1. British Foreign Policy under Blair .......................................................... 36

2. Atlanticism in British Foreign Policy .................................................. 45

3. Anglo-American Relations ................................................................. 52

4. US-Uk Cooperation ............................................................................. 53

   A-Political and Defence Cooperation .................................................. 55

   B-Intelligence and Counterterrorism Cooperation .............................. 56

   C- Economic Cooperation .................................................................. 57

Chapter 3: United Nations Debate and the Invasion of Afghanistan

1. UN Debate ......................................................................................... 62

2. UN Resolutions after 9/11 .................................................................. 63

3. The Self-Defence Justification for the Invasion .................................. 65

4. Humanitarian Law ............................................................................... 67

5. USAF Mandate ................................................................................... 68

6. Did 9/11 provide Moral Justification for the invasion in Afghanistan .... 69

7. September 9, 11, 2001 ....................................................................... 70

8. US Military Campaign: Operation Enduring Freedom ...................... 73

9. Diplomatic and Humanitarian Efforts ............................................... 75

10. 2002: Operation Anaconda .............................................................. 77

General Conclusion ................................................................................. 83
Works Cited
General Introduction

Military interventions have long been a tradition of superpowers in world politics and regarding Britain one of these nations paved its way and gave it the opportunity to intervene in many spots in the world such as: Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq. It is apparent that Britain had followed an interventionist, imperialist mission through its history in away that it shaped its current foreign policy. The British occupation of Afghanistan in the 19th century had its objectives that stressed on preventing the Russian expansion into Central Asia in what was called “The Great Game”. However, distinctive justifications and new objectives were raised during the 2001 intervention on Afghanistan directly after 9/11 events. So taking this position, Britain granted itself an imperialist, expansionist path to dominate world affairs along with USA and to reshape politics in ways that would serve their imperial interests.

In this perspective, Britain was eagerly determined to prevent southward Russian expansion into Central Asia. Thus Afghanistan in this period served as a buffer state to stop continued Russian movement into British India. British Great Game in Central Asia during the 19th century would be demonstrated in a long history of conflicts and battles with Afghans. Wars which would leave unforgettable wounds on the people who witnessed the devastating outcomes of a war they did not ask for. Also this would have catastrophic consequences on Afghanistan, a torn country with civil conflicts and unknown future. A war happened mainly because the great powers saw Afghanistan a perfect opportunity for fulfilling their imperialistic attempts. It is important to note that the country is an opening gate to the riches and waterways of the
Central Asia and the Indian continent. It is because of its strategic position, Afghanistan become a center for continual friction between the great powers of the nineteenth century, and took the name of “the graveyard of empires”. Due to the influencing conditions of the “Great Game”, Britain fought three wars with Afghanistan and in each time they fail to subjugate the country.

In the twentieth, twenty-first centuries, Britain saw a major shift in its foreign policy mainly due to Blair’s premiership as a prime minister in government. Under Blair, a dream for a better Britain with a standing position in world affairs seemed a close reality. Since its early steps in government, Blair showed great motivations for change mainly from the conservative long history that characterized Britain since years. The arrival of Blair into office opened the way for new approaches and policies to be maintained. Under Blair, Britain’s foreign policy was introduced to an age of an active policy that is built on multilateralism. During his term he pushed for renewed relations with Europe from one hand and emphasizing on a close relationship with the United States from the other hand. By taking this stand, Blair hoped that having mutual connections with both sides would provide as a pushing motive for positioning Britain in the heart of the international community. Moreover, he insisted that Britain would serve as a “bridge” linking and mediating the two poles, Europe and the USA.

Blair’s insistence on building a close relationship with the USA revived an ancient link and history that characterized the relations bounding the two countries, the United Kingdom and the United States. This can be seen in the friendship that gathered the two political leaders, Ronald Reagan and Margret Thatcher. Recently, the UK-US relationship developed largely due to the changing dynamics of world politics. One can state mainly the eminent threats that face the western world, global terrorism. Now
concerning the Bush-Blair relationship, it is characterized as being a close friendship that served largely in bringing the two leaders together. But it is important to demonstrate that 9/11 attacks on US soil intensified this relation and gave it a new spirit. UK’s strong stand with the USA in its crisis opened new angles for the future of the relation between the two allies. From these points, one can figure out why UK-US relationship is labeled as being “special”. Also the UK-US relationship is build on a mutual cooperation in various fields in a manner that it helped to tighten their connections on a large scale.

The special relationship between the Unites States and United Kingdom was tested in the outraging 9/11 attacks on US homeland. In the aftermath of 11 September 2001, the US condemned these atrocities and immediately claimed that al-Qaeda organization and its members are responsible for these actions. International support also condemned the attacks and showed its sympathy to the USA. The UK was the first one sided with the US and quickly responded to its demands for punishing the perpetrators of the attacks. In this context, the UNSC passed its resolutions regarding this issue. In this time USA proclaimed that these attacks are “acts of war” and accused the Taliban government in Afghanistan for sponsoring al-Qaeda members. In these circumstances, the US right away raised its right of self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter. From its part, the UK also adopted USA’s position and condemned the Taliban. So in a few weeks a plan of war was prepared for invading Afghanistan and hunt down al-Qaeda and its sponsors. However, it is important to note that this action was not authorized by the UNSC.

So tackling and studying this angle of world affairs, I would state that my thesis will include a thesis statement which demonstrates that Britain's current foreign policy
either serve to illustrate its close ties with the US in away to say that it is submissive to USA’s foreign policy because of the special relationship between the two allies that have a long standing history. Or that Britain has its own personal interests, imperial motives in Afghanistan and in Central Asia that has long roots in history since the 19 century. And these intentions became clear when it intervened again in Afghanistan 2001 after the events of 11 September. The main aim of this research is to emphasize that Britain's foreign policy goals have always been limited and never really changed or achieved anything. This may be related to the developing and close relationships which generated between Britain and USA which made US shadow dominate world politics, as a result, it is said that the US have overstepped its powers. So failure in Afghanistan would deal a serious blow to the credibility of the UK, NATO and the international community.

The primary research questions of this study are: following the failure of Britain in Afghanistan during the 19 century, will history repeat itself today? What are the true aims, reasons for Britain’s wars in the 19th Century in Afghanistan and the reasons for the war now 2001? Additionally, this research seeks to investigate the following: Was it worthy to enter Afghanistan in the first place and was it a war for Democracy or a war for controlling the riches, oil of Central Asia? Were UK-US’s actions in the wake of 9/11 legitimate? Is the use of force a legitimate response to terrorist attacks? Based on these questions, many hypotheses were raised: intervention in Afghanistan was a mistake from the beginning because it was not Britain’s war, but in away it was a war of mutual expansionist interests between US and Britain. Britain's own security is at risk if again Afghanistan becomes a safe haven for terrorists. Responses from both British public and international community varied on the encroachment on Afghanistan, some with and others against. Afghan population is
suffering due to insurgents and combat attacks, so human rights are provoked in away or another. This study would be based on literature review that includes: primary sources mainly the United Nations Charter, also UNSC resolutions, Speeches reported by prime minister Tony Blair, and president George Bush on the 11 September attacks, memoirs as Tony Blair: A journey. My thesis also would include secondary sources: books, articles that would provide a source of important information, and various aspects about the core study of my research questions.

My thesis will include three chapters. In the first chapter of this research, i will introduce a historical background about British military intervention and its objectives in Afghanistan during the 19 century in which the British tried three times between 1839 and 1919 to subjugate Afghanistan, and each time they failed. The second chapter of this study would present Britain’s foreign policy under Blair and the main changes and policies he introduced as prime minister. It also introduces an analysis of the special relationship between the US and UK and the varied aspects of this connection. The last chapter of my research investigates United Nations debate over claiming a self-defence right to launch an armed attack and the main justifications, reasons of US-UK led “coalition of the willing” intervention in Afghanistan in 2001.
Chapter 1

The ‘Great Game’: British Domination and Imperialism

Introduction

Afghanistan is slightly a small region with a long standing history which lies at the heart of the Asian Continent. The country is dominated by a majority of Sunni Muslims, a balance of Shiites and other ethnic minorities. Despite its strategic position at the crossroads of Central Asia and serves as a mediator of many diverged cultures, economically, the country is the poorest in the area. In the nineteenth century, the region becomes involved in the continuous struggle between the two colonial powers, Great Britain and Russia in what was called the ‘Great Game.’ Afghanistan then became a significant interest for the British. In a way that it served as a buffer state to protect British hold in India from one hand and to prevent southward Russian expansion from another.

British concerns over the Russian invasion of British India promoted the significance of Afghanistan. However, the conflicting interests of these two powers generated a brutal confrontation which eventually led the country to an inevitable war, first with the British (the three Anglo-Afghan wars) and later on with the Soviets. In this game, Britain wished to accomplish mainly two aspects. One aspect was to prevent the increased Russian influence in Central Asia. The other one was to secure its interests in India by using Afghanistan as a buffer state. This chapter therefore reveals the stressing issues surrounding the dilemma of the Great Game between the
British and Russian Empires during the nineteenth century. In which the region became an open theatre to the standing struggle between these two superpowers. In this regard, the chapter continues to explore the main reasons behind British invasion of Afghanistan.

Along its history, Afghanistan has been a victim of the permanent struggle between powers around the world and this can be traced back to the nineteenth century. Apart from the British Empire, we have the Soviet Union and most recently the United States. In this era, the British were engaged in a brutal war with the emerging power, Communist Russia over the Indian Continent. This struggle was inaction to fulfill a dominant self-interest, imperialistic purposes and establishing a strong foothold in Central Asia. All these events affected the country widely; as a result, Afghanistan became divided into shephers of influence among the great powers in the so called ‘Great Game’.

1. Historical Background

During the 19 century, Afghanistan has become an important potential access to the heart of Central Asia. The region is a bridge to natural reservoirs of gas and oil resources in the Central Asian and Caspian regions in away that would satisfy the western states’ needs. It also provides options for the construction of many pipelines that would facilitate the continuous flow of these materials. “Those who control the oil routes out off Central Asia will impact all future direction and quantities of flow and the distribution of revenues from new production” (qtd. in Baryiski 15). Since the long history that characterized Afghanistan, it was an open theatre to outside interventions by superpowers. In this case, the region has been recognized as an opening gate to the
richness of Central Asia. It is a significant fortune that must be managed to hold the uprising hunger of the great powers in the scene.

In this period, imperial competition intensified between the great powers mainly Russia and Britain. With Russia emerging as an increased influence in Central Asia, each power worked hardly to protect its interests in the area. Consequently, this made Afghanistan a significant target for both powers to strength their foothold in the region. So the region became a stressing source of energy deposits and the target of the conflicting interests of surrounding states, as well as the Western powers. It was considered also an open window to new territories which would be used as markets and be exploited for economic, military, and strategic and expansionist interests. Therefore, the intentions and plans to invade Afghanistan had roots stretching back as far as the post-cold era.

…, Afghanistan has become an important potential opening to the sea for the landlocked new states of Central Asia. The presence of large oil and gas deposits in that area has attracted countries and multinational corporations...Because Afghanistan is a major strategic pivot what happens there affects the rest of the world (qtd. in Krakowski 25).

A. Location

As noted by Khan, Afghanistan is one of the strategic regions that constitute Central Asia, besides Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan. The country shares borders with Pakistan, Iran, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and China. These borders worked as a step bridge for smugglers, armed groups and terrorists to operate within the territorial integrity of Afghanistan. Afghanistan is considered the essential spot of influence in Central Asia on one hand. Central Asia on
the other hand is a crucial instrument that serves as a two-direction hold between the
East and West, thus establishing an influence of global control (66). In this regard, due
to its strategic location, Central Asia became a common ground for brutal clashes
among empires that left their print in the region such as the Persians, the Russians and
the British. These powers wanted to exploit the region according to their personal
interests. “Turkistan, Afghanistan, Transcaspia, Persia...are the pieces on a chessboard
upon which is being played out a game for the dominance of the world” (qtd. in
Naeez 4).

From this angle, the significant position of Central Asia increased the desire of
the great powers to subjugate the country. It became important because it served as a
base for spreading their influence in the area. As a result, these motives would be
achieved through Afghanistan, which was seen as the gateway to the Indian Ocean and
would be the main centre of the future world. Central Asian republics constitute the
potential source of energy which would supply the needs of approximately all western
countries for the next decades. So Afghanistan surfaced as one of these top valued
regions that would fulfill the requirements of great powers’ expansionism in the 19th
century.

B. Ethnicity

Along its history, Afghanistan has been a diverse country containing many
ethnic groups. It is dominated by a majority, 44 % of Pashtuns and now approximately
63% of the population, there is no doubt that it is the largest group among the other
ethnic minorities. It is followed by 25% of Tajiks. The other main groups are the
Hazaras, the Uzbeks, the Turkmen, and the Aimaq each composes about 10 % of the
population. Other minorities include Kazakhs, Wakhis, and Nuristanis, with also very
small numbers of Hindus and Sikhs. It is important to know that the distribution of these different ethnic groups in Afghanistan was as a result of the drawn borders of the nineteenth century by the British and Russian Empires, which splitted the country into small traditional tribes (Kakar 56). However, it is important to note that the diversity of the communities in Afghanistan have contributed largely to its fragmentation and disunity this eventually led to the emergence of civil wars among these groups. Furthermore, these continuing frictions between the various groups contributed in a way or another in threatening the peace and security of Afghanistan.

**C. Religion and Language**

Afghanistan is largely dominated by a Sunni Muslim composition 84%, Shia Muslims almost constituting 15%, others Sikhs, Hindus and Jews 1%. It is important to know that in Afghanistan, religion acquired a great significance during Afghan resistance. Firstly against the British, later on, in an organized Islamic Jihad which was launched against the Soviet Union and the USA recently? Language in Afghanistan varies distinctively, Afghan Persian or Dari as it is called is predominant 50%, whereas Pashtu comes in the second place 35%, Turkic languages primarily Uzbek and Turkmen composes 11%. Other 30 minor languages mainly Balochi and Pashai which constitutes 4%, it is noteworthy that Farsi is the dominant language in Kabul and widely regarded as a more cultured as Pashtu (Kakar 58).

**2. The Great Game: The British Lion and the Russian Bear**

According to Burghart, a Professor of National Security and Eurasian Studies, the term “Great Game” was coined by Arthur Connolly who was a captain in East India Company and intelligence officer in the area of Central Asia. The term refers to the rivalry between the Russian and British Empires in Central Asia during the 19th
Century (2). In this period, from one hand, Russian interest in the region was a natural motive of their Empire’s expansion to the East; on the other hand, Britain’s reaction was to prevent the Russian advance into Central Asia, and most importantly, its fear that this would threaten its British interests in India, the “jewel” of the Empire. In other words, the concept of the ‘Great Game’ refers to the continued searching for territorial and imperial dominance in the Afghan region, which was played out between the British and Russian empires in the second half of the nineteenth century.

In what was called the “Great game”, Britain fiercely feared over its great Empire in India in a way that Russia was seen as a major threat to its position and its power in the globe. Also, Britain’s concerns grew and become a reality when other emerging competitors surfaced on the ground namely: the Soviet Union and most urgently the strong newcomer rival, the United States with its own growing imperialistic adventures. Due to all these factors, Britain’s hegemony was at stake if we consider its long expansionist attempts since ever (3). From this perspective, it is clear that after the end of the cold war, there was a strategic shift of interest toward Asia. In away that the region is the future for vast transitions of natural resources which would mainly serve as opened energy markets, all this attracted the attention of the international community. And also established new efforts for influence, control, and of course raised conflicts. So these regions became a means of development and also a source of possible energy routes for exploitation by the western countries.

In its early history, Britain emerged as a world superpower with inherited motivations of imperialism. It began its conquest mission by controlling India in the 1700’s through the activities of East India Company to the fully occupation of the Indian subcontinent in the late 1800’s. The colony become independent in 1947 only after the British divided it into two completely separated states, India and Pakistan, a
division stood mainly on religious differences: Hindus and Muslims (McDonnell 1). Britain also continued its colonial pace when it waged a war against Afghanistan in the period 1838, 1878 and again when suppressing a rebellion in 1919. To protect its foothold in India and most importantly to stop the Russian influence from trespassing southward, Britain took over the Khyber Pass, which was an important gateway of Central Asia to South Asia, in away that it served as the principal opening for the passage of merchants, people, and conquerors.

Additionally, Britain intervened in Afghanistan when it positioned its puppet Afghan ruler, Shuja in the place of Dost Mohammed who has been deported to India. It continued its imperialistic attempts when it affirmed control over Afghanistan’s foreign affairs. After a long history of battles, uprisings and rebellions with the British, finally Britain would recognize Afghanistan’s independence. But this is not the end, because after this period, Afghanistan would experience another period of suffering and struggle mainly because of the Soviet Union’s invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. In response, the United States would arm the Afghans to fight back the USSR attacks and with time a group of fundamentalists would come out to existence namely the Taliban and Osama bin Laden and his organization, al Qaeda (2-4). In the words of John Darwin, a historian, concerning the British expansionist interests and control of Central Asia, he reported:

The British had always been prepared to secure their imperial ends—trade, security, Influence by the widest variety of political means, using the inflexible and expensive method of direct colonial rule only when necessary—and often grudging the necessity. Whenever possible they preferred to influence, persuade, inveigle (by economic benefits) or frighten
local rulers into cooperation with them. All this means that we can not easily measure the extent to which British dominance over client states and colonial peoples contracted by the crude yardstick of a change in constitutional forms… (10).

In other words, the Great Game of the nineteenth century brought the British as a very strong competitor among the other powers as Russia, the Soviet Union for control of Central Asia, and most importantly, Afghanistan. In this way, each of them tried hard to reserve its interests in the strategic region of Afghanistan. Additionally, the impacts of this game continued to exist until the twenty-first century with the United States emerging as a leading superpower in the world. In this regard, Elie Krakowski comes to the conclusion:

It is the crossroads between…the world’s Heartland and the Indian subcontinent. It owes its importance to its location at the confluence of major routes. A boundary between land power and sea power, it is the meeting point between opposing forces larger than itself…An object of competition between the British and Russian empires in the 19th century, Afghanistan became a source of controversy between the American and Soviet superpowers in the 20th. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, Afghanistan has become an important potential opening to the sea for the landlocked new states of Central Asia… (45).

3. The Middle East

In the Middle East also, the British left their print by establishing a direct conflict of interests. In away that they were determined to check Russia’s commercial
relations and military communications which ran through Persia and the Eastern
Mediterranean Turkey. The British were under pressure to control the Sultan of
Turkey, who controlled the territory which the Suez Canal ran through, and which was
considered as a principal route to India. From their part, the Russians were urgently
determined to control the Sultan because he was also the guardian of the Straights of
Constantinople, ‘the key to her house’. In their stressing efforts to defend their
interests, both powers employed a set of policies: competition for political influence on
Persia, persuade the Sultan of Turkey, and the Amir of Afghanistan; trade relations;
military expeditions, and perhaps most importantly, building allies in Europe. In this
context, Britain could usually depend on its close allies for help to decrease the
Russian influence (McDonnell 10).

In other attempts of expansion, Britain invaded Egypt in 1882, reserving a
colonial relationship with the country until 1954. Britain also took over Muslim states
from the former Ottoman Empire after the First World War as “trust territories”,
namely establishing Iraq, as well as taking Jordan and Palestine. In addition, Britain
also subjugated Iran by the use of economic relations, concession to explore oil in the
country. And as a result, in 1907 Britain made an agreement with Russia to divide Iran
into separate spheres of influence (12). Indeed, to achieve its colonial Empire’s
wellbeing, Britain knew that the Middle East is an essential reward for any power
interested in world influence or domination. Since control of the world’s oil reservoirs
also means control of the world economy. From this angle, Britain’s policy aimed to
dominate and control the Middle East affairs to guarantee its global hegemony. So it
was clear that it would contain any movement threatens western domination of the
region:
The major British and other Western interests in the Persian Gulf [are] (a) to ensure free access for Britain and other Western countries to oil produced in States bordering the Gulf; (b) to ensure the continued availability of that oil on favorable terms…; (c) to bar the spread of Communism…in the area and subsequently to defend the area against the brand of ‘Arab nationalism’ (qtd. In McDonnell 17).

Russia, on the other hand, surfaced as a potential leading power which threatened the very existence of Britain. In the 19th century, Russia had been expanding southward and also eastward to Central Asia. It imposed a progressively increased challenge to British India. In this regard, Britain was determined to stop its advance before it threatens India. In this case, both the British and Russians became more interested in the territory that separated them, so struggle and competition grew over these regions and the rivalry between the two powers widened. As a result of this, Afghanistan was one piece of the puzzle and it was seen as an opening gate to India. And this eventually led Britain into a military adventure with Russia over this strategic region. Consequently, this game would carry out a long brutal fighting and hostility with terrible results to the region which was in many times unnecessary.

Russian expansionist attempts to control Central Asia, the Indian subcontinent and especially Afghanistan have been overseen in its early history. But these intentions were suppressed by the British power in the 19th century, “of all the external influences beyond Indian frontiers, the Russian advance in Central Asia threatening British supremacy in Afghanistan constituted the greatest danger” (qtd. In Feifer 35). However, it was logical that these ambitions would revive and become a reality when the British withdrew from the region in 1947. In this case, the Russians would have a
strong foothold in the East mainly controlling the Central Asian states that formed their Empire. And in the same time would be able to block the oil’s supplies to Europe, which obviously would provide them enormous political influence. Regarding this issue, these Russian ambitions would be accomplished in the coming years of 1979, when a decision of invading Afghanistan would be taken on December 27. As a matter of fact, a decision that would start a war that cost thousands of lives and would last nine years until 1989 (Poullada 178). From this perspective, as far as Afghanistan was concerned, the region was seen as a perfect opportunity and an important footstep which would make the Russian imperialistic desires in Asia a possible reality. In this regard, the Southward expansion was inevitable because it paved the way for the Russians to reach the warm waters of the Indian Ocean and perhaps to have more power over the oil of the Persian Gulf.

4. The Importance of India

On this vast and sensitive competition between the British and the Russians, India was an essential centerpiece. The British considered India as more valuable than any of their other imperial possessions. Because of its productive trade which served their investment in the region, it provided the desired troops; another factor was that India established a commanding position for the British in Southern Asia. Perhaps the most important thing in this relationship, it was believed that losing India would ruin the British imperial reputation as the ‘undefeatable rival’ (178). So in this case it was clear that the British were aware that a large area as India could not be subjugated by force alone. Therefore to seize India, it was important for the British to maintain their influence on the population and crucially to manage the benefits of their Empire’s expansion.
In this dilemma, the only concern for the British was that Russia might establish its influence in this area probably in India, Eastern Persia or Afghanistan and might use it as a base to launch rebellions. During this time, the British were concerned about the safety of Afghanistan, so they decided to open negotiations. In a way or another, this decision changed when they were at ease when informed that Afghanistan “lay completely outside the sphere within which Russia might be called upon to exercise her influence” (qtd. In Barakat 16). But as a matter of fact, these claims are doubted because Russia would work hard to ensure close relations with Afghanistan, a strategic zone which serves as an opening gateway to the treasures of the Indian Ocean. Actually concerning this case, Russia increased pressure in the East, the other major theatre of the Great Game. In fact, Russia went to war with Turkey in 1877, and as in the words of Feifer, it reached the point of seizing the “keys to her house” from the Sultan, of course we are talking about Britain’s house. But Britain managed to secure its back when it called the support of Austria and Hungary (17).

5. The Afghanistan Story

The urging question that comes to any one’s mind is why a superpower of the 19th century such as the British Empire would, would be interested in a small, poor country in Central Asia? Throughout its history, Afghanistan has been as a buffer zone between various empires. While, the country in itself is not very rich with natural resources, it is because of its strategic location that empires wanted to have control over it. Afghanistan is the key to Central Asian oil pipelines that would be exerted, exported to world markets; the country also is the route to the raw materials of the Persian Gulf (19). It is for this reason, Afghanistan become a battlefield for continuous rivalry between great powers in the 19th century in a way to fulfill their main interests.
So the region opened the way to the reserves of Central Asia and the Caspian Sea which would be the world’s future.

In this context, Afghanistan provides a bridge between Central Asia, South Asian republics of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan and shares borders with Iran and Pakistan. Therefore, control of Afghanistan means control over the routes that lies between the Indian subcontinent and the resources of Central Asia. Thus the country seemed a potential chance for establishing control over the flow of oil reserves and to promote great powers’ interests in the region (Reuveny and Prakash 689). To understand the British insistence to control a region as Afghanistan, it is important to go back to history and exactly to1815. When France was out of the equation, after its defeat, Great Britain and Russia emerged as two main great powers. Great Britain was working hard to expand its colonies all over the world. Although Britain’s colonies in the Caribbean and Africa played a significant role, India was the most valued one; the country was the first financial contributor for Britain. It was clear that the British would do anything to guarantee India’s safety (689).

While Britain was extending its control and influence across the oceans, Russia was preparing for its resurgence and marking its existence on the scene. Despite its large size, Russia was determined to enlarge its borders, and all this due to the benefits that Britain had from its colonies. In this case, Russia could not expand westwards without fight with its neighboring states (Prussia and Austria), nor it could move North and East due to open oceans. Therefore, the only suitable solution was to expand south into Central Asia and the Indian Ocean. Secretary of State for India, Lord Ellenborough, concluded that: “Russia will attempt, by conquest or influence, to secure Persia as a road to the Indus [River], I have the most intimate conviction” (qtd. In
Feifer 86). This claim become real when Russia in 1825 took over the region of what is now, Kazakhstan. Then after 3 years, the Russians took over Armenia. Observing all these changes of Russia’s continued expansion in Central Asia; the British were becoming more and more concerned. As a result of this, Britain had signed an agreement with Persia for mutual defense. This deal stated that if any power threatened or attacked Persia, Britain would help either by money or military support.

After the Russian attempts to take over Armenia, Persia urgently asked the British for help, but what was not expected that Britain would refuse. Feeling betrayed Persia began exploring new agreements and relations with Russia. In this context, The British had lost Persia, now they decided to look for other possible alliances in the region, so the target was Afghanistan. In 1836, British Captain Alexander Burnes was sent to Afghanistan to arrange a meeting with the Afghan ruler, Dost Mohammed Khan who was seen as an old ‘friend’. Because of the relationship that brought the two together a few years earlier in Central Asia (Tanner 135). On this perspective, Burnes found that Dost Mohammed was ready to an alliance against the Russians, but mainly the Dost was more interested in resolving another obstacle, getting back the strategic city of Peshawar, which was undertaken by the Sikhs. However there was a complication, the Sikhs already had their alliance with the British. Favoring an alliance with Afghans, Captain Burnes suggested that governor-general of India, Lord Auckland, build an alliance with Dost Mohammed who was clearly cooperative with the British and could make a strong ally, but Lord Auckland refused to risk his secured mutual alliance with the Sikhs, for uncertain, potential alliance with Afghanistan (Tanner 136).
6. The First Anglo-Afghan War 1839-1842

Late events of 1837 would have a significant role on British policy towards Afghanistan. In November 1837, a Persian army reinforced by Russian troops seized the city of Herat, in western Afghanistan. The Afghans managed to hold back the combined Persian/Russian army, due to the help that the British introduced. The second event that pushed the British to choose the path of war was the arrival of Colonel Ivan Vitkevich to Kabul in December 1837. When Dost Mohammed met with Colonel Vitkevich, Lord Auckland’s worst fears came true. However, despite the meeting with the Russian agent, Dost Mohammed was favoring, hoping for an alliance with the British. These events confirmed British suspicions that the Russians were really interested in Afghanistan, which was seen as an urging desire to control India. By these turning points, however, Lord Auckland was already convinced that Amir Mohammed must be removed from Afghanistan. In early 1838, Lord Auckland finally responded to Dost Mohammed’s demands for alliance (138). Auckland sent Dost Mohammed a note in which he revealed his conditions:

You must desist from all correspondence with Persia and Russia; you must never receive agents from [them] …without our sanction; you must dismiss Captain Vitkevich with courtesy…In return for this, I promise to recommend to the Government that it uses its good offices with its ancient ally, Maharaja Ranjit Singh… (qtd. In Darwin 12).

Additionally, it is important to know that in this period Afghans and Sikhs of Iran were in continuous dispute. Respectively, Dost Mohammed in hope of forcing the British to offer a better deal, he opened negotiations with the Russians, Vitkevich. In this case, Auckland concluded that the Dost was infidel, when he subsided with the
Russians and accepted to build relations. In October 1838, Lord Auckland was literally insistent on occupying Afghanistan, so the first thing to do was making plans for restoring the former ruler of Afghanistan, Shah Shuja and in the same time introducing a set of proposals as a condition of his return. His restoration of the throne would be accomplished by the help of the Sikhs under Ranjit Singh. However, when hearing about Auckland’s demands, neither Shah Shuja accepted nor the Sikhs were satisfied about these requests and the result was an immediate rejection (Tanner 140).

So taking this position, neither the Afghans nor the Sikhs would reach a final agreement with the British; so the British were determined to make their final preparations for the invasion of Afghanistan. In December 1838, a force of British soldiers was decided to depart from India to occupy Afghanistan. So, it is obvious that the First Anglo-Afghan War had begun. From their first steps in the region, the British had faced troubles, the first challenge was mainly hostile resistance, harsh climate because the region was mountainous and soon they suffered a shortage of supplies. But later on, the British felt relieved when Alexander Burnes, managed to fulfill their required needs. After a while in early May 1839, the British arrived at a major Afghan city: Kandahar and they were hoping that their man would be welcomed by the Afghans as an Amir, but unfortunately this was not the case (Tanner 142).

The next challenge for the British was the stronghold of Ghazni, which stand between the city of Kandahar and Kabul, Afghanistan’s capital. Ghazni was defended by a force of about 3,500 men ruled by one of Dost Mohammed’s sons. Accordingly, the British did not surrender and looked for the weakest link in Ghazni’s defense which was the Kabul Gate (143). After a while, the gate was heavily bombed and destroyed. In this event, both the British and Afghans suffered great casualties among
their troops. As a final point, the British took control and at the end achieved victory. As a result, Dost Mohammed became desperate and eventually fled to the mountainous passes of the Hindu Kush.

It appears that the news of the quick and determined manner in which we took possession of Ghazni, completely paralyzed the population of Kabul and Dost Mohammed’s army; and that...all his hopes were terminated by a division in his camp, and the greater part of his army abandoning him; and finding that our army was fast advancing upon him,…Dost Mohammed fled… (qtd. In Darwin 18).

After two weeks, the British entered Kabul with Shah Shuja without any opposition. However, as experienced previously in Kandahar, only few welcomed Shuja’s restoration in Kabul. In this case, the British crowned Amir Shuja a king and did not leave Afghanistan as planned before, because he would be removed from power as soon as possible. “Shah Shuja was formally installed here as king of Afghanistan, without, however, any symptom of the interest or enthusiasm which we were led to expect on the part of his subjects” (qtd. In Keen 156). The period 1840-1841 was coined mainly by two events, Dost Mohammed’s surrender to the British, and eventually his exile to India. The second was the strong revolt of the powerful Ghilzai tribe of eastern Afghanistan which attacked British supplies permanently and this made the situation even worse for British soldiers (Keen 159). Consequently, it became obvious that the British should have a permanent presence in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, because of large costs, most of the British soldiers were sent to India, only smaller forces were left in Kabul, Kandahar, and also in Ghazni. Accordingly, the British established permanent bases in these regions. At this point, what started as a
small protest in Kabul against the British was now a national rebellion by tribesmen across the country.

Still, though Afghanistan may be for the moment tranquil, our prospects there are far from cheering….we are hated as both strangers and infidels, and as the interested supporters of an unpopular dynasty; and any disaster which befell our arms, any material reduction of the army of occupation, would be followed by an instant and universal revolt of all the tribes (qtd. In Keen 164).

For the next coming weeks, the Afghans would be engaged with the British in several fighting’s. To begin with, on November 23, the British launched an attack on the strategic location of the Beymaroo Heights; the attack was destructive and a total disaster. It is noteworthy that casualties from both sides were high, but fortunately at the end of the battle, the Afghans gained victory (166). Captain George Lawrence commented: “I could see from my post our flying troops hotly pursued and mixed up with the enemy, who were slaughtering them on all sides; the scene was so fearful that I can never forget it” (93). Negotiations began between the British and Afghans after the death of Sir William Macnaghten, a peace treaty was signed and on January 6, 1842, the British army began it’s withdrawn from Afghanistan, region by region back to India. Therefore, life in Afghanistan returned to be normal. Dost Mohammed was freed from India, and returned to continue his rule in Afghanistan. As John William Kaye, former soldier and historian stating the British defeat in the First Afghan War, “No failure as total or overwhelming as this is recorded in the page of history. No lesson so grand and impressive is to be found in all the annals of the world” (145).

In this context, i can conclude that during the First Afghan war, Britain tried hard to maintain Afghanistan as a potential ally. Or as it was called a ‘buffer’ state
which in a way or another served to hold its constant fear of the Russian Southward expansion into Central Asia. Mainly, Afghanistan was seen as a foothold in the region. Another motive was that it feared a threat to the position of British India, which was the most important colony among Britain’s other colonies. The region also served as an opening gateway to the oil and gas treasures of the Indian subcontinent and the riches of Central Asia. From the analysis of the British intervention of Afghanistan, it is important to shed light on Britain’s imperialistic foreign policy that surfaced during the first encroachment on the region. Thus, it is obvious that this policy was mainly an expansionist, imperialist move to establish its influence and domination in the region. But, during this brutal war, Afghanistan showed that there was no power that could subjugate the free and prode people, tribesmen of this region. Consequently, the First Afghan War ended as an expensive and destructive failure for the British.

7. The Second Anglo-Afghan War 1878-1880

After the end of the First Anglo-Afghan War, Russia continued to increase its advance into Central Asia. In 1868, they seized Samarqand nowadays Uzbekistan and also took over Bukhara, which became their protectorate. This progress troubled British officials, who were convinced that this expansion threatened their hold in India. In 1873, both parties agreed that the land that they were fighting over was an Afghan territory, so Russians would not invade it. In the same perspective, the British would be allowed also to influence Afghanistan’s foreign policy (O’Ballance 68). Accordingly, the Afghan Amir, Sher Ali, was not invited on these negotiations between Russians and the British. In this moment, in Britain, government changed its motives and objectives about involvement in Afghanistan; the British intentions aimed to establish a Forward Policy concerning Afghanistan. As observed by Barfield, “..., [the Forward Policy] demanded more direct control over Afghan affairs; at a
maximum, it foresaw the dismemberment of Afghanistan into its component regions and their incorporation into British India” (140).

Unlike the First Anglo-Afghan War, the British admired much more direct control over Afghanistan in this second war. As a direct consequence of this policy, in 1876, the British military took over Quetta in Baluchistan, a decision taken in favor of the Forward Policy. Lord Edward Lytton, the new British viceroy in India, wanted to rule Afghanistan as a province governed by a permanent British representative in Kabul. However, the Amir Sher Ali refused this demand. Tensions began to rise and finally exploded in July 1878 when the Russians forced an unwelcomed diplomatic agent in Kabul, against the wishes of the Amir. When the British heard the news they insisted again to send the British agent to the region. But this was not accepted by Sher Ali, eventually, this decision officially triggered the Second Anglo-Afghan War, so Britain declared war and invaded Afghanistan in November 1878 (O’Ballance 75).

When the British invaded Afghanistan, Amir Sher Ali asked the Russians for help, but in the end they refused his request. By January 1879, the British under the command of Cavagnari easily occupied Jalalabad. Upon the death of Sher Ali in February 1879, the British supported the ascension of his son, Yaqub Khan. The new king made a peace agreement with the British which resulted in signing the Treaty of Gandamak in May 1879. The treaty granted British India the Khyber Pass. It also allowed the British to hold a permanent mission within the borders of Afghanistan. All these attempts were established to control Afghan foreign policy. Tensions rose and some local residents killed Cavagnari and his guards in Kabul (77).

In response to this event, the British then occupied Kabul in October 1879 under the command of General Frederick Roberts, after this Amir Yaqub Khan was
sent to exile in India. The British now exercised a direct rule on Afghanistan. Yet the
game was not over, Afghans and the British fought again in the battle of Maiwand on
27 July 1880. In this round, Afghans achieved victory over the British and Indian
troops. But later on the British would fight Ayub Khan’s, new Amir of Afghanistan,
forces and beat them. The result was that Ayub Khan surrendered and the Second
Afghan War was officially over. After the mission was accomplished, British officials
finally settled Abdur Rahman, nephew of the former Amir Sher Ali, Amir of
Afghanistan (Barfield 147). During his rule, Abdur Rahman allowed the British to
influence Afghan foreign policy, by allowing diplomatic agents to take control in
Kabul. All this was in favor of the British support for his rule in the region. He was
named the’ Iron Amir’ because of his centralized government, harsh rule and severe
taxes which mainly provoked dissatisfaction, hostilities among the population. Barfield
writes:

By the end of his reign, he had created a powerful police state in which even
subversive talk that might offend the Amir could land a person in jail or worse.
The level of violence it took to bring Afghanistan to such a state has frequently
been overlooked by historians and later political leaders, who instead lauded
the Amir’s ability to bring order to such a fractured land (147).

From this perspective, the Second Anglo-Afghan War stressed an insisting
reality about a long standing history of a world superpower as the British Empire in the
19th century. However, this position did not prevent Britain from exploiting a territory
that is not desired in itself but for its potential location as a buffer zone, only to
accomplish self-interest and imperialism. In this regard, late nineteenth century
triggered a furious imperial competition between Russia and Britain which established
Afghanistan as an open battlefield for outside interventions. Therefore, British forces worked hard to subjugate Afghanistan trying both, direct and indirect control, but the country confirmed its long standing identity, autonomy and legacy in the face of all powers. To conclude with, during the second time in its history, Afghanistan could stand and defeat a superpower as Britain only by traditional warfare, tribesmen determination and hope to leave free.

8. The Third Afghan War 1919

After the death of Amir Abdur Rahman in 1901, his son Habibullah took over the throne; it was during his reign that attempts to modernize Afghanistan had begun. The new Amir maintained a policy of neutrality during World War I and resisted any pressures that would affect his ambitions of modernization. Afghanistan’s fears of foreign interventions that threatened its stability had not disappeared, and the progress of the Soviet Empire meant that the region again would become a buffer zone between Russia and Britain. In this second phase of the Great Game, King Amanullah succeeded his father, and in his early days, he declared a full independence of Afghanistan. A jihad against the British took place. As a result, attacks on British India’s northern frontier were in position, all this triggered and lead to the third and last Anglo-Afghan war. However, it is important to know that the war was short, it was a conflict of borders and it finally ended with Afghanistan achieving its complete independence (Barfield 150).

From another angle, in 1921, Afghanistan and the Russians signed a pact of Friendship, a mutual alliance. They provided the Amir, Amanullah with assistance in the form of money, and military equipment. The British imposed sanctions on Afghanistan as a response to the deal affirmed with the Russians, when they lost any
signs of agreement (153). However, it is noteworthy that both the Soviets and the British tried to take advantage of the circumstances that characterized this period. In this context, both powers began to show a mutual interest and a sense of association mainly with the beginning of 2\textsuperscript{nd} World War. It was a period that brought the two powers of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, Britain and Russia on one foot of cooperation. Consequently, this phase of the ‘Great Game’ between the two great powers came to an end.

From all this one conclusion comes to my mind, it is clear that Afghanistan’s history was an open theatre of revolts, long civil wars among the various ethnic groups that constitutes the country, and most importantly foreign interventions. Yet, Afghans from the beginning insisted on getting their freedom. They always confirmed that they are free people above any sort of domination and external rule. Focusing on this particular aspect, it is obvious that the British tried many times to subjugate Afghanistan and Afghans but in each time they fail to achieve their goals. So once again, the British could not seize Afghanistan during their Third and last war in 1919. And confirmed that this game, the ‘Great Game’ was a complete failure in the history of the world’s superpower: the British Empire.

9. Afghanistan: Theatre of the New Great Game

The Soviet Union vs. USA

It is clear that the continuous struggle, the famous Great Game between Russia and Britain was over for good. But once again Afghanistan’s fate has been determined, by its strategic position on the globe. Most commentators see the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan as a clear act of assault by an authoritarian state. But in reality the situation was more complicated than it seems (Feifer 52). For more than a year, Soviet leaders rejected Afghan communist government’s requests to send troops to hold down
rebellions by the rural population. These protests were as a result of Taraki’s regime. After the Soviets intervened in this dilemma, they found their selves trapped in a conflict frankly speaking, a civil war that does not end. However, it is important to understand that Leonid Bogdanov close ties with Afghanistan’s first communist president, Mohammed Taraki, were a principal cause of the Soviet invasion. Taraki’s assassination offended the Soviets. Nevertheless, this incident served more as an alleged reason ‘pretext’ for action than a motive. In this context, the Soviets installed Babrak Karmal in place of the deceased president (Tripathi 11).

Another key factor in Moscow’s intervention was the Cold War, which served as a background for Afghanistan’s internal conflict. From another perspective, the Soviets tried to justify their own interference in a sovereign state’s affairs by directing accusations against the Americans for planning to invade Afghanistan. Actually this was true in a way that Washington insisted on expanding its influence, of course by marking its presence in Afghanistan. The Soviets were determined not to allow Afghanistan fall under the control of their superpower rival, especially, after spending decades on the country’s leadership in an attempt to establish hegemony and domination. Also the Soviet leaders supposed that Afghanistan’s closeness to Soviet Central Asia would be a threat, mainly fearing anticommunist activities among the large Muslim population in these regions (Feifer 54).

Consequently, in 1979, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in search of, as the British wanted before, establishing a foothold, a “buffer state” in the region. Both powers began with conquering the main cities in Afghanistan and later on installed their puppet ruler in the region. However, the Soviets were unable to exercise dominance over the resistant tribesmen of Afghanistan. In this context, Afghan rebels declared a jihad against the intruders. In this period, 1984, the USA began its
interference in the region, by helping Afghan Mujahideen in their war against the Soviets, mainly through providing weapons, money and training campuses led by CIA professionals. And as usual Afghans achieved victory. In 1988, after their failure, Soviets leadership agreed to withdraw from Afghanistan (58).

In this regard, however i come to conclude that the withdrawal of Soviet Union from Afghanistan affected the region heavily, mainly opening the way for the US to become the only superpower. It also weakened the USSR economically and internally and finally played an important role in its collapse. Soviets departure from the country also generated and helped in the emergence of war lords. In this period, various Afghan Mujahedeen leaders who had lot of weaponry and influence set out their strong hold in the area which inevitably led to hostilities and eventually civil wars. Another consequence was the rise of extreme Fundamentalism. The Afghan resistance against the Soviet occupation was based mainly on Islamic Jihad, a feature that empowered fundamentalism. As a result, all this transformed Afghanistan into a haven state, harboring terrorists from all over the world. And opened the way, prepared the region for a new era of suffering under the control of Taliban.

The Taliban, this group surfaced as a movement of former Mujahideen mostly Pashtuns as a reaction to the disorder, oppression and warlords. In their early days, they worked hard on removing warlords, providing order, and imposing strict form of Islam in the country. They seized Afghanistan, first by capturing Kandahar in 1994. Then continuing their ‘Islamic and reformist’ mission, the Taliban established their government in the Kabul in 1996. By the end of 1998, they occupied about 90% of the country (Nafeez 13-14). So, this group surfaced on the scene as a result of USA help in the 1890’s to hold back the Soviet expansionism. Later on this would have disastrous
effects on the United States, mainly when this fundamentalist group launches attacks on the Pentagon and the Twin Towers in 11\textsuperscript{th} September 2001.

To conclude with, the Soviet war in Afghanistan again confirmed that no power ever can easily conquer that land, in which the British in the nineteenth century tried three times to subjugate the country and eventually failed, in their continuous struggle with the Russian Empire for decades in what came to be called the Great Game. But Afghanistan’s long history of fighting back confirmed that Afghans are free tribesmen no power or no one could control their absolute freedom. So they fought fiercely against outside encroachers until they reached their independence.

**Conclusion**

In the nineteenth century, Britain surfaces as one of the leading powers in world politics. It was perceived as the most pre- eminent nations which would compete and inevitably maintain its influence and domination. This could be achieved easily mainly because the country’s strong empire and also its position as one of the influential and major nations in the scene with a long standing history of colonization and imperialism. In this period, Britain’s concerns mainly grew due to Russia’s southward expansion into Central Asia. More importantly, the British feared over its colonial possessions primarily, their hold in British India which was considered “the jewel” of the British Empire. These interlocking interests between the two generated a continual struggle which eventually would lead to what was known as the “Great Game”.

In this dilemma, Britain fiercely defended its position in the face of the raising communist Russia. The conflicting interests between the two powers raised an insisting significance in Afghanistan. The region served as a buffer state which would
prevent Russian movement into British India, the most important colony of the British Empire. It is important to note also that the region is an opening gate to the resources of Central Asia and the Indian Continent. In this way Afghanistan entered in the equation, and this would have catastrophic consequences on the country. In the “Great Game” between Britain and Russia, the British fought three wars with Afghanistan mainly to serve their imperialistic motivations. From their first steps in the region, British troops had strong confrontations from the Afghan mujahidin. In the three Anglo- Afghan wars, (1839-1919) the British tried hard to control Afghanistan and subjugate its people, but they unfortunately failed to fulfill their mission basically because of strong confrontation and the fierce battles they have with Afghans who were get the British out. And this was the case, after a long tricky way of uprisings, battles, and suffering, Afghanistan achieved its full independence.
ENDNOTES


2 Trust territories indicates a situation when a foreign country controls the external affairs of another country not by military occupation but by using economic sanctions, as a protectorate or using concessions to explore its resources. For instance: Britain’s concession over Iran’s oil.

3 Arab nationalism is a desire for self determination, self government and the full control of internal and external affairs of their countries.

Chapter 2

British Foreign Policy and U.S.-UK Special Relationship

Introduction

In the twenty-first centuries, the United Kingdom continued its expansionist imperialistic movements and it followed an active foreign policy mainly under Blair. From his early steps in government, he showed insisting motivations of changing Britain’s foreign policy. He was characterized by introducing an active, interventionist initiatives that would serve Britain’s own interests. This can be seen in Britain’s continued involvement in many conflicts around the world, for instance, Blair’s participation in the wars in the Gulf, the Balkans, and recently his interventions in Afghanistan and the Iraqi war. Under Blair, British foreign policy saw a renewed age of multilateral cooperation.

His main attitudes focused on positioning Britain at the heart of the international stage. By maintaining a close connection with Europe and in the same time building and reserving a unique relationship with the United States. Blair worked hard to make Britain a linking “bridge” between the two sides. And demonstrated that only by sustaining a joint cooperation, western powers could face the challenges of this changing world mainly the threats of global terrorism. From their early history, the UK and USA had some shared aspects that would be the basis for their future special relationship. The coming of Blair into office made this a reality; Blair’s insisting approaches on maintaining a close link with the United States generated a sense of mutual connection between the two leaders. This special
relationship between the two allies had seen many ups and downs since its foundation and it was and still an interesting subject for debate. So what constitutes this “special relationship” and importantly what makes it “special”?

1. British Foreign Policy under Blair

Since the end of the World War II, British foreign policy has tried constantly to play a “three sided” influential role in the world. And this mainly surfaced by establishing a unique position within the Empire or Commonwealth of Nations; with the United States; and with Europe. It is worth remembering that the three circle equation; Empire, Europe and the US can be used as the starting point for the analysis of Blair’s foreign policy. The image of the three interlocking sides that represented Britain’s position in the world was mentioned by Prime Minister Winston Churchill during a speech to the Conservative party conference in 1948 (Deighton 9). Later, as Britain’s empire in Africa came to an end, the Commonwealth connections became an apparent burden. As a result, the British government shifted its role from three sided circle to “two directed mission”, the United States and Western Europe, with the United Kingdom acting as the “bridge” between them (Wallace 55).

Since the end of the Cold War, the British government has emphasized its conduct on the great role of multinational corporations in a way to accomplish its main goals of a mutual and cooperative foreign policy. The first one is an urging necessity to multilateral cooperation. The second is the stressing need to be America’s closest partner. The third is achieving a leading role in Europe (Deighton10). These principles have been used as a ground framework for understanding Britain’s foreign policy and conduct in the world.
Since Blair became Prime Minister in 1997, the primary vision of his administration was not totally distinctive from the previous approach of its predecessors. The Blair Administration has demonstrated clearly its multilateral approach. Strong expressions of multilateralism were evident during the new Labour’s period in power. The approach emphasized the United Kingdom’s global interests in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), NATO, the European Union (EU) and others. Above all; there was an effort to find a sense of balance between the relationship with the United States and that with Europe at the heart of Blair’s strategy. In a way that the British government insisted that the United Kingdom would remain the closest ally of the United States. It also claimed to be at “the centre of Europe” and repeatedly made the presuming claim that it was the link between Europe and the United States (12). As Blair described it to his audience on 10th November 1997:

[British foreign policy should aim to be] strong in Europe and strong with the United States. There is no choice between the two. Stronger with one means stronger with the other. Our aim should be to deepen our relationship with the United States at all levels. We are the bridge between the United States and Europe. Let us use it (qtd. in Wallace 54).

2. Atlanticism in British Foreign Policy

Atlanticism is a philosophy of cooperation among European and North American nations concerning political, economic, and defense issues. According to a theory, Atlanticism has provided a basis foundation for American engagement in the construction and continuation of global order after 1945. On reaching this point, it
revealed that the international organizations had been established under the leadership of the United States mainly because it dominated world affairs. In this regard, leading powers had established their own conventional customs, laws and institutionalized diplomacies, which were acceptable and reliable by America’s allies and partners. It is important to note that since the post-Cold War era, the relationship between America and Europe has begun to transform from a true friendship with a strong-shared vision and common values, into a “coalition of the willing” with many non-willing states (Daalder 121).

Therefore, the United Kingdom has tried to bridge the gap between the United States and Europe. William Wallace, Professor of International Relations, cited: “British foreign policy has tried to punch above its weight for the past half-century, while balancing between different sets of international allegiances” (57). Douglas T. Stuart, an Assistant Professor of Political Science, stated that it has been difficult for the United Kingdom to sustain its role as a bridge between the United Kingdom and Europe. But he continues to argue that the British have sixty years of experience to count on. To reach this goal, successive British governments have followed the familiar strategy of seeking to persuade the United States to view the United Kingdom as its most trustworthy and effective ally and then using this special status in its relations with other European countries (37).

When Blair came to office, it was obvious that he is an “Atlanticist”. One of his impressive strategies of foreign policy focused on how to enhance a relationship with Europe, while the United Kingdom still playing a leading and self-confident role. At the same time the UK government was concerned about how to balance the relationship with the European Union while binding special relations with the United
States. In his first key note speech on foreign policy, Blair insisted, “We must end the isolation of the last twenty years and be a leading partner in Europe” (qtd. in McCausland and Stuart 135). Once again, Blair set out this ambition in a speech in the autumn of 1999. He concluded that Britain had lost an empire and failed to find a role. Blair argued, “we have a new role...not as a superpower but as a pivotal power, as a power that is at the crux of the alliances and international politics which shape the world and its future” (136).

Acting as a bridge across the Atlantic, Blair made good progress until Bush came to office in 2000. Since Bush became President of the United States, his foreign policy has been focused on a unilateral approach. Following a unilateralsm approach led other European countries to react against the United State’s power which in many occasions affected the stability of these entities. It is clear that there have been an increasing loss of mutual trust and interest in the value of the partnership between the two sides of the Atlantic. Many arguments in contemporary European debate are raised in order to find ways to restrain the continuing expansion of American hegemony. Critics point out that European countries need to balance American dominance by establishing European institutions and building a competing center of power. For instance, President Jacques Chirac took the initiative of building a coalition that was intended to counterbalance American unilateralism and to put a multilateral approach as its first priority (Jackson and Towle 52). As Chirae stated:

When you look at the evolution of the world, you see that quite naturally a multipolar world is being created, whether one likes it or not. It's inevitable... That means our relations between the European Union and the United States will have to be relations of complementarily and partnership
between equals. Otherwise it will be a different world, which is not what
France observes and wants (qtd. in Jackson and Towle 57).

To many, the growing difference of power between the United States and
European countries is becoming a crisis in transatlantic relations. It was demonstrated
that Americans and Europeans are growing apart. Robert Kagan, an American
neoconservative scholar and political commentator, pointed out: “It’s time to stop
pretending that Europeans and Americans share a common view of the world or even
that they occupy the same world” (qtd. in Gordon 71). Ivo H. Daalder, a senior fellow
at the Brookings Institution, expected that the one crucial consequence of the
differentiation of power is the effective end of Atlanticism. He stated: “American-
European foreign policies no longer centre on the transatlantic alliance to the same
overriding extent as in the past” (150).

It has been suggested that the United Kingdom government has no influence
on the United States. So it is useless to offer advice to the American empire. Peter
Riddell, a leading political commentator, argued that the alliance between the British
and the United States over Afghanistan has been a bond of convenience and
circumstance, not of an ideological unity. He pointed out that Bush and Blair have
different approaches. Riddell stated: “The former is nationalist in origin and
application, while the later is internationalist” (90). In addition, the United Kingdom
has also been damaged by supporting the United States in the war on terrorism
resulting in the United Kingdom’s diminished influence in Europe. Therefore, it is
very important for the United Kingdom to detach itself away from the United States
and to pay more attention to improve its relationship with Europe. This pressure has
put the United Kingdom in a difficult situation. In a way that Bush’s neo-conservative
view has become one of the most important challenges facing Blair’s foreign affairs. In this context, Blair’s own strategy is questioned mainly due to his efforts to find a new position in order to balance the relationship with the United States and that with Europe (Daalder 154).

In an age of American domination and influence, Blair disagrees with the critics’ opinions who call for “the end of Atlanticism”. In a speech about international hegemony, he confirmed his support of Atlanticism, when he stated that there needs to be a strong alliance to deal with the world problems, especially the terrorism threats. From Blair’s point of view; conflicts can be solved by maintaining a strong alliance and supporting an active foreign policy of engagement not isolation. Blair realizes that it is difficult to become a true friend with the United States. Moreover, he insisted that the United Kingdom would not always agree with America. However, he continues to argue that instead of being against the American hegemony, the United Kingdom has urged Europe to cooperate with the United States in order to promote the long-term interests of the world (155). Blair concluded:

The danger with America today is not that they are too much involved. The danger is they decide to pull up the drawbridge and disengage. We need them involved. We want them engaged. The reality is that none of the problems that press in on us can be resolved or even contemplated without them. Our task is to ensure that with them, we do not limit the agenda to security. If our security lies in our values and our values are about justice and fairness as well as freedom from fear, then the agenda must be more than security and the alliance include more than America (qtd. in Blair 22).
After the 11th September attacks, Blair’s foreign policy has been guided by the hope that Britain can combine its position as the closest friend of the USA, one of foreign policy leaderships in the EU. Blair tried to manage bilateral meetings with some European leaders and with President Bush. Blair and other heads of states and governments attended an urgent meeting in Brussels, at which an action of anti-terrorism was discussed and approved. The European Foreign Secretary and other government ministers attended special sessions of the EU Council, at which initiatives to combat terrorism at an international level were taken (McCormick 426).

Blair’s foreign policy has been characterized as being proactive. In a way, that he sees engagement and intervention’s policies a moral consideration and a duty that should be fulfilled. In this case it is noteworthy that his beliefs tightened after the devastating attacks of 11 September on the United States. Blair’s interventionist foreign policy offended in a way or another many labour members. It is undoubtedly clear that Blair had a certain leadership and style that favored a proactive engagement foreign policy rather than isolation (Bogdanor 2). In this regard, Blair’s eager for deploying UK troops in many coalition conflicts especially Afghanistan and Iraq is generated from his growing conviction that Britain need to serve as a “force for good” in this globalized world. All these hints demonstrate that an active British foreign policy had been in practice under the Blair leadership. In the words of John Sawers, a former Blair foreign policy adviser concerning Blair’s policy, he stated: “Blair’s foreign policy record developed as time passed, i do not think that he came with a clear set of ideas he then delivered” (qtd. in Daddow 3).

Much of Blair’s foreign policy during his second term focused on foreign policy issues notably the “war on terror”, which began with the war in Afghanistan
2001 and later on with Iraq 2003. For this, the Blair's government was criticized for its controversial commitment to the ‘war on terror’ and its transforming measures to fight global terrorism. Many analysts argue that Blair’s own commitment was driven in essence by the so called ‘remarkable partnership’ with the Goerge W Bush administration. It is crucial however to reveal that the ‘war on terror’ by itself is a debatable dilemma, mainly because of its long- destined term and open ended consequences. Many commentators argue that it is a complicated process which in most cases lacked a sense of legitimacy and legality of its aims (Daddow 4).

During Blair’s second term also, Africa become an increasing priority. It is important to note that in February 2004, an international commission was established to examine the situation and policies directed toward the African Continent. In 2005, aid policies were underway to help the continent combat stressing issues mainly conflict, poverty and diseases. The Blair government worked hard on a series of domestic reforms during this second term. This included encouraging investment in public services, especially, health, education and transport. Also under the Blair leadership, issues of climate change were increasingly important mainly, UK’s support for the Kyoto Protocol (Blair 25).

Many observers argue that Blair’s active military initiatives mainly his interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq were undertaken to counter threats to Britain’s security. But this is not the case, in reality Blair’s aggressive interventionist motives brought more terrorist dangers to Britain’s national security both at home and abroad. In this context, they demonstrate that it is clear that under the leadership of Blair, Britain had become a less safe place (Morrison 8). All this had generated from his
unjustified engagements in many conflicts in the world. One can conclude that this became a reality when Britain came under attack in 7th July, 2005.

Under the Blair leadership, a mission of a powerful Britain with a standing position and a possible leadership of the world stage were underway. He urgently looked for a Great Britain with a glorious future stepping as a bridge between the USA and the European alliance. As well as, he insisted that the US would play a significant role in achieving this aim. But it is important to acknowledge that his ideologies were strongly condemned by many critics. Mainly in the media, who portrayed this devotion as a complete subjugation to USA’s foreign affairs? In this context, they continued to state that this ‘close relation’ affected Blair’s image in a way that he was seen as “Bush’s poodle” (Morrison10).

While the United States, the strongest military power in the world, hesitated over whether or not to cooperate with the NATO, Blair has insisted on renewing the American relationship with Europe by playing a leading role in NATO. Therefore, the United Kingdom tried to encourage Europe to commit to multilateralism to solve global problems. And particularly, stressing on issues concerning global terrorism. From this angle, the British government hoped that Europe’s general dedication to cooperative efforts would secure the gaps between the European states and America. And in the same time influence the United States to extend its multilateral approach (14).

In the anti-terrorist campaign, the United Kingdom is in need for a collective security, which promotes mutual and sustainable responsibilities for the management of terrorism threats. At its heart, The United Kingdom has respect for international law and fundamental human rights. Blair insisted that only by working together
countries would be able to overcome the threats they face. Due to all this, the United
Kingdom has been at the front position of efforts within NATO to transform it from
being a military alliance designed to defend its members. To a more focused union on
high-intensity war fighting and more importantly on stabilization operations.
Furthermore, Blair persuaded NATO to undertake the basis causes of terrorism
aboard. Blair’s policies focus on diplomacy, peacekeeping and nation-building
efforts, economic aid, and democracy-promoting support (McCormick 429). In this
perspective, Blair reported:

So I believe this a fight for freedom. And I want to make it a fight for justice
too. Justice not only to punish the guilty, but justice to bring those same
values of democracy and freedom around the world... The starving, the
wretched, the dispossessed, the ignorant, those living in want and squalor
from the deserts of Northern Africa, to the slums of Gaza, to the mountain
ranges of Afghanistan: they too are our cause (qtd. in Daalder 160).

While the United States has been positioned as the most influential and
greatest power of the world, the world is becoming increasingly interdependent.
Consequently, the United Kingdom needs to find a balance between its close
relationships with the United States from one hand and to determine its future
position toward Europe from another hand, the UK did not want to be restricted by
European relationships. Additionally, raising suspicion of Europe caused many
British people to refuse joining in a membership of a European organization; the EU
which they thought might be the reason for losing their identity and independence
(Daalder 161). It is clearly apparent that, no country is great enough to solve
problems alone, especially, in an age of globalization and threats of global terrorism.
More importantly, to win the war on terrorism, the United Kingdom needs to organize international coalitions and build institutions to deal with shared threats and challenges. The United Kingdom needs to guarantee that the United States and Europeans countries do not go in separate ways. The Blair government needs to convince both sides that despite their differences, in a world of interdependence and a stressing danger of global terrorism which threatens their national security, neither Europe nor America can undertake these issues independently (161). This is why they need to work together in a way or another to promote common interests around the world.

3. Anglo-American Relations

Prime Minister Winston Churchill once wrote, “Learn all you can from history, for how else can one even make a guess what is going to happen in the future . . . in history lie all the secrets of statecraft”. Churchill was right, and his guidance is especially appropriate in understanding the British foreign policy. The roots of the relationship between the United Kingdom and the United States reach far back to the 17th century, and this relationship has had ups and downs since its beginnings.

During the 20th century, the UK-US relationship evolved gradually into something like its present form in the years following the end of the Second World War (Brown 2). Professor Charles Skinner has argued that there have been three main drivers of the relationship in the postwar period.

Firstly, successive British Governments realized that they no longer had the capacity to protect British interests around the world, and quickly emphasized on the replacement of Britain by the United States as the world’s dominant power. Secondly, the UK believed that the most direct threat to British and European security was that
coming from the Soviet political and military power. And this could only be confronted if the United States was tightly drawn into the transatlantic community (3).

Finally, he believed that a “… the third driver of the special relationship was the mutual suspicion in Washington and London about a deepening of European political integration that could come at the expense of US engagement and influence in the Atlantic community” (qtd. in Skinner 5). As a result, during the period of the Cold War and beyond, Britain was one of the most supportive European allies of America within and outside the Atlantic area. This led to the building of a multilateral cooperation between the two allies in many fields, and this pushed and allowed each side to define the relationship as ‘special’ rather than just close (Skinner 6). In this context, it is noteworthy that during the second half of the 20th Century, the relationship between the US and the UK was one of the most influential partnerships in the global arena.

“Anglo-American relations” have a long standing history. This can be traced back to World War II, in which the historical heritage of the United States and the United Kingdom is seen as a basis foundation to their close diplomatic and military cooperation. At this time the United States was becoming the new imperial power, and in a way or another it was realized that Britain’s greatest chance to establish an effective international influence was to stay close to America (Eatwell 792).

According to Derek E. Mix, Analyst in European Affairs, many members of Congress and USA officials foresee the UK as the closest ally and reliable partner of the United States. It is noteworthy that this stand generated from a combination of shared factors. These mainly include a common sense of a shared history, values and a set of cultural
similarities. As well as a long established cooperation on a wide variety of policy and security matters (1-2). In this regard, it is clear that UK’s strong role during the last decade mainly its attitudes toward wars in Afghanistan and Iraq reinforced a sense of trust and solidarity between the two countries. For many commentators, this may be one of the influential reasons to reveal the various controversial aspects of the so called “special relationship” between the United Kingdom and the United States.

The term “special relationship” was first used by Churchill during his speech of March 1946. In the cold war era; Churchill believed that a close alliance between the UK and the USA was crucial, in order to maintain security and liberty in the west. He even insisted that these rights should be encouraged to the rest of the world. Furthermore; Churchill wanted the Anglo-American alliance to speak with a unified voice when dealing with potential threats. This is why he pushed and called for a “special relationship” between the two countries (Brown10). Similarly, Margaret Thatcher became a very famous international figure, having a very close personal relationship with President Ronald Reagan. The immediate friendship between the two leaders originated from their similar view of the world. Thatcher admired Reagan’s strong stand against Communism, and he in return regarded her view in opposing socialism, a very insisting motive for uprooting a dangerous illness that had overwhelmed England for a long time. Therefore, both of them entered office with the two major goals. First, it is important to reduce the increased interventionist government’s attitudes to a more manageable state. Second, their main purpose was to step and move on communism rather than coexisting with it. These fundamental agreements between Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan would provide the desirable ground for foreign policy cooperation between the two countries (12). It is clear that this relation would shape the future relations between the two countries.
After the end of the Cold War, international order has become characterized by a leading American Empire. Charles Krauthammer, political journalist, called it a “unipolar moment”. From this stand, it is important to note that the world now is dominated only by one unchallenged superpower, the USA. Which would obviously be the principal director controlling the rest of the international community. In this case, it is obvious that the United Kingdom widely confirmed that it could not act against American wishes. So, a close relationship between the United Kingdom and the United States generated over the years and it is often known as a “bargain relationship”, “junior partnership”, and the most used concept the “special relationship” (27).

In recent years, many observers argue that the UK-USA relationship is said to be losing its faith and relevance, mainly due to USA changing dynamics and shifting foreign policy priorities. They continue to demonstrate that there is an imbalance in power which is changing in the favor of the United States. And this occasionally led some British commentators to call for a reassessment of UK’s approach toward its relation with the USA. Despite these remarks, most analysts believe that the two countries will remain close allies. And they would choose to reserve their cooperation concerning various global issues such as counterterrorism, NATO’s mission in Afghanistan and different global economic challenges (Mix 5).

The special relationship between the United Kingdom and the United States has been an interesting subject of analysis and debate since ever. And mush was written in favor of this challenging subject by a variety of observers, analysts, and politicians from both countries. Years ago, President Goerge Bush described the special relationship between the two countries as “the rock upon which all dictators
this century have perished” (qtd. in McCausland and Stuart 113). In the 21 century, this relation renewed mainly with the arrival of George W Bush to Washington. In a way that he frequently described Britain as the most influential ally in the so called “global war on terror”. From his part, Prime Minister Tony Blair has an influencing effect on the American scene and he is widely admired by the American public. So in a way or another many commentators admit that there is a unique connection binding the two allies, the USA and UK (113).

Concerning the Bush-Blair relationship, it is generally stated that both men maintained a close relation and in the same time a strong friendship. Despite this many argue that in essence, Bush was known for his aggressive, unilateral foreign policy approaches. While, Blair was more open-minded, flexible and frequently insisted on multilateral approaches. In other words, President Bush insisted on carrying out his policies alone. Although, Blair’s important contributions toward the USA were of great deal from the beginning (Mix 5). Thus it is clear that Bush from his early steps in government pushed for an isolationist policy for the United States. But it was important for Britain to support America’s foreign affairs, in a way to fulfill its national interests as USA’s closest partner from one hand. And to maintain its hold and influence in the international arena as a connecting bridge between western powers.

Undoubtedly, it is clear that Blair himself inherited the same commitment as Thatcher. Due to the special relationship, Blair also pushed for progressive, active attitudes for the British government in its relations towards the United States. The British government has collaborated with the United States because it hopes that the special relations between the two countries can enable the United Kingdom to
influence American policy. While American dominance within the global order is likely to remain, the British government needs to ensure that the United States maintains its liberal approach for the anticipated future (McCausland and Stuart 114).

However, since Bush became President of the United States in 2000, it has been difficult for Blair to stay close to the United States in order to influence its foreign policy. In this context, Bush has demonstrated clear agendas for unilateralism and stressed his commitment on expanding global American domination. The United States, as the pre-eminent power of the world depended strongly on the unilateral exercise of American power rather than on international law and institutions to get its way (Mix 7). Observers state that he regarded organizations like the United Nations as an exclusively instrumental tool. The Bush Administration was willing to work through it, only if it secured its personal policies and served its interests in the first place. Evidently, the United States decisions demonstrated that it did not give much significance to the United Nations. For instance; the United States has rejected several initiatives on climate change. It also refused efforts to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention, even though the 2001 attacks clearly confirmed the dangers of biological terrorism. Furthermore, in 2002, the Bush Administration abandoned a treaty to establish an International Criminal Court (9).

After the 11 September attacks, Bush’s neo-conservative foreign affairs have been focused on his doctrine of preemption with a powerful confirmation on American hegemony. As a result, a strong sense of distrust has rapidly grown against the United States. Since Bush’s foreign policy was directed toward unilateralism, the special relationship between Britain and America was in an uncomfortable position. During the Bush Administration’s first months in office, the British government
rapidly adapted to the major shifts from the Clinton Administration to a new approach of the Bush presidency, unilateralism. From Blair’s point of view, the world would be unsafe and a risky place if the United States goes in its way alone and the British did not stay close. As a result, the United Kingdom must preserve its closeness to the United States, with the aim of influencing United States foreign policy in a more multilateral approach (Eatwell 792). It is clear from a speech by Tony Blair in 2003 that he expected that Anglo-American relations could influence the United States to enlarge its liberal approach. In his words:

The price of influence is that we do not leave the United States to face the tricky issues alone ... We should remain the closest ally of the United States, and as allies, influence them to continue broadening their agenda. We are the allies of the United States not because they are powerful, but because we share their values (qtd. in Eatwell 794).

Following the 11th September attacks; Blair has positioned the United Kingdom as the closest ally and supporter of the United States’ war on terrorism, affirming the various ties between the two countries. Blair realized that “only the most valuable expressions of solidarity with the United States would purchase any influence over the White House” (qtd. in Mix 11). The special relationship between the United Kingdom and the United States after the 11th September attacks can be divided into two parts. Firstly, the United Kingdom stood “shoulder to shoulder” with the United States in punishing the perpetrators of the 11 September terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon and willingly accepted the involved risks. Due to the kindness and solidarity of the United Kingdom, Bush rewarded its
efforts by stating that: “America has no truer friend than Great Britain” (qtd. in McCausland and Stuart 115).

Secondly, Blair became a “missionary for the international coalition” against terrorism. It is important to acknowledge that British military’s mission in Afghanistan may have been slightly limited, but it had a major job in the area of diplomacy. After the 11th September attacks, Blair played an important role in building an international consent, which would help the United States initiate its attacks on the Taliban. Additionally, before the Afghanistan war, Blair worked hard on gathering international support for the military action. Peter Riddell, a London Times columnist, declared that in the eight weeks after the 11th September attacks, Blair held 54 meetings with world leaders and traveled frequently to convince governments such as Russia and Pakistan to join the United States-led coalition on Afghanistan (115).

Also the United Kingdom served as a mediator between the United States from one side and countries which were suspected to be sponsors of terrorism from the other. By doing so, Blair was portrayed as “United States ambassador to the world” by British and American media. Blair’s solidarity with the American tragedy and his commitment to defeat terrorists and global terrorism made an impression on the Bush Administration, the American congress, and the public (Mix 13). In describing the Anglo-American relationship, John Hay, US ambassador to the court of ST. James and Blair’s biographer stated that Britain and USA are “bound by a tie we did not forge and which we cannot break, we are joint ministers of the same sacred mission of liberty” (qtd. in McCausland and Stuart 117).
4. U.S.-UK Cooperation

A. Political and Defense Cooperation

The U.S.-UK political relationship includes an extensive network of individuals from a wide variety of sectors. However, relations between these individuals and mainly national leaders are often analyzed by some observers as political representative agents for their countries. Prime Minister Tony Blair established a close personal relationship with both President Bill Clinton and President George W. Bush. The degree to which the UK influenced U.S. policy choices in a wide variety of issues as the war on terrorism, Afghanistan and Iraq, has been a topic of much debate. Some observers asserted that Blair played a crucial role in influencing USA’s foreign policy. For instance, in convincing the Bush Administration to work through the United Nations essentially in the case of Iraq war. Also, it is important to mention Blair’s insisting attempts on resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with a US help. Additionally, UK’s pressing efforts for an international peacekeeping presence in Afghanistan, which finally resulted in the creation of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) (Mix 15).

However, critics alleged that Blair and the UK did not benefit much from their support of U.S. controversial policies. Mainly stressing out that Blair was unable to prevent the Bush Administration from abandoning efforts to reach an inclusive international consensus regarding mainly Iraq in 2003. Also little progress was made on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Furthermore, U.S. response to Blair’s initiatives on issues such as climate change, development in the African continent was not promising. Characteristics of U.S’s supremacy and dominance were obvious in the
international scene. And this has caused many to characterize the UK as the “junior” partner in the relationship between the two countries (McCausland and Stuart 117).

In addition it is important to acknowledge that the relationship has often appeared to be more “special” to the UK than it is to the United States. As a result, Blair paid a high political price within his own party and mostly with the British public for his close alliance with President Bush. For this reason, the Blair-Bush years raise questions in the UK about whether future prime ministers might think twice about supporting controversial U.S. policies or whether they might make more explicit demands of the United States as the price for their support. Some British observers became anxious to affirm that British national interests come in the first place in deciding British policy. Furthermore, they continue to state that these interests are not always identical to U.S. national interests, and that the UK should not be excessively submissive to the United States in foreign policy issues (118).

There is a widespread agreement that the defence relationship between the UK and the US are a central piece in their relationship. According to Professor William Wallace, since the end of the Cold War, the UK has been the largest and the “most effective” supporter in most USA’s led conflicts. British financial and naval power was seen as America’s first line of defense against any ambitions, threatening the territorial integrity of the United States. For instance, British support for the US-led coalition was important mainly in the two Iraq wars in 1991 and 2003; and also the intervention in Afghanistan 2001. In this context, UK’s support for the United States was very valuable and it has been “influential to US policy”, and any withdraw by the UK would have significant effects on the US (118).
Within the area of cooperation, it was believed that closest military relationships existed between the two, American navies and British air forces. Also, British military and civilian officials have had privileged access to US defence planning. U.S and British forces have also established a widespread association with one another on training, equipment, intelligence and exchange arrangements. In this perspective, it is generally known that the United States is the largest overseas supplier of the UK Ministry of Defense. In turn, the UK is also the largest supplier to the U.S. Department of Defense (“Global Security: UK-US Relations” 13).

**B. Intelligence and Counterterrorism Cooperation**

Most analysts agree that the United States and the United Kingdom have a well-established, close and mutual cooperation concerning intelligence and counterterrorism relationships. Usually UK intelligence agencies cooperate with their U.S counterparts in information sharing, and frequently both of them serve as investigative partners. Although many details of their work remain secret, U.S -UK intelligence and counterterrorism cooperation has reportedly disrupted several terrorist operations against both countries in recent years (Mix 16). In addition to these efforts, U.S and UK officials work together on high intelligence operations concerning developments in countries such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Yemen. Although, intelligence and counterterrorism relationship is generally positive, there have been some tensions. Mainly, these are concerned with public accusations of British participation in USA’s torture of terrorist suspects in the years 2002-2003 (16).

There have also been some tensions about exile arrangements. In most cases, these frictions have been in relation to the suspects of terrorist actions. For instance,
UK’s measures on extraditing radical Islamists to the United States to face trial on related terrorism charges. U.S. officials were annoyed that the process took years to take affirmative actions. For its part, the British government has faced criticism mainly from those who argue that British citizens should have evidence against these suspects. And also they state that they should face trial in British courts before transporting them to another country. Some British observers even pointed out that under current arrangements, U.S. prosecutors are not required to present supporting evidence in cases related to the expulsion of suspected radical Islamists and terrorists (“Global Security: UK-US Relations” 15).

C. Economic Relations

There is a little doubt that economic and commercial relations are at the core of the existing “special relationship” between the USA and UK. The two countries have long been related by long and significant standing trade, investment, and commercial connections. And one can observe that a standing mutual relationship is tightly undergoing between the United States and the UK. These special ties between the two reflect to some extent the depth of the relationship that is existent. Despite the irregularity that characterizes the size of their own economies, the two countries are important trading partners. From one hand, the United States was the UK’s largest export partner, accounting for some 15 percent of UK exports. In imports, the United States was the UK’s second largest partner at 9.2 percent. From the other, the UK is the sixth largest overseas partner in trade in goods. In services, the UK is now competing with the Caribbean financial centers as the largest U.S. trading partner. Also, the UK is the most important partner of Washington concerning tourism (16).
Importantly, investment is the second influencing feature in the shared cooperation between the US and the UK. The UK is the top target for U.S. investment, accounting for 10 percent of total U.S. international investment and 28 percent of its investment in Europe. The total supply of U.S. investment in the UK is about 30 percent greater than the second most important destination for U.S. investors, Canada. These levels of contact in trade and investment are representing examples of a wide range of economic and business relations that connect the two countries together. There are two other areas which help in defining the wider position of relations. The first one is in financial markets, in which both countries are world powers. It is surprising that there are more U.S.-owned banks in London than in New York (Mix 18).

The second is in defense industry cooperation, in which strong bilateral and multilateral defense ties between the two countries are standing out. This cooperation extends from trade in defense equipment to technology sharing. Despite the shifts in world economic powers and the diverse nature of U.S. interests around the world, the UK does indeed represent an important set of bilateral relations with the United States. It is also a key player inside the EU. Furthermore, the special relationship implies that there is an open and good possibility that London could be a “bridge” between the United States and Europe on a varied set of issues, including trade liberalization, the pursuit of mutual determined interests with other EU members (18).

**Conclusion**

It is clear that Britain’s foreign policy changed noticeably since Blair took office. He introduced new policies that would put Britain in the heart of the international community. Since he stepped government, Blair emphasized his efforts
on multilateralism mainly pushing on cooperative approaches between the United States and Europe. He thought that this relation would in a way or another help Britain to maintain its own hold and establish a strong position within European powers. To fulfill his motives, Blair followed an active foreign policy that was built on a motivation of engagement and intervention. And this is obvious in his involvements in Afghanistan and Iraq. His interventionist policy was criticized mainly because of his close friendship and cooperation with the George Bush Administration. In a way that Blair was portrayed as “Bush’s poodle” and Britain’s foreign policy was obedient to the wishes of the USA.

From this one can conclude that it is risky to build a relationship and call it “special” as that of the UK-US relation mainly on conducting foreign policy or on a personal closeness between two leaders. Although, their joined collaboration can be seen a characteristic of a special relationship, but it does not consist the basis foundation for it. In other words, despite close personal relations between political leaders in world politics, their interests and conduct of foreign policy may be similar but definitely not identical. It is crucial to note that each one has his own interests in the light of this relationship. From this, entire one can conclude that Anglo-American relations are a mutual cooperation with substantial benefits.
END NOTES


2 The Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is an international treaty that sets binding obligations on industrialised countries to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. The UNFCCC is an environmental treaty with the goal of preventing "dangerous" anthropogenic (i.e., human-induced) interference of the climate system. There are 192 parties to the convention, including 191 states (all UN members, except Andorra, Canada, South Sudan and the United States) and the European Union. The United States signed but did not ratify the Protocol and Canada withdrew from it in 2011. The Protocol was adopted by Parties to the UNFCCC in 1997, and entered into force in 2005.

Chapter 3

United Nations Debate and the Invasion of Afghanistan

Introduction

It is generally known that UNSC is the only responsible body for taking action in any dispute and is capable to determine any violations to its principles. It is important to acknowledge that after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the USA condemned these atrocities and immediately claimed that al-Qaeda organization and its members are responsible for these actions. International support also condemned the attacks and showed its sympathy to the USA. The UK was the first one sided with the US and quickly responded to its demands for punishing the perpetrators of the attacks. In this context, the UNSC passed its resolutions regarding this issue. In this time USA proclaimed that these attacks are “acts of war” and accused the Taliban government in Afghanistan for sponsoring and providing a safe haven to al-Qaeda members.

In these circumstances, the US right away raised its right of self-defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter. From its part, the UK also adopted USA’s position and condemned the Taliban. So in a few weeks a plan of war was prepared for invading Afghanistan and hunt down al-Qaeda and its sponsors. The US and its coalition of the willing began their attack on Afghanistan on 7 October 2001, with an increased support from western countries especially the United Kingdom. USA’s primary mission was focused on hunting down al-Qaeda members, punishing and overthrow the Taliban government that helped them. However, it is important to note that this action was not authorized by the UNSC. In this case, how an armed attack was
launched on a sovereign state without a clear authorization from the UNSC? Is not this attack a violation to international law and the stability and security of a nation state?

1. UN Debate

In the beginning it is important to acknowledge that before 9/11 attacks; United Nations Security Council condemned the Taliban government for helping and providing a safe haven to al-Qaeda organization. In 1998, the council asked the Taliban in resolution 1214 to: “stop providing sanctuary and training for international terrorists and their organizations [namely, Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda], and that all Afghan factions cooperate with efforts to bring indicted terrorists to justice. . . .” More importantly, in 1999, the Council determined that: “the failure of the Taliban authorities to respond to the demands constitutes a threat to international peace and security. . . .” In the same context, the Security Council stated: “that the Taliban turn over Usama bin Laden without further delay. . .” (qtd. in McDonnell 263). Some argue that there is clear evidence that Taliban did provide training camps to large numbers of jihadists and allowed them to enter Afghanistan for the sack of training. In this case, it was said that the Taliban government cooperated in a way or another with the terrorists when it permitted them to act within its borders. However, some state that neither the Taliban have the power to control al-Qaeda organization or support it nor it directly funded or equipped its members. Since the Security Council issued its first resolutions, the Taliban openly refused its demands (264). In this context, many questions come to my mind, did Taliban’s ignorance of the council demands implied that a state, USA may use force against al-Qaeda or the Taliban in
Afghanistan? Was it apparent that Taliban adopted al-Qaeda’s actions as its own? Was USA led coalition of the willing justified?

It is important to acknowledge that the military campaign that took place in Afghanistan in 2001 was not explicitly mandated by the UN, in this case there was no specific Security Council Resolution that authorized the invasion. But it was apparent that this operation was widely supposed to be a legitimate form of self-defence under the United Nations Charter (Quigley 542). In this perspective, it is noteworthy that Article 2(4) of the UN Charter prohibits the “threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state” (“UN Charter, Article 2(4)”). However, it was recognized that there are only two other exceptions to this case: first, where a competent body of the UN, almost always the Security Council which alone may authorize the use of force. Without this authorization, any military action against another country is said to be illegal. Or second, in the situation where one nation attacked another one, on this ground, it has the ‘inherent right of individual or collective self-defense’ under article 51 of the Charter to react (Quigley 542). In the case of Afghanistan, this condition cannot be totally supported because Afghanistan did not attack the United States. Article 51 reads as follows:

Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the in inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security. Measures taken by Members in the exercise of this right of self-defence shall be immediately reported to the Security Council and shall not in any way affect the authority and responsibility of the Security Council under the present Charter to take at
any time such action as it deems necessary in order to maintain or restore international peace and security (“UN Charter, Article 51”).

Accordingly, the US and the UK reported to the UN their reasons for invoking the article mainly to justify their standing military action in Afghanistan. On this basis, the Taliban was considered the primary conspirator of the events of 9/11 and therefore, it became a justified and reasonable target for military action. It is important to note that Security Council Resolutions had already been passed requesting the Taliban to stop giving safe haven to al-Qaeda organization. In this context, Humanitarian law requires any action to be proportionate (Buckley and Fawn 53). In other words, this means that the use of military action against a given country must only be when it is necessary to resist an attack and prevent further attacks from happening, and it also requires minimal civilian casualties.

2. United Nations Resolutions after 9/11

On 12 September 2001, following the attacks on New York, Washington and Pennsylvania, the UN Security Council adopted its Resolution 1368. It condemned the 9/11 attacks and stated that it “regards such acts, like any act of international terrorism, as a threat to international peace and security”. It also expressed “its readiness to take all necessary steps to respond to the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, and to combat all forms of terrorism in accordance with its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations” (“Security CR 1368 (5)”). On this angle, it is clear that this is a very strong language in UN terms, in a way that the Security Council may authorize the use of force. From this perspective, Article (3) of the Resolution clearly gives a general authorization for action to bring the terrorists to justice:
Calls on all States to work together urgently to bring to justice the perpetrators, organizers and sponsors of these terrorist attacks and stresses that those responsible for aiding, supporting or harbouring the perpetrators, organizers and sponsors of these acts will be held accountable (7).

Nevertheless, the Resolution does not demonstrate what action is required or who is capable for taking it. The Resolution also identified the Security Council’s main responsibility for dealing with matters of international peace and security. But it did not impose on the right of self-defence7. On 28 September 2001, another Security Council Resolution, 1373 was passed. The resolution set out the actions that all states must take against terrorism, such as freezing accounts, exchanging police information, prosecuting terrorists, or facing economic sanctions (Quigley 543). Like Resolution 1368, 1373 gives general authorizations: states are required to “take the necessary steps to prevent the commission of terrorist acts” and to “cooperate, particularly through bilateral and multilateral arrangements and agreements, to prevent and suppress terrorists attacks and take action against perpetrators of such acts” (“SCR 1373”). Again this Resolution emphasizes the principle of self-defence and the necessity to act within the required provisions of the UN Charter and international law, but it is important to say that both Resolutions do not state clearly the use of military force; how to implement its requirements or against whom exactly.

As a matter of fact, the USA did not really seek for an authorized Resolution from the UN mainly due to its alleged right of self-defence, but in a way or another it have gained a legal support from the Security Council for its action in Afghanistan (Quigley 544).
3. The Self-Defence Justification for the Invasion

The invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001 was thus not conducted with the authorization of a specific UN Security Council Resolution. Instead, the United States and the United Kingdom said that their military action against Afghanistan was undertaken under the requirements of Article 51 of the UN Charter, which recognizes ‘the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence’ (13). In response to these outraging attacks, the USA and the UK reported to the United Nations Security Council on 7 October 2001 that they had begun the use of military force on the ground of self-defence, in which USA armed forces have initiated actions intended to prevent and discourage further attacks on the United States. These actions include measures against Al-Qaeda terrorist training camps and military installations of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan (Smith and Thorp 2). In this regard, the US stated that:

The attacks on 11 September 2001 and the ongoing threat to the United States and its nationals posed by the Al-Qaeda organization have been made possible by the decision of the Taliban regime to allow the parts of Afghanistan that it controls to be used by this organization as a base of operation. Despite every effort by the United States and the international community, the Taliban regime has refused to change its policy. From the territory of Afghanistan, the Al-Qaeda organization continues to train and support agents of terror who attack innocent people throughout the world and target United States nationals and interests in the United States and abroad (qtd. in Smith and Thorp 3).

From its part, the United Kingdom affirmed its military readiness to be engaged in operations against the targets that are involved in the action of terror against the United States of America. In this context, the UK stated that: “…forces
have now been employed in exercise of the inherent right of individual and collective
self-defence, recognized in Article 51, following the terrorist outrage of 11
September, to avert the continuing threat of attacks...” It continued to state that: “this
military action … is directed against Osama Bin Laden’s Al Qaeda terrorist
organization and the Taliban regime that is supporting it” (qtd. in McInnes 40). The
announcement also continues to mention that the British Government had presented
evidence on the role of Osama bin Laden and his Al Qaeda terrorist organization’s
capability to execute major terrorist attacks on the United States citizens and its allies.
It argued that significant measures had been taken in the selection of targets and in
the same time confirmed that the military actions were not “directed against the
Afghan population, nor against Islam” (40).

On September 18, 2001, President George W. Bush was authorized by
Congress to take the necessary measures to hunt down 9/11 terrorists through the
passage of a legislation entitled Authorization for Use of Military Force against
Terrorists. This legislation authorized the use of United States Armed Forces against
those responsible for the attacks on September 11, 2001 (Jackson and Towle 6). The
authorization granted the President the authority to use all "necessary and appropriate
force" against those who planned, committed the September 11th attacks, or who
harbored them either persons or groups. For its part, the Bush administration did not
ask for a declaration of war by the U.S. Senate, and immediately labeled Taliban
troops as supporters of terrorists rather than soldiers, this claim denying them the
protections of the Geneva Convention and due process of law. This position was
successfully challenged in the U.S. Supreme Court and it was questioned even by
military lawyers responsible for prosecuting the suspected prisoners (7).
4. Humanitarian law

The use of force in self-defence must fulfill the rules of humanitarian law, and is related to two main considerations: necessity and proportionality that would be the basis for proclaiming any attack against another country. The USA and UK argued that their action was necessary depending on a number of justifications. Al-Qaeda had the means and motivation to carry out further attacks. In this angle, many observers demonstrate that there is nothing hidden about Bin Laden’s agenda. In February 1998, he signed a fatwa stating that ‘the killing of Americans and their civilian and military allies is a religious duty.’ From this stand, it is clearly apparent that Bin Laden openly threatens the USA and its citizens (Buckley and Fawn 301). Furthermore, he made a statement on 7 October 2001 in which he directed a comment to the United States and its people:

I swear by Almighty God who raised the heavens without pillars that neither the United States nor he who lives in the United States will enjoy security before we can see it as a reality in Palestine and before all the infidel armies leave the land of Mohammed, may God’s peace and blessing be upon him (qtd. in “Operation Enduring Freedom” 10).

The second consideration is proportionality which is judged in terms of the need to prevent the supposed attacks against which an act of self-defence is intended. It may not be considered proportionate to react in the same way as the original attack, or to produce the same amount of harm. This explains the emphasis on military operations directed on targeting the terrorist infrastructure and training camps which supported the al-Qaeda network, and on breaking the Taliban’s capability to present a safe shelter to the organization’s members. It is noteworthy that the problem was that
the 11 September attacks had been carried out by al-Qaeda, but the military target in Afghanistan was the Taliban. However, a series of UN Security Council Resolutions provided a given possibility that the Taliban were indirectly responsible for al-Qaeda’s attacks (McInnes 41).

On several occasions, the UN Security Council had insisted that the Taliban stop providing a refuge for al-Qaeda and other international terrorists. They should be more aware that the territory under their control was not used for the preparation of terrorist actions, and most importantly hand over Bin Laden to justice. In this dilemma, the Taliban themselves became involved in international terrorism and clearly violated international law. In doing so, it has been argued that the Taliban became an accomplice of al-Qaeda. This made them responsible for the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, and allowed the action in Afghanistan to be a legitimate self-defence (43).

5. ISAF Mandate

As it was mentioned before, the initial invasion of Afghanistan was not mandated by a specific UN Resolution. The Security Council authorized a military operation to stabilize Afghanistan relying on the justification of self-defence. Security Council Resolution 1386 of December 2001 introduced the initial mandate for International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to be deployed to Afghanistan (Smith and Thorp 5). It was created to take all necessary measures to fulfill its mission in helping the Afghan Interim Authority to maintain security and peace operations in the region. It is important to note that the Command of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was handled by the United Kingdom and later on was taken by Turkey. And finally the mission of keeping peace and stabilizing Afghanistan
moved to be under the command of NATO on August 11, 2003. In this context, it is important to demonstrate that the ISAF force is not deployed under the leadership of the United Nations, but it is conducted as an UN-mandated coalition of the willing (6).

Since UN Resolution 1386, the UN Security Council has adopted several resolutions extending the deployment of ISAF. These include Security Council Resolution 1510 in October 2003 which expanded the ISAF mandate to cover the whole area of Afghanistan. In this manner it set out the foundation for ISAF commanders to expand operations beyond Kabul. At this time, UN Security Council Resolution 1890 (2009) authorizes the presence of ISAF until 13 October 2010. In this perspective, the Secretary General of the UN, Kofi Annan in a speech on 8 October 2001 acknowledged that states have a right to individual and collective self-defence. Also the UN and many states seemed to accept that the attacks on Afghanistan were legitimate right of self-defence (Dawes 16).

6. Did 9/11 Provide Moral Justification for the War in Afghanistan?

On the basis of three points, the United States had claimed itself a moral right to launch an armed action against Afghanistan mainly generating from the universal right of self-defense. All this was to fulfill its attempt in capturing or killing bin Laden and his al-Qaeda network, also to prevent them from launching another attack on US homeland. To begin with, the 9/11 attacks were carried out by Muslim members of al-Qaeda. Secondly, the attacks had been authorized by the founder of al-Qaeda, Osama bin Laden, who was in Afghanistan. Thirdly, the US invasion of Afghanistan was necessary and urgent because the Taliban refused to turn bin Laden over to US authorities. Much had been written about the terrorist attacks of 9/11
(Buckley and Fawn 305). Many commentators demonstrate that these operations almost have been predictable. While the organizers of these atrocities were not publicly known before 9/11 events as al-Qaeda, its members had a long history with bombings. Which can be traced back to the attacks on the world trade center, and also the planned bombings of US embassies of Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam in 1998? (11). All these plans meant that something big was underway.

It is noteworthy that before 9/11, Osama bin laden was considered as the most prominent threat to the USA. This should not be surprising mainly because of bin laden’s declaration of war on the USA in 1998. US intelligence services reported in summer 2001 that mass information about a supposed attack against the American mainland was anticipated. Intelligence agencies stated that preparatory measures were taken but they did not reach a full range of investigations and did not conduct any arrests. Allegations rose mainly about how intelligence services and even the white house knew of such expected terrorist attacks on the United States. In this regard, Democrat Senator, Tom Daschle charged the Bush administration that it had previous warnings about these attacks in August 2001 and ignored them. In the same context, some leading US officials already had previous expectations that a “spectacular attack” by bin laden and his al-Qaeda organization would be within a period of weeks (305).

7. 11 September 2001

On September 11, 2001, a series of coordinated attacks took place on United States soil. Four commercial airplanes were hijacked. The hijackers intentionally crashed two of the aircraft into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City, killing everyone on board and many others working in the buildings. Both
buildings collapsed within hours, destroying nearby buildings and damaging others (McInnes 169). The hijackers crashed a third airplane into the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. The fourth plane crashed into a field near a rural area in Pennsylvania. It was immediately apparent that numbers of victims would be high and the majority is ordinary citizens; in fact there were no survivors from any of the flights. Nearly 3,000 people and the 19 hijackers died in the attacks. The United States quickly identified Al-Qaeda and its members as the perpetrators of the attacks (169).

On 12 September, American response to these atrocities was already inaction. President Bush labeled the attacks as ‘acts of war’ and declared that no distinction would be made between those who conducted the attacks and those who sponsor them. In this context, he stated his famous slogan: ‘Either you are with us or with the terrorists.’ International support was immediately introduced from traditional American allies especially the United Kingdom. As a result, it was the first time since its existence; NATO invoked Article 5 (McDonnell 172). It offered immediate assistance from all members to the USA. A day later US Secretary of State, Colin Powell pronounced that bin Laden is the primary suspect of these atrocities. On 15 September, Bush confirmed this allegation and in the same time declared that the United States is at war. But before applying military action, US authorities demanded that the Taliban hand over bin Laden and other high associates in al-Qaeda. In reaction, the Taliban asked the USA for its proof and offered a trial for bin Laden in its own courts (173).
8. **US campaign in Afghanistan: Operation Enduring Freedom**

US military response to 11 September began officially on 7 October 2001. In the beginning the aims of the campaign in Afghanistan were unclear. But later two distinct options surfaced. The first one involved punishing the Taliban for harbouring and collaborating with al Qaida and bringing those involved to justice. The second option was to remove the Taliban regime and open the way for an alternative government that would allow the US a direct access to al-Qaeda camps in Afghanistan. After Taliban's failure to cooperate with US demands, the first option had been ignored and the US pushed for the removal of the regime (Buckley and Fawn 307). Planning for the war began when Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld ordered on 12 September the preparation of 'credible military options' to respond to international terrorism. In this regard, General Tommy Franks was responsible for preparing a war plan for operations in Afghanistan. He presented a set of operations that reflected targeting the leadership of al-Qaeda and the Taliban with much emphasis on regime change in Afghanistan. Franks proposed that “US Central Command . . . would destroy the Al Qaeda network inside Afghanistan along with the illegitimate Taliban regime which was protecting and harbouring the terrorists” (qtd. in “Operation E F” 10). Furthermore, on 1 October detailed plans for combat operations, including spotting targets and force requirements were presented to Secretary Rumsfeld and were authorized by the President. In the beginning of military action in Afghanistan under Operation Enduring Freedom, Bush outlined the nature and goals of the action in which he stated:

> On my orders, the United States military has begun strikes against al Qaeda terrorist training camps and military installations of the Taliban regime in
Afghanistan. These carefully targeted actions are designed to disrupt the use of Afghanistan as a terrorist base of operations, and to attack the military capability of the Taliban regime (11).

In this regard he continued:

We are joined in this operation by our staunch friend, Great Britain. Other close friends, including Canada, Australia, Germany and France, have pledged forces as the operation unfolds. More than 40 countries in the Middle East, Africa, and Europe and across Asia have granted air transit or landing rights. Many more have shared intelligence. We are supported by the collective will of the world (11).

Soon after President Bush’s statement, Prime Minister Tony Blair showed Britain’s readiness to participate in the operation so he reported:

As to the precise British involvement I can confirm that last Wednesday the US Government made a specific request that a number of UK military assets be used in the operation which has now begun. And I gave authority for these assets to be deployed. They include the base at Diego Garcia, reconnaissance and flight support aircraft and missile firing submarines. Missile firing submarines are in use tonight. The air assets will be available for use in the coming days (qtd. in Dawes 18)

Although US ground troops were deployed early, it is worth mentioning that these were limited in numbers and mainly drawn from Special Forces. They were operating with the United Front or as it were called the Northern Alliance, their role focused primarily on intelligence gathering and guiding targeting launched from US
aircrafts. Large presence of troops would have been a serious problem especially with a hostile nation support in Afghanistan, and also from Pakistan and the republics neighboring Afghanistan that would refuse to be a base for a US ground force (Jackson and Towle 10). The operation began with air strikes against selected military targets and expanded to include strikes against political and infrastructure as well as al Qaeda bases. Air strikes were complemented by Special Forces operations against Kandahar the birthplace of the Taliban's leader, Mullah Omar. In its center, US strategy attempted to split the already divided Taliban both by strategic strikes and also by affecting its military capabilities (10).

By the end of October, however, critics argued that the US campaign did not achieve its targeted aims. This was mainly because the United Front had failed to take the key northern city of Mazar-e Sharif and support for Taliban was already strong in both Afghanistan and neighboring areas of Pakistan. Although the Taliban was under increasing pressure mainly keeping a strong hold in the North and maintaining control elsewhere in Afghanistan, the impressions of a failing military campaign were in the air. It was in this context that in the last week of October, US strategy shifted towards more intensified operations on Taliban positions, of course with the help of United Front ground operations (Nafeez 248). In November the air attacks intensified, the key northern town of Mazar-e Sharif was seized by United Front troops. The Taliban attempted to withdraw south to their strong hold in the Kandahar region. However, they did not have the chance to retreat because of continued air strikes. On 12 November United Front forces entered the capital, Kabul and took control. After these events, the Bonn agreement would be signed on 5 December which would set the principles for the Afghan Interim Authority in Afghanistan under the leadership of HamidKarzai. On 20 December, UN Security Council Resolution 1386 was
passed to authorize the establishment of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) under British command which would be responsible for stabilizing Afghanistan for the next period (249).

9. Diplomatic and Humanitarian Efforts

After the Taliban fled from Kabul in November 2001 and left their stronghold in the southern city of Kandahar, it was generally understood that by then major Al-Qaeda and Taliban leaders had fled across the border into Pakistan. In December 2001, the United Nations hosted the Bonn Conference in Germany to reach a kind of political understanding. The meetings of various Afghan leaders were organized by the United Nations Security Council. The Taliban were excluded from these meetings. Participants included representatives of Afghan opposition groups. Observers included representatives of neighboring and other involved major countries, including the United States. The result was the Bonn Agreement which created the Afghan temporary authority that would serve as the “basis foundation of Afghan sovereignty”. It also outlined the important political processes towards a new constitution and choosing a new Afghan government (250).

UN Security Council Resolution 1378 of November 14, 2001, included "Condemning the Taliban for allowing Afghanistan to be used as a base for the export of terrorism by the Al-Qaeda network and other terrorist groups and for providing safe haven to Osama bin Laden, Al-Qaeda and others associated with them, and in this context supporting the efforts of the Afghan people to replace the Taliban regime" (qtd. in McInnes 170). To help provide security to support the Afghan Interim Authority, the United Nations authorized an international force the (ISAF)
with a mandate to help the Afghans maintain security in Kabul and surrounding areas. During the U.S.-led invasion, the United Nations World Food Programme temporarily suspended activities within Afghanistan at the beginning of the bombing but continued them after the fall of the Taliban (171).

By now the US was only interested the total overthrow of the Taliban. But with the collapse of Taliban resistance in Kandahar and the establishment of the interim authority in Kabul, now its time for Afghanistan to enter a new period of post-conflict reconstruction. However, for the United States, the conflict continued to exist although its nature had changed. General Franks described the mission as now being to 'locate and destroy remaining pockets of Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters and to search for surviving leadership'. For Franks, much work still needed to be done and some of it very dangerous. The overall pattern which emerged however was described by Franks as one of a general low level with occasional intense activity. US ground forces began to play an increasingly significant role in combat operations mainly a battle in mid-December at Tora Bora south of Jalalabad (Dawes 23).

10. 2002: Operation Anaconda

Following Tora Bora battle, U.S. forces and their Afghan allies consolidated their position in the country. Following a grand council of major Afghan groups, tribal leaders, and former exiles, an interim Afghan government was established in Kabul under Hamid Karzai. U.S. forces established their main base at Bagram airbase just north of Kabul. Kandahar airport also became an important U.S. base area. Several bases were established in eastern provinces to hunt Taliban and al-Qaeda fugitives. The number of U.S-led coalition troops operating in the country would eventually grow. Meanwhile, the Taliban and al-Qaeda forces had not given up
(Navlakha 3811). Mr. Rumsfeld gave his impressions on the Taliban and al-Qaeda’s resistance, he pointed out:

…They still have a lot of very seasoned tough people. Any one who has ever watched the history of that country, or the effort that the Soviet Union made to conquer the country has to know that these people who have spent many, many years fighting, and they live in caves, and they are perfectly capable of fighting a very tough fight (qtd. in Dawes 24).

On March 2, 2002, U.S. and Afghan forces launched attacks on al-Qaeda and Taliban forces that were hidden in the mountains of Shahi-Kot southeast of Gardez. These fighters used small arms, hit and run tactics, opening fire on the U.S. and Afghan forces and then retreating back into their caves and bunkers to weather the return fire and persistent U.S. bombing raids. To compound the situation for the coalition troops, U.S. commanders initially underestimated the Taliban and al-Qaeda forces as a last isolated pocket numbering fewer than 200. It turned out that the guerrillas numbered 1,000–5,000 according to some estimates and that they were receiving reinforcements (Buckley and Fawn 234).

By March 6, more than 400 opposing forces had also been killed in the fighting. Many of the coalition troops and the U.S. forces resulted in dozens of wounded. However, several hundred guerrillas escaped the dragnet heading to the Waziristan tribal areas across the border in Pakistan. During Operation Anaconda and other missions during 2002 and 2003, Special Forces from several western nations were also involved in operations. These included Australians, Canadians, the Germans, and New Zealand Special Forces (236). Nevertheless in the first three months of Operation Enduring Freedom the United States had succeeded in removing
the Taliban regime from power; al-Qaida activities had been severely disrupted, though the organization had not been destroyed; it had lost the ability to operate out of a friendly state and at least 11 training camps as well as other facilities in Afghanistan; at least eight of the top al Qaida leaders were believed dead, although both Osama bin Laden and the Taliban leader Mullah Omar were probably fled to Pakistan (236).

**Conclusion**

The US led invasion in Afghanistan in 2001 was a perfect mission which justified the use of force against a sovereign state. Although, the invasion was not explicitly authorized by the United Nations Security Council, that is to say there was no clear statement of allowing a military action. The USA proclaimed its right of self-defense under article 51 of UN Charter as an argument to launch an armed attack on Afghanistan. It is important to demonstrate that UNSC did pass resolutions warning the Taliban to stop harboring and providing a safe haven to al-Qaeda organization and its members. But there was no specific resolution or any suggestion of carrying out and approving a war on Afghanistan. In addition, it is a bit difficult to analyze the relationship between the Taliban and al-Qaeda especially when the former did provide training camps to al-Qaeda members. But it worth mentioning that the Taliban did not finance or help al-Qaeda to launch attacks on US homeland.

In this case, US led invasion on Afghanistan on the basis of these reasons seems undefendable especially with the lack of UN authorization. From this one can conclude that the US used SC resolutions as a base for broadening the right of self-defense in a way to serve its own interests. It is generally known that attacking a sovereign state is prohibited by both the United Nations Charter and international
law. This is why taking a decision for raging a war against Afghanistan is considered a violation of its territorial integrity, especially when it is taken by a single or a coalition of states and not by the only responsible and capable organ for taking such operations, the UNSC. From these points, one came to conclude that the US led campaign in Afghanistan in 2001 can be seen an illegal action against a sovereign state. This action is held by the USA, the pre-eminent power in world politics mainly to fulfill its imperialistic motives regardless it was authorized or not.
END NOTES


**General Conclusion**

Britain’s history as a colonial, expansionist empire continued to survive in the changing world of the twentieth-first century. In the 19 e, Britain insisted widely on maintaining its strong hold among other powers in the international scene. In this period, communist Russia emerged as the most influential rival that threatened British interests. From this stand, one can demonstrate that in the “Great Game” between the British and Russian empires, each side tried hard to serve his benefits in a way or another. In this dilemma, the British concerns raised mainly from the consistent southward Russian expansion to British colonial possessions, especially British India. The continual struggle between Britain and Russia triggered a strong interest in the region of Afghanistan. The country served as a buffer state preventing the Russians from trespassing to waterways of the Indian continent. It is important to state that Afghanistan is not a rich or developed country; it is because of its strategic position that superpowers often wished to control it. Afghanistan lay at the crossroads of Central Asia which is considered the source of natural resources. It is also the opening gate to passages of the Indian continent. The country was seen a perfect
opportunity for expanding control and domination by both powers, controlling Afghanistan means having the key to the republics of Central Asia.

In the confusing dilemmas of the great game, the British tried many times to subjugate Afghanistan. This can be seen in the three wars (1839-1919) that Afghans combated to regain their freedom. In this perspective afghan people always confirmed that they are free people above any sort of domination and external rule. Focusing on this particular aspect, it is obvious that the British witnessed strong confrontations from their early steps in Afghanistan and this was apparent when they failed in their first and second wars. Once again, the British failed to achieve their goals, when they could not seize Afghanistan during their Third and last war in 1919. These concluding points confirmed that this game, the ‘Great Game’ was a complete failure in the history of the British Empire.

British foreign policy changed with the coming of Tony Blair into office. From his early steps, he focused on a multilateral approach pushing for more mutual cooperation with the Europe and in the same time with the United States. Under Blair a new renewed motivation for reviving the days of the British Empire was obvious in his conduct of foreign policy. By taking this position, Blair hoped that close relations with the two sides, Europe and USA would generate a leading position for Britain in the international stage. He insisted that Britain would be the “bridge” connecting the two poles of the Atlantic. Blair’s foreign policy emphasized new motivations for an active, interventionist attitudes, he largely encouraged Britain’s involvement in many conflicts around the world. His apparent eager for engagement and intervention was mainly seen in his decisions concerning wars in Afghanistan 2001 and his controversial participation in the Iraqi war 2003 which was the reason for his
condemnation by the British public. Blair’s insisting commitment to “war on terror” brought many questions, mainly to what extent is Britain capable and willing to commit itself to a long controversial dilemma as “war on terrorism”. What benefits would be generated from such commitment?

Blair’s insistence on a close relationship with the United States presented what many called the “special relationship between the US and UK. This relation is not new but it has roots that can be traced to the seventeenth century. Also this close connection can be based on the link and friendship that related both President Roland Reagan and Prime Minister Margret Thatcher. The special relationship between the US and UK developed largely and tightened when George W Bush and Tony Blair took office. Both were close friends and shared some aspects concerning the conduct of foreign policy. Due to the close relation between the two countries, British foreign policy was influenced to some extent by USA’s conduct. This was clear when the US was under attack in the 9/11, 2001. In a way that Britain was the primary supporter for punishing the perpetrators, and launching an armed attack on the Taliban government in Afghanistan for harboring al-Qaeda organization and its members. Furthermore, the UK was the only nation that provided ground forces in the first days of the military campaign in Afghanistan, Operation Enduring Freedom.

After 9/11 attacks, the USA proclaimed its right of self-defence under Article 51 of UN Charter and launched a military action against Afghanistan. It is important to note that this action was carried out without the authorization of the United Nations Security Council. However, the bombing and invasion of Afghanistan were not legitimate self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter because the 9/11 attacks were not armed attacks by another state but rather were perpetrated by groups of
individuals or non-state actors. So launching an attack on Afghanistan can not be supported. It is important to acknowledge that the US waited a month before launching its war on Afghanistan, thus it was not an urgent necessity. As a result, the U.S.-led military campaign, Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in Afghanistan was not under the authorization of the UN.

The United Kingdom participated largely in the military campaign which was launched against Afghanistan in 2001 and also showed great commitment to the “war on terror”. It is apparent that it has certain motives and interests that encouraged this stand. It is known that the UK has colonial and imperialist attempts since its early history, and its intervention in Afghanistan is one of these. But it important to state that intervention in Afghanistan was a mistake from the beginning because it was not Britain’s war, but in a way it was a war of mutual expansionist interests contracted between US and Britain. So, British intervention in Afghanistan 2001 was a continued process of expansionist, imperialist motivations. The US-UK intervention on Afghanistan on the basis of the atrocities of 9/11 attacks and war on terrorism seems undefendable and lacks the support of the international law. It is better to say that these reasons are a perfect cover for expansionist intentions toward Central Asia. United Kingdom’s and other powers interest in the region is generated from its richness and strategic position. Afghanistan is the heart of Central Asia and Central Asia is a natural reservoir of oil and gas resources, in this case controlling Afghanistan means a control of all the neighbouring republics of Central Asia, as a result, controlling the centre of the world. Accordingly, US-UK intervention on Afghanistan in 2001 was a clear statement of establishing their imperialist interests and expanding their domination on the international scene.
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