

## INTERNATIONAL POLICIES OF GREAT BRITAIN 1979-2007 (THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES AND EUROPE. THE ANTITERRORIST WAR)

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**Abstract.** *The hypothesis of the present article approaches the foreign policy of Great Britain starting with the period of Margaret Thatcher and ending with Tony Blair's period, characterized by the idea of maximisation of power and the return to the status of a great power. During thirty years Great Britain relations with Europe and the United States were guided through the same principles of foreign policy. Great Britain played a decisive role in the transatlantic relations. It was a connection point between the United States and Europe. At the same time, Great Britain tried to maximize its power within the relations with the United States and Europe. The personalities of the Prime Ministers Margaret Thatcher, John Major and Tony Blair played an essential role in the formulation and interpretation of Great Britain's foreign policy. If from the point of view of its own foreign policy the invasion of Afghanistan was justifiable, the case of Iraq is more problematic.*

**Keywords:** *International policies, Great Britain, Antiterrorist War, Relationship with United State and Europe.*

The external policy of Great Britain in the context of the antiterrorist war 2001-2007 and the relationships of Great Britain with the United States and Europe represent very important subjects from global and local points of view.

A serious research of the international environment is connected to a research of the policy of Great Britain because it has to start with this important ally of the United States.

The foreign policies during the period of Thatcher, Major and Blair concentrated mostly on the relationships with the United States and Europe. In the 80's Great Britain became again the main ally of the United States backing the rollback of communism policy taken by the American president, Ronald Reagan. Great Britain had a complex attitude towards the Economic European Community. It supported the extension of the Economic European Community and tried to obtain a reliable relationship with this organisation.

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The end of the Cold War meant a new international environment. The Anglo-American partnership was demonstrated by the first Gulf War. The Maastricht Treaty is considered a victory of British Diplomacy and the act of establishment of the European Union. John Major and then Tony Blair have taken a policy of balance between the European Union and the United States.

The attacks of 9/11 meant a turning point from the point of view of international relations. The United States and their allies were forced to remake their foreign policies. Great Britain has and had numerous military presences in the world.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, from a global point of view, it represents one of the most important allies of the United States. Locally, Great Britain is one of the keys for the understanding of the general policy of the European Union, but also, separately, a key for understanding the policy of the most important countries of the European Union. The relationship with Romania exemplifies the connections with the new countries from the European Club; at the same time is very important for the contributions the two countries had within the war on terror. For understanding better the dimensions, coordinates and objectives of Great Britain's foreign policy I propose to analyse the internal and external context in which Great Britain evolved, environment modified by the fall of communism and then by the attacks of September 11.

The hypotheses from which we start are:

— The foreign policy of Great Britain starting with the period of Margaret Thatcher and ending with Tony Blair's period was characterized by the idea of maximisation of power and the return to the status of a great power. During the Thatcher's years Great Britain adopted a policy of uncompromise towards the adversaries like the Soviet Union but also Argentina, regaining the status of the most important ally of the United States. Towards the European Community, Great Britain tried to assume a correct position especially on the budgetary policy. At the same time, it maintained a close relation with countries from Eastern Europe (see the case of Poland)<sup>2</sup>. During this period winning the Cold War remained one of the first objectives.

— For thirty years Great Britain's relations with Europe and the United States were guided by the same principles of foreign policy.

— Great Britain played a decisive role in the transatlantic relations. It was a connection point between the United States and Europe. At the same time, Great Britain tried to maximize its power within the relations with the United States and Europe.

— The personalities of the Prime Ministers Margaret Thatcher, John Major and Tony Blair played an essential role in the formulation and interpretation of Great Britain's foreign policy.

If from the point of view of its own foreign policy the invasion of Afghanistan was justifiable, the case of Iraq is more problematic.

<sup>1</sup> Afghanistan, Iraq, Bosnia, Sierra Leone, East Timor.

<sup>2</sup> The National Archives, Public Record Office, Cabinet Office Papers, CAB 128/68/22, pp. 5, 6.

*The foreign policy under Margaret Thatcher. The relationships with the United States and the Economic European Community*

Over the entire term, Margaret Thatcher adopted a confrontational attitude of identifying the problems and solving them like in the case of Falkland Islands, the Economic European Community, in the same way as her homologous from the United States, Ronald Reagan. Thatcher and Reagan had in common the characteristic of the programmatic leader type, they both came to power at the same time after the oil crises which weakened seriously the adversary parties which had previously governed, creating a vacuum of power.<sup>3</sup>

In the 80's there was a strong close relationship between Great Britain and the United States of America. In 1982 Margaret Thatcher declared the following regarding the relation with the United States: "We are your friends. We do support you. And we shall support you. Let there be no doubt about that."<sup>4</sup> In 1988 Margaret Thatcher stated that there was a very special relationship between Great Britain and the United States, a relationship characterized by a union of ideas. Professor Allan shows that this relation produced a similar way of thinking and acting<sup>5</sup>. At the end of the 60's Great Britain was confronted with a number of issues; the disappearance of the British Empire; economical problems, the membership to the European Community.<sup>6</sup> We can say that Great Britain was changing its political role throughout the world.

The idea of proximity between the two countries was launched by Winston Churchill and has at its base a common culture and alike juridical systems. Ernest Bevin, the foreign secretary, considered that a partnership with the United States is essential, because the American interventionism is preferable to the eventual isolationism<sup>7</sup>. Unlike France, which had chosen a confrontational policy towards the United States, especially within the North Atlantic Alliance, Great Britain preferred to publically support the United States policies and to influence it behind closed doors on the basis of a common language, culture and diplomacy. In this sense we remind the periodical consultations between the administrations of the two countries, the collaboration of secret services, the naval collaboration, the nuclear alliance between 1940-1941, broken in '45, '46 and renewed by Eisenhower and Macmillan at the end of the 50's as a response to the Soviet intercontinental ballistic missiles.<sup>8</sup>

The very good relationship between Great Britain and the United States was exemplified by the Falklands war between Great Britain and Argentina. In this

<sup>3</sup> Nicholas Wapshott, *Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, A Political Marriage*, New York, Penguin Group, 2007, pp. 101-102, 105-107.

<sup>4</sup> Margaret Thatcher, "Speech at White House Arrival Ceremony," 17 December 1979, Margaret Thatcher Foundation, 31 October 2009, <<http://www.margaretthatcher.org/speeches/displaydocument.asp?docid=104194>> in Sara Mahaffy, *A Dependent Nation, Thatcher, Europe and the Special Relationship*, p. 12 [http://www.lemoyne.edu/Portals/11/pdf\\_content/302B.pdf](http://www.lemoyne.edu/Portals/11/pdf_content/302B.pdf), accessed on 3 February 2012, 9.50 a.m.

<sup>5</sup> David Reynolds, *Rethinking Anglo-American Relations*, *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944), vol. 66, No. 1 (Winter 1988-1989), p. 89.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 91.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 97.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 98.

case there was a fruitful collaboration between Great Britain and the United States which affected the relations of the last with its South American allies.<sup>9</sup> Unlike the Suez Channel crises, in the case of the Falklands the transnational and international connections increased, creating a bigger interdependence between Great Britain and the United States.<sup>10</sup>

Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan had similar positions towards the Soviet Union. In 1976 Margaret Thatcher gave a speech in which characterises the Soviet Union as a military power which failed both economically and humanly.<sup>11</sup>

In 1979 the Soviet Union not only appeared as invincible but also as an ascending power. It was the biggest oil producer and had the support of the communists who had taken power in Vietnam, Nicaragua, Angola, Mozambique, Somalia, Ethiopia, and South Yemen. The Soviets managed to overcome the United States in the field of nuclear missiles.<sup>12</sup>

Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher are the only ones who realised the vulnerabilities of the Soviet state.<sup>13</sup> The American president gave up the strategy of containment by applying the roll back strategy; the destabilisation of the East European block, the acceleration of the arms race for weakening the Soviet economy, the increase of arms resistance in the points of Soviet interests.<sup>14</sup>

The only one who gave an unconditional support to President Reagan was Margaret Thatcher. The relationship wasn't a given fact, in 1979 a Central Intelligence Agency paper noting that the alliance between Great Britain and the United States wasn't important any longer, since Great Britain had become a secondary level ally within the North Atlantic Organisation.<sup>15</sup> Despite this paper, Great Britain became, during the 80's, the most important ally of the United States, a powerful military player within N.A.T.O. regaining the status of a strong economical state. The relation between Great Britain and the United States was based upon the personal connection between Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher and functioned despite the British Opposition which wanted leaving the country out of the Cold War, the withdrawal of the American troops from the British soil, the abolition of nuclear warheads.<sup>16</sup>

By backing him up in critical points, Margaret Thatcher gained a powerful influence upon Ronald Reagan, essential in the relation with the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. Thatcher allowed British bases to be used by the Americans for bombarding Libya and backed the Americans for the El Salvador military action.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Linda P. Brady Review, *When Interests Diverge: Alliance Politics at the Close of the Twentieth Century*. Reviewed work(s): *When Allies Differ: Anglo-American Relations during the Suez and Falklands Crises* by Louise Richardson, *Mershon International Studies Review*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (May, 1997), p. 130.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 131.

<sup>11</sup> Nicholas Wapshott, *cited work*, New York, Penguin Group, 2007, p. 108.

<sup>12</sup> Claire Berlinsky, *There Is No Alternative, Why Margaret Thatcher Matters*, New York, Basic Books, 2008, p. 270.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 271.

<sup>14</sup> Percy Cradock, *In Pursuit Of British Interests, Reflections on Foreign Policy under Margaret Thatcher* and John Major, London, 1997, John Murray (Publishers) Ltd.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 273.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 273-274.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 275.

The partnership between the British prime minister and Ronald Reagan constitutes the key of understanding the close relationship between Great Britain and the United States of America in the 80's. The two had in common the total confidence in the capitalist system with a free economy and market and the opposition towards communism. Both were action people and became two political friends.<sup>18</sup> Ronald Reagan saw Margaret Thatcher as his ally against the Washington bureaucracy.<sup>19</sup> During the Cold War Margaret Thatcher desired to back up the countries from the East European Block as we can see in the case of Poland, when Great Britain wanted to aid the Polish people.<sup>20</sup>

The Falklands war represents an essential point in demonstrating the intransigency of the foreign policy adopted by Margaret Thatcher. The surprise attack was generated by the political factor and not by the secret services.<sup>21</sup> The political failure and not the one of the secret services led to this war, Great Britain and Argentina underestimated themselves.<sup>22</sup> The principal British argument was of political-military nature: the aggression should not succeed.<sup>23</sup>

The relations with the European Community were a very important issue on the agenda of the Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. Thatcher wanted a united Europe, sovereignty and independence were not considered purposes for themselves, the military and political alliances were very important in the Iron Lady's conception.<sup>24</sup> As a result Margaret Thatcher supported the remaining of Great Britain in the European Community within the referendum organised in 1976.

The greatest problem was linked to money.<sup>25</sup> Great Britain had a small but efficient sector of agriculture, being obliged to subsidise other agricultures, in fact their losses. Great Britain received from the European Community one pound for every 1.5 pounds spent, being the greatest contributor after Germany and one of the poorest members. Within all the summits of the Community Great Britain claimed parity, in the end the president of France Francois Mitterrand would agree with this parity making the other members to return some of the funds.<sup>26</sup>

We have to remember the fact that in 1980 the budgetary issue was so pressing for the British government that it took very seriously the idea of stopping the payments to the European Community.<sup>27</sup> From the economic point of view a change had to be made in order to reduce the excessive spending within

<sup>18</sup> Nicholas Wapshott, *cited work*, New York, Penguin Group, 2007, p. 91.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>20</sup> The National Archives, Record Office, Public Cabinet Office Papers, CAB 128/68/22, pp. 5, 6.

<sup>21</sup> Gerald W. Hoppo, *Intelligence and Warning: Implications and Lessons of the Falkland Islands War*, World Politics, vol. 36, No. 3, (April, 1994), p. 342.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 361.

<sup>23</sup> Cristoph Bluth, *The British Resort to Force in the Falklands/ Malvinas Conflict 1982; International Law and Just War Theory*, Journal of Peace Research, Vol. 24, No. 1 (March, 1987), pp. 10-12.

<sup>24</sup> Speech to Finchley Conservatives, August 14, 1961, Thatcher MSS, doc. 101105 in Claire Berlinski, *cited work*, p. 313.

<sup>25</sup> Claire Berlinski, *cited work*, p. 316.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 317.

<sup>27</sup> The National Archives, Public Record Office, Prime Minister Office Record PREM 19/55, UK contribution, 28 November 1979, M. A. Hall Private Secretary to M Alexander Esq, 10 Downing Street, pp. 1-6.

the common agricultural sector<sup>28</sup>. In 1983 the contribution of Great Britain would have been 1.5 billion pounds<sup>29</sup> given that it was among the three poorest members of the Community in term of ground national product.<sup>30</sup> In 1980 the British contribution to the European Community would have been 40% larger than that of any other member.<sup>31</sup> On the other hand, in six years the trade of Great Britain with the European Community had grown with 40%.<sup>32</sup> In the case of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Great Britain tried to obtain a common position of the European Community towards this aggression.<sup>33</sup>

The Single European Act adopted by the European Community was realised at the initiative of Margaret Thatcher and resulted in a unique market, without borders in which goods, people, money, services, capital can move freely.<sup>34</sup>

The change of attitude of Margaret Thatcher towards the European Community happened after 1986 and had two causes. The move to a unique currency undermined too much the national sovereignty of Great Britain which couldn't establish any more its interest rates and its exchange rate. The second reason was given by Jacques Delors, the socialist president of the Commission, a convinced federalist. In 1988, Delors announced that the Community would be responsible for 80% of the legislative decisions taken by its members.<sup>35</sup> Delors had a speech in front of the British unions saying that the decisions will be taken at Brussels, for Margaret Thatcher this meant giving up the national sovereignty. To avoid reforms, the unions and Labour Party accepted Delors decision. Considering these reactions Margaret Thatcher would adopt a critical position towards the European Community.

### *The John Major Period*

John Major had a special relationship with the European Union. He considers that the European Union must be united and prepared to compete with the great powers of the world: The United States, China, India, Japan and Russia. One of the main problems is that Europe has bigger social costs than the other powers while

<sup>28</sup> The National Archives, Public Record Office, Prime Minister Office Record PREM 19/54, Deskby Fco and Ukreb Brussels 160800Z, p. 2.

<sup>29</sup> The National Archives, Public Record Office, Prime Minister Office Record PREM 19/223 10 Downing Street, 25 February 1980, Deskby Fco and Ukreb Brussels 160800Z, p. 2, and The National Archives, Public Record Office, Prime Minister Office Record PREM 19/223 10, The RT John Biffen MP, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Defence and Oversea Committee Sub-Committee on European Questions 14 February 1980, p. 1.

<sup>30</sup> The National Archives, Public Record Office, Prime Minister Office Record PREM 19/223, 13 February 1980 Foreign and Commonwealth Office, p. 1.

<sup>31</sup> The National Archives, Public Record Office, Prime Minister Office Record PREM 19/223, Letter to von Dohnanyi, European Community Department, 12 February 1980, p. 1.

<sup>32</sup> The National Archives, Public Record Office, Prime Minister's Office Record PREM 19/54, Treasury Chambers, 20 September 1979, p. 10.

<sup>33</sup> The National Archives, Public Record Office, Cabinet Meeting CAB 128 67 5 Conclusions of a Meeting of the Cabinet held on 10 Downing Street on Thursday 7 February 1980, p. 1.

<sup>34</sup> Claire Berlinski, *cited work*, p. 318.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 319.



from the technological point of view the European Union should advance. The European vision is much too orientated within itself.<sup>36</sup>

John Major had a difficult mandate because of his own party. There was almost a split between pro European members and those who regarded with scepticism the next steps of the European integration: passing to the exchange rate mechanism and to the unique currency. In the 90's the first step finished with a disaster for the British currency. Again the ratification of the Maastricht treaty posed problems for the British government. Being preoccupied more with the unity of the party the British prime minister didn't manage to form a firm policy towards the European Union in the opinion of some authors.<sup>37</sup>

The relation with the United States was a very important aspect during the Major's years in office exemplified by the excellent cooperation which they had during the First Gulf War. In this period John Major convinced his American homologous to implement the no fly zones for the Iraqi aviation.<sup>38</sup>

In the case of Northern Ireland the negotiations in 1993 led to the signing of a treaty of ceasing fire in 1994.<sup>39</sup> As a result of President Clinton's position towards the Northern Irish separatists the relations between Great Britain and the United States recorded a dramatic drop point in 1994.<sup>40</sup>

Towards the Bosnian conflict Great Britain had an ambivalent attitude imposing an arms embargo on each combatant.<sup>41</sup> It was different from the position of the United States but also from other European countries which considered to blame the Serbs for the conflict and acted in consequence.

### *Tony Blair's mandate*

The British foreign policy posed a factor risk in this period, the alternatives hadn't been considered reliable for the decision making factors and groups. For Great Britain the end of the bipolar world meant a new world full of dangers and threats for the internal security of Great Britain, security which represents a first grade preoccupation for the British politicians.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Alex Massie, *An Interesting Interview With John Major*, The Spectator, 9 June 2011, <http://www.spectator.co.uk/alexmassie/7011599/an-interesting-interview-with-john-major.html>, accessed on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2012, 12.19 p.m.

<sup>37</sup> BBC News *Backing Away From Europe* [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/static/in\\_depth/uk/2001/uk\\_and\\_europe/1990\\_1997.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/static/in_depth/uk/2001/uk_and_europe/1990_1997.stm), accessed on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2012, 12.35 p.m.

<sup>38</sup> The New World Encyclopedia, [http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/John\\_Major](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/John_Major), accessed on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2012, 13 p.m.

<sup>39</sup> The Official site of British Prime Minister's Office [www.number10.gov.uk/history-and-tour/john-major-2/](http://www.number10.gov.uk/history-and-tour/john-major-2/), accessed on 7<sup>th</sup> August 2011, 10 a.m. see also The New World Encyclopedia, [http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/John\\_Major](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/John_Major).

<sup>40</sup> This post was adapted from Brian Till's new book, *Conversations with Power: What Great Presidents and Prime Ministers Can Teach Us about Leadership*. John Major: *Weaker Political Commitments Will Help Revive Politics*, <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2011/06/john-major-weaker-political-commitments-will-help-revive-politics/240062/>, accessed on 8<sup>th</sup> August 2011, 11 a.m.

<sup>41</sup> *Bosnian Genocide Military Intervention in Bosnia urged*, 18 February 2011, <http://bosniagenocide.wordpress.com/tag/john-major/>, accessed on 9<sup>th</sup> August 2011, at 1 p.m. and Melanie McDonagh, *How Britons helped Milosevic*, 9 July 2001, New Statesman, <http://www.newstatesman.com> accessed on 10<sup>th</sup> August 2011, at 2 p.m.

<sup>42</sup> BBC News *Blair Terror Speech in Full* <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/3536131.stm> Blair terror speech in full BBC news, accessed on 11<sup>th</sup> August 2011, at 10 a.m.

At the same time Great Britain was many times accused of betraying the European Union's interests by the too close relationship with the United States. In this context comprehending the foreign policy of Great Britain is extremely useful for understanding the war on terror.

Tony Blair along his mandate considered that it was his duty to protect the international community (Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq), his policy falling under the special relation with the United States.

The military intervention in Kosovo represents a very important event during Tony Blair's mandate. The position of the British government was uncompromising with the Milosevic regime. Tony Blair adopted a firm policy supporting the Northern Atlantic Organisation's bombings and even a possible ground campaign.<sup>43</sup> This way the Blair doctrine was formed containing five essential points which must be followed for the decision of military intervention: the intervention must be justifiable, all diplomatic means of negotiation exhausted, prudent military decisions can be taken, there must be a long term commitment, and the national interest must be fulfilled.<sup>44</sup>

The attacks of 9/11 redirected the foreign policy of the United States; after 9/11 the main purpose of the American politicians became the capture the Al Qaeda leaders and the defeat of the Taliban regime<sup>45</sup>. Great Britain, the main ally of the United States, participated in this campaign with thousands of troops.<sup>46</sup> The engagement of troops in Afghanistan is in the framework of the foreign policies taken by the British government since Margaret Thatcher. The main ally was attacked, all the Western countries could have been victims of terrorist attacks; these were the main arguments of the British leaders for engaging Great Britain in the Afghanistan campaign.<sup>47</sup> If it wanted to take part to the remodelling of the world, Great Britain had to be alongside the United States. On the other hand as he admitted in 2006, Tony Blair stated that the Taliban movement was too soon considered defeated. Winning the war on terror means a new geopolitical framework, means winning the popular support and building nations in the failed states.<sup>48</sup>

In Tony Blair's opinion the attacks from 9/11 changed radically the international system. The choosing regarding the terrorist organisations and failed states had to be made between containment and military intervention. Blair's doctrine referring to military intervention had changed. Self defence wasn't the only reason for intervention. The humanitarian reasons were noticed in the Kosovo

<sup>43</sup> BBC Online Network World *Tony Blair: Kosovo Crusader*, <http://news.bbc.co.uk> and *Kosovo Speech Blair*, March 25 1999, <http://keep-tony-blair-for-pm.wordpress.com/kosovo-speech-blair-march-25-1999/> <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/kosovo/interviews/blair.htm>, accessed on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2011, at 10 a.m.

<sup>44</sup> Paul Carcone, *Tony Blair's Doctrine and NATO's Kosovo Campaign*, European Affairs, 8 June, 2010, <http://paul-carcone.suite101.com/tony-blairs-doctrine-and-natos-kosovo-campaign-a24621>, accessed on 11<sup>th</sup> August 2011, at 10.25 a.m.

<sup>45</sup> William Maley, *The Afghanistan Wars*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, p. 255.

<sup>46</sup> Toby Helm, *Blair admits Afghanistan error*, 21 November 2006, The Telegraph, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/1534784/Blair-admits-Afghanistan-error.html>, accessed on 11<sup>th</sup> August 2011, at 1 p.m.

<sup>47</sup> Tony Blair, 2010, *A Journey*, Hutchinson, London, pp. 345, 350, 352.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibidem*.



case. The increased interdependence between states in a globalizing world led to a new type of intervention.<sup>49</sup> In this way we can see a new type of liberalism in the British foreign policy doctrine in the cases of Kosovo and Sierra Leone.

The meeting with President Bush in February 2001 is representative for the evolution of the problem of Iraq, of the Iraqi problem. President Bush wanted the implementation of sanctions not a military intervention.<sup>50</sup> The failed state characterised by corruption and chaos could be a proper place for terrorist organisations. In the opinion of Tony Blair from this point of view the attacks of 9/11 influenced the fate of Iraq.<sup>51</sup>

First of all the Taliban movement from Afghanistan had to be defeated. But after that followed the failed states which presented the risk of producing and using weapons of mass destruction. During 12 years Iraq violated the United Nation's resolutions; in 1998 the government of Iraq expelled the experts which were monitoring the existence of weapons of mass destruction. The United States followed Great Britain in using the United Nation's resolutions with the problem of Iraq. The 1441 resolution was adopted, Saddam didn't conform and the progresses made by the inspectors were minor. The United Nation's Security Council didn't give Saddam a tough ultimatum. Great Britain couldn't assume the risk that Saddam continued his research program for obtaining weapons of mass destruction.<sup>52</sup>

Some authors sustain that Great Britain should not have invaded another state. The invasion did not diminish the terrorist danger, neither created a safer world and not by any means it enforced the international world. Jeremy Corbin, a rival from the labour party, considered that Tony Blair was responsible for all the decisions regarding Iraq's invasion and therefore must face trial within the International Court of Justice of Hague.<sup>53</sup>

John Major attacked Tony Blair in 2010 for the war in Iraq. Initially he believed in his speech referring to proves of weapons of mass destruction, himself being confronted with an alike problem in 1990. The argument that Saddam was a bad dictator simply does not hold. There are many like him in the world and there is not decided a military intervention for each one of them.<sup>54</sup>

The terrorist threat remains a very important issue from the international terrorism but also from the Northern Irish problem, partially solved under Tony Blair's mandate.<sup>55</sup>

The relations with the European Union represented a very important point on the British agenda during the mandate of Tony Blair.

<sup>49</sup> BBC News *Blair Terror Speech in Full*, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/3536131.stm> Blair terror speech in full BBC news.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>52</sup> BBC News *Blair Terror Speech in Full*, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/3536131.stm> Blair terror speech in full BBC news.

<sup>53</sup> Jeremy Corbyn *Tony Blair was Iraq War Decision Making*, <http://rt.com/news/blair-iraq-war-corbyn/>, accessed on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2011, at 10.24 a.m.

<sup>54</sup> BBC News *Sir John Major criticises Tony Blair over the Iraq War*, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8437422.stm>, accessed on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2011, at 11 a.m.

<sup>55</sup> Peter Hain MP, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Chatham House, 2007, *Peacemaking in Northern Ireland: A model for conflict resolution?*, <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/issues/politics/docs/nio/ph120607.pdf>, accessed on 17<sup>th</sup> May, 2012, at 3.21 p.m.

Tony Blair had a very important role in the development of the European Union (signing of Amsterdam and Nice treaties), participating directly in this organisation's reform. Together with the president of France, Jacques Chirac, he played an important role in the decision to place the European Union as not only an economic actor but also diplomatic and military on the international scene within the summit of St. Malo.<sup>56</sup> Without the capacity of deployment of military forces and without the political machine apparatus capable of taking this kind of decisions, the European Union was lacking an essential factor in its foreign policy. The European Union will become a more independent partner and in this way a more solid partner of the United States. After the agreement of St. Malo and the signing of the Nice treaty, the European Union was engaged in four military presences.<sup>57</sup>

Under the leadership of Tony Blair, Great Britain was an ardent supporter of the enlargement of the European Union, becoming a first hand player in the dynamics of the evolution of this organisation. There was a strategic motivation, that of creating a stronger organisation (it was the same in the case of the compromise regarding the European budget).<sup>58</sup>

One of the European failures was the lack of capacity to adopt the unique currency and the lack of a common position towards Iraq. The position of Great Britain towards the War on Terror modified its relations with France and Germany, the European Union failing in having a commune foreign policy.<sup>59</sup>

During thirty years Great Britain tried and partially managed to become again a great world power. This was made with the respect of international law through uncompromising (the Soviet Union, Argentina) and collaboration (the United States and the European Union)

The research of documents, articles and papers shows that after 9/11 during the period of Tony Blair the foreign policy of Great Britain was a reactive one characterised by the partnership with the United States within the campaigns of Afghanistan and Iraq. At the same time between 1979 and 2006 the foreign policy of the Great Britain was oriented towards the building of a strong Europe.

Great Britain made a risky choice. The alternative would have been not to support unconditionally the United States and to play more on the European card. Considering the balance and interventionist policy of Great Britain this way could not seem feasible to the British leadership.

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<sup>57</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibidem*.

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