BRITISH PRIME MINISTER TONY BLAIR'S DECISION TO GO TO WAR IN IRAQ:

AN EVALUATION OF MOTIVATING FACTORS

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Blair sent British troops to join U.S. forces in the invasion of Iraq in 2003 at great political cost to himself. What motivated him to take this step? Sources for this work include: autobiographies and biographies of individuals close to Blair; journal and newspaper articles and monographs on this topic; Prime Minister's speeches and press conferences. Part one is comprised of five chapters including the Introduction; Blair's years at school; Blair's early political career; and From Parliament to Prime Minister. Part two includes four chapters that analyze motivating factors such as, Anglo-American Relations; Blair's personality, faith, and his relationship with Gordon Brown; and finally, Blair's perception of Britain's Manifest Destiny. All of these factors played a role in Blair's decision.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

On January 13, 2009, President George W. Bush awarded Tony Blair the Presidential

Medal of Freedom for his unwavering support of the United States in its battle against terror. The

President acknowledged the role of the former British Prime Minister by saying, "He was there to

show America and all nations, that he understood the stakes in the war on terror . . . Under Tony

Blair's leadership, the might and the moral authority of Great Britain have been applied to the war

on Terror from the first day."[1]   This was not the first time that Blair received one of the highest

honors America could give in recognition of extraordinary acts undertaken on behalf of the United

States and its allies. In 2003, Mr. Blair received the Congressional Gold Medal of Honor to

recognize his "steadfast stand against evil."[2]   The awarding of these medals speaks volumes about

the American public's perception of Tony Blair's role in the Iraq War.   As President Bush

explained while presenting Mr. Blair with the Medal of Freedom:

> Tony Blair's entire career is defined by his devotion to democratic values and human
> dignity. At his very center, the man believes in freedom – freedom from oppression,
> freedom from hunger, freedom from disease, and freedom from fear and despair. In the
> House of Commons, as the longest-serving Labour Prime Minister in history, he fought to
> lift up his nation's communities and better the lives of all its people. He helped turn
> generations of violence in Northern Ireland into years of peace. He drew the attention and
> conscience of the world to the suffering in Africa, and he continues to serve the cause of
> peace and democracy as the Quartet Envoy to the Middle East. . . . Out office, but still in
> public life, Tony Blair remains on the world stage as a man of high intelligence and insight
> – and above all, as a man of faith and idealism and integrity. The former Prime Minister of
> the United Kingdom will stand tall in history.[3]

For his part, Tony Blair made his feelings about his decisions regarding Iraq perfectly clear

in May 2007 at a joint press conference with President Bush in which he stated emphatically:

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[1] President Bush Honors Presidential Medal of Freedom Recipients, January 13, 2007 Whitehouse Office of the
Press Secretary, www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2009/01/   accessed 1/16/09.

[2] *Times* Online "Tony Blair will collect Congressional Gold Medal", January 7, 2007,
www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/politics/article5467515 , accessed 1/8/09.

[3] President Bush Honors Presidential Medal of Freedom Recipients, January 13, 2007 Whitehouse Office of the
Press Secretary, www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2009/01/ , accessed 1/16/09.

And you can debate about the mistakes and the issues, and you can debate about Iraq, whether we should have done this or we should have done that. But, actually, what is happening in Iraq today is that our enemy is fighting us, and, therefore, if what happens when our enemy fights us is that we drift away from our friends, that we kind of make the little accommodations so that we don't escape some of the difficulty and the responsibility and occasionally opprobrium of decision-making -- if we do that, our enemy takes heart from that, they watch that. They watch what we're doing the whole time.

They ask, are these guys standing up for what they believe, or, if we carry on, is their will going to diminish and they're going to give up, because it's just too difficult, because the public opinion is too difficult, because the opinion polls tell them it's too difficult?

Now, that is the decision of leadership. And it's not just a decision for me and him; it's a decision for everybody who's engaged in politics. And people run down politics and say it's all just a series of positions, and attitudes, and sound bites, and occasionally even lies and all the rest of it. Actually, what politics is in the end, when it's done in the right way, when people stand up for what they believe, is it's about public service.[4]

 In the introduction to his book, *The Blair Years*, Alastair Campbell touched upon one such

motivation when he described Tony Blair as, "a man of enormous drive and vision, who was

determined to use his time in power to make a difference and [who] brought about a lot of change

for the better."[5] Blair did not acknowledge the traditional limitations of politics. His goals as

Prime Minister transcended the political realm into the loftier planes of the establishment of an

ethical and enlightened international community.[6] Blair never saw his responsibilities as being

limited to doing what was best for Britain. He was driven by the conviction that he, and every

other world leader in a position to do so, had a duty to become involved in righting wrongs such as

genocide, religious or ethnic conflicts, hunger, and disease regardless of where they existed. The

creation of a more perfect world would become the driving force behind much of what Blair

sought to accomplish in the area of international affairs. Yet there were many ways in which Blair,

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[4] Prime Minister Blair, President Bush Defend Stance on Iraq War**, www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/politics/jan-june07/bushblair_05-17.html**, accessed 1/25/2009.

[5] Alastair Campbell, *The Blair Years: The Alastair Campbell Diaries*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007), .xiii

[6] J.H Grainger, *Tony Blair and the Ideal Type*, (Exeter, UK: Imprint Academic), 2005, 5.

in his position as Prime Minister of Great Britain could have made a difference that would not have carried such an expensive political price tag. He had proven that he was adept at effecting change as an MP and Labour Leader with his anti-crime campaign, with the revision of Clause IV of the Labour Constitution, and his efforts to change Labour's voting policy to a one member one vote format.

The fact that Blair has shown remarkably little regret for the momentous decision made in 2003 to take Britain into the war in Iraq alongside the United States, and that he also tenaciously refuses to reassess this action, would not surprise those who know Blair well. Going to war against Saddam and resolutely adhering to that commitment is entirely consistent with the character of the man who led Britain's Labour party back into power after 17 years in the "wilderness." However, Blair's actions, even though they may have received a warm response here in the United States prior to, and shortly after, the invasion of Iraq, were never similarly accepted by the British population. Ultimately they had a profound, and in large part, negative impact on his political career. Yet, even though he understood that his Iraq decisions would in all probability damage his standing public opinion polls, he forged ahead and made them anyway.

The questions that must be answered are: "Why?"; "What?"; and "How?" Why would Blair risk all that he had worked so hard to achieve from the moment he first sought public office? In 2003 Blair certainly had not yet accomplished all he might have wished in the sphere of domestic politics, so why would he choose such a different venue in which to make a difference? Why would he venture on to the stage of international politics where he had little experience? What made Tony Blair the man who would take that very risky and career threatening step into unproven territory? What role did Blair's religious views play in his decision? What was inherent in Blair's personality and character that dictated his choices? How did his perception of Britain's

relationship with the United States, or its role on the world stage affect Blair's reasoning on the issue of Iraq? And finally, how did his relationship with his chancellor, Gordon Brown factor into his decisions to focus on international affairs?

To answer these questions it is first necessary take a brief look at, how friends, family, colleagues, and life experiences helped shape Blair's character, setting him on the course that defined his years as Prime Minister and his role in the realm of international politics. Only then can the factors that shaped Blair's decision to go to war in Iraq be fairly evaluated. In an effort to provide the context in which his decisions regarding Britain's role in Iraq can be better understood, Part I of this thesis looks at key biographical episodes in Blair's early life and political career up to 1997 when Blair became Prime Minister. Blair's life at Fettes College and at Oxford; his courtship and marriage to Cherie Booth; his efforts to win a seat in parliament; his actions as part of the Labour shadow cabinet; his efforts to gain leadership of the Labour party and subsequently to help the party regain the majority in the 1997 general election are discussed. Part II explores the various motivating factors that appear to have influenced Blair's choices regarding the extent and nature of British participation in the Iraq War. Blair's relationship with the United States and its leaders, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush**;** his desire to construct the "transatlantic bridge"; his relationship with Gordon Brown; his religious and ethical beliefs; and Blair's personality type are reviewed to determine what impact they may have had in the formation of Blair's decision to go to war in Iraq. This thesis posits that each of these factors is an essential element of Blair's decision to pursue the course he chose, and helps to explain why he elected to do so in the face extreme opposition at home, and the certain knowledge that his decisions would be unpopular with the British public.

Accumulating data concerning recent events like the Iraq War is facilitated by fact that so much information is readily available on the World Wide Web. Archived newspaper articles and editorials, academic papers and journal articles regarding Blair, his press conferences press releases, formal speeches and informal interviews, and parliamentary debates are all available on-line and were used extensively in the preparation of this thesis. A number of individuals closely associated with Tony Blair have published their diaries or written autobiographies that discuss Blair and his actions as Prime Minister including: Alastair Campbell, Robin Cook, Cherie Blair, Philip Gould, Peter Stothard, and Derek Scott. These primary accounts provide a unique perspective on as to why Blair chose to involve himself in the war in Iraq. John Kampfner, Peter Riddell, Con Coughlin, David Coates and Joel Krieger authored monographs about Tony Blair and the Iraq war which offered detailed information and important bibliographical references that were helpful in the creation of this thesis. Biographies and monographs written about other individuals who played a key role in Blair's life were also invaluable because the information they offered provided texture and depth to Blair's story. These works included Bill Clinton's autobiography, and the biographies of John Smith, Peter Mandelson, Gordon Brown, and George W. Bush. Blair himself authored several articles and pieces for the Fabian Society as well as his book, *New Britain: My Vision of a Young Country* all of which provided valuable insights into Blair's beliefs and the rationale he employed when making certain key decisions. Finally, a number of well crafted biographies have already been written about Tony Blair by authors such as Anthony Seldon, John Rentoul, John Sopel, and Philip Stevens. These works were essential to the creation of Part I of this thesis because Blair has not yet written his memoirs and these authors were able to personally interview many individuals that had critical knowledge of Blair's early years.

Writing a thesis that deals with an event that occurred within the past decade is somewhat problematic. Although there is certainly a plethora of material readily available regarding the Iraq War and Blair's decision to become involved in the conflict, this war is an ongoing event and its outcome is not yet certain. The long term ramifications of the invasion and occupation cannot be determined at present. Consequently, it is difficult to fairly and accurately evaluate the efficacy of Blair's decision. What may seem to have been a questionable decision when assessed as a "current event", might invite an entirely different evaluation from historians who research Blair's actions one hundred years hence. For this reason, the scope of this paper is limited to suggesting that there were a multiplicity of factors that entered into Blair's decision to go to war in Iraq and offering an opinion was to what those factors were.

PART I

TONY BLAIR – THE MAKING OF A PRIME MINISTER

CHAPTER 1

FROM BOY TO MAN

Tony Blair did not burst upon the British political scene as a fully fledged Prime

Minister, or even as a leader of the Labour Party. In fact, there was little in his early upbringing

that would suggest that Anthony Charles Lynton Blair would ever end up as a leading figure in

the Labour Party let alone Britain's Prime Minister for three consecutive terms. Few of his

classmates at Fettes or Oxford would have predicted his subsequent emergence as a world leader

whose rise to prominence during the trying times after 9/11, would place him in a position that

could justifiably be considered as second only to the president of the United States. What was it

then that molded Tony Blair into the man who would stride so boldly across the world stage?

Who was this person who made a very unpopular decision and then stood by that decision with a

stubborn determination and bulldog-like tenacity even though the cost of doing so was the loss of

power and prestige he had fought so hard to win?

Born the second of three children on May 6, 1953, in Edinburgh, to Leo and Hazel Blair,

a young Tony Blair enjoyed a life that was solidly middle class. Blair's father, Leo, the product

of a working class background grew up as a socialist. He became Secretary of the Scottish

Young Communist League at the age of fifteen and held that post for four years. However, after

serving as an officer in the Army's Royal Signals Corps, this working class man was propelled

into the ranks of the middle class, and consequently, as he put it, he experienced a political

conversion to the Conservative party which he attributed to the change from living in a tenement

in Govan to life in the Officers' Mess.[7] Later he would indicate that he found men he had

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[7] John Rentoul, *Tony Blair, Prime Minister*, (London: Sphere, an imprint of Little, Brown), 2001, 8.

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previously vilified because of their class, to be quite normal.[8] Upon his discharge from the

military, Leo worked for Inland Revenue while working for his degree in law at Edinburgh

University. There, he met and married Blair's mother Hazel in 1948. When Tony was two, Leo

moved the family to Australia where he was a lecturer of Administrative Law at the University

of Adelaide. The family returned to Britain three years later and the senior Blair took up the

practice of law while also working as a University lecturer in the city of Durham. As a

successful barrister on the northern judicial circuit, Leo was able to provide his family with a life

that was replete with all the trappings of a comfortable middle class existence. Blair said of his

father, "He had a flourishing legal business and was always lecturing around the country. He

was also an astute self-publicist, appearing regularly on regional television."[9] Leo Blair was so

ambitious and busy with his career that his children saw little of him in their formative years.

Blair, remembering this, exercised great care in spending time with his own children when they

were small.

Early Education

Tony and his brother Bill acquired the beginnings of their formal education at Durham

Chorister School, an English preparatory school. Blair's years at the Durham school are

accounted to have been primarily happy and productive. He is said to have attributed his good

manners and general courteous demeanor to his days at Durham where practice of these traits

was emphasized. According to one of his biographers, Philip Stevens, there is little doubt that

Blair embraced his early Durham training. He states, "Whatever his faults, Blair is an

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[8] Anthony Seldon, *Blair,* (London: Simon and Schuster UK Ltd.) 2004, 2005, 18.
[9] Ibid., 21.

unfailingly courteous politician, one rarely heard to raise his voice in anger, one who always dispatches a note of thanks in response to a kindness or courtesy."[10]

Sadly, during Blair's last year at school in 1964, his father suffered a devastating stroke that left him unable to speak. The senior Blair had entertained hopes for a career in politics and to further this goal he had succeeded in becoming the chairman of the Conservative party's local association. Leo Blair wrote about his aspirations in a letter to John Rentoul, saying, "I always had the ambition to be a British MP. Furthermore, my ambition was boundless, I wanted to be Prime Minister."[11] Unfortunately any nascent political ambitions Leo Blair might have entertained were ended with his stroke. As for Tony Blair, his father's stroke, in his words, spelled the end of his idyllic childhood.[12] Blair indicated "After his illness my father transferred his ambitions on to his kids. It imposed a certain discipline. I felt I couldn't let him down."[13] While Blair felt his childhood slip away, his mother, Hazel Blair simply did all that was needed to be done. She was the rock of the family at this time, caring not only for Leo, helping him relearn how to walk and talk; but also caring for Blair's sister Sarah as she struggled to overcome Still's disease, a form of rheumatoid arthritis; and for her own mother Sally who was suffering from Alzheimer's. Much of Blair's tenacity and perseverance may be attributed to lessons he learned from his mother during those years when she held the family together, and labored unceasingly to make things as normal as possible. Blair explained, "When you think of what she must have gone through with Dad she must have been under awful strain. But she never exhibited any signs of it, so I owe her a very great debt."[14]

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[10] Philip Stephens, *Tony Blair: The Making of a World Leader*, (New York: Viking Press), 2004 , 4.

[11] John Rentoul, *Tony Blair, Prime Minister*, 4.

[12] Francis Beckett and David Hencke, *The Survivor: Tony Blair in Peace and War*, (London: Aurum Press) 2004, 6.

[13] John Rentoul, *Tony Blair, Prime Minister*, 4.

[14] Ibid., 5.

As a result of Leo's stroke, the Blair family experienced the discomfort of somewhat straightened circumstances. Although he was able to resume his teaching duties, his ability to practice as a barrister was "badly impaired", significantly reducing the family income.[15] One of the family vehicles had to be sold, and the family suffered socially as "fair-weather friends" deserted them.[16] However, they were still situated comfortably enough to insure that Tony and his older brother continued their public school education. Consequently, at the age of thirteen, Blair was sent to join his brother Bill at Fettes College in Edinburgh.

Leo Blair explained why he selected Fettes College for his sons by saying, "I did it for three reasons: I had read in Scottish Field that it was the "Eaton of Scotland"; the local county judge went there, as did his son; [and] I have always found that the Scots valued a good education and its benefits more than the ordinary Englishman."[17] One of Scotland's leading public schools, Fettes applied a Calvinistic-type rigor to the turning out of young men of character. The school employed strict discipline and exacting austerity to achieve that end. According to Anthony Seldon, Blair's early years at Fettes were happy ones. He seemed to be well liked by students and staff who gave "the general impression that the early Blair. . .was an extremely cheery, dandy young boy, grinning away like mad with his attractive smile, very popular right from the word go, because he was so likeable and enthusiastic."[18] However, this idyllic interlude was not to last. Life at the school was austere to the extent that the boys slept in tiny cubicles and took cold showers. The school's regimented schedule, archaic codes of discipline, and seemingly sadistic practices of caning to punish minor misdeeds, were difficult to accept for a young man who had been accustomed to the kinder treatment meted out at his school

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[15] Anthony Seldon, *Blair,* 6.

[16] John Rentoul, *Tony Blair Prime Minister*, 3.

[17] Ibid., 14.

[18] Ibid., 7.

in Durham. Another practice Blair found hard to deal with, was that of forcing younger students

to "fag" for the older students, in essence forcing them to become personal valets to those with

more seniority.   The Fettes program set up Blair to rebel against the system, a feat he managed

on a regular basis. He frequently escaped over the walls to enjoy an evening's entertainment in

Edinburgh. He found himself in trouble for hair grown too long, and for infractions of the dress

code. Blair seemed to have had a knack for frustrating the staff by questioning every rule when

what was expected was simple compliance.   "For Blair, testing the boundaries meant smoking,

drinking, breaking bounds, having long hair and mimicking staff . . . it did not mean taking drugs

or breaking the law . . . or doing anything he deemed immoral."[19] His breach of the rules was

never substantive or serious, but was rather a passive aggressive statement regarding his lack of

connection to the entire Fettes system. His rebellion at Fettes offered an early hint of Blair's

ability to pursue a potentially damaging course with a "damn the consequences" attitude.

Blair did not leave Fettes with happy memories of his time spent there; however, he did

come away with certain skills that would serve him well in his future political career. While at

Fettes, Blair was given the opportunity to practice his skills as an actor. He was cast in the role

of Marc Anthony in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, and as Captain Stanhope in *Journey's End* by

R.C. Sherriff. In both cases, and in other roles that followed, Blair is said to have acquitted

himself with admirable skill.[20] Blair's present ability to craft and deliver speeches that strike an

effective emotional chord with his audience may be attributed to the skills honed as a stage actor

at Fettes. His future speeches as Labour Leader, and subsequently as Prime Minister, benefitted

from the dramatic impact Blair, the actor, infused in their delivery. He is a master at knowing

his audience, at pacing his words, at using emphasis for maximum effectiveness.

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[19] Anthony Seldon, *Blair,* 13.

[20] Philip Stephens, *Tony Blair: The Making of a World Leader*, 6.

Anyone who has watched Blair give a speech, regardless of venue, knows that his presentation is almost always flawlessly delivered with perfect emotional overtones, designed to capture and hold audience attention while Mr. Blair wins them over with his well-honed powers of persuasion. "[He is] all things to all men . . .making what he wills out of what is before him . . . The captive audience is always an opportunity for projecting himself, for 'charm' and persuasion, for charging others with his out flowing energy; he is indeed 'the genial ego'."[21] His acting skills served him well not only in his public roles, but also in his more private and personal life. Blair is a master of veiling his emotions, smiling and remaining unfailingly courteous regardless of how angry, bored, disappointed, or disgusted he might feel. These emotions are shared only with a privileged few, his family and his closest inner circle of advisors and friends.[22]

Blair's official line about his time at Fettes was that his unhappy final year can be entirely attributed to his house master, Mr. Roberts, who forced him to cut his hair when it grew beyond regulation length, and who would punish him for infractions such as wearing the wrong tie or refusing to queue up properly for lunch. Actually the previous house master Eric Anderson, much revered by Blair, was equally as adverse to long hair and the other minor rebellious acts for which Blair had become so well known.[23] Blair might have faced expulsion from Fettes his final year for his various misdeeds had not his girlfriend's father, Jack Mackenzie-Stuart, then a distinguished Edinburgh judge, intervened on his behalf. He arranged that Blair would spend his final week after 'A' levels away from school doing social work at a boy's camp.[24] His time at Fettes, though not the stuff from which many positive memories are made, did help mold Tony

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[21] J.H. Grainger, *Tony Blair and the Ideal Type*, 7.

[22] Philip Stephens, *Tony Blair: The Making of a World Leader*, 8.

[23] Francis Beckett and David Hencke, *The Survivor: Tony Blair in Peace and War*, 21.

[24] Anthony Seldon, *Blair*, p. 12.

Blair into the man who would become Prime Minister. Compared to the eager and naïve thirteen

year old boy who entered Fettes, the self assured eighteen year old Blair had developed a

charisma which allowed him to naturally become the focus of attention when he entered a room.

It was a trait that would become one of his defining characteristics.[25]

Oxford

Upon leaving Fettes, Blair was admitted to St. John's College, Oxford. However, he

requested a 12 month gap year so that he might pursue non-academic activities for a time.

Blair's desire to enjoy a bit of freedom and to pursue his interest in music led him to London

where he and a friend, Alan Collenette, decided to try to make a go of managing a rock band.

Initially, Blair stayed with a series of friends until he finally settled into more permanent lodging

arrangement with a Richmond vicar who also provided a place for one of the bands managed by

Blair and Collenette, to practice. Not surprisingly, managing the band did not provide adequate

income for the two young men to survive, so they were forced to take jobs at Barkers, an upscale

department store in Kensington. This interlude in Blair's life did not last long however.   After

six months of putting on band performances at the church hall, and a few weeks of tending bar in

Paris, he returned to St. John's to study law.[26]

At St. John's, Blair diligently applied himself to his studies, eventually earning a law

degree that was respectable, if not distinguished. According to Derry Irvine who would become

Blair's employer and later his mentor, Blair earned a "good Second" failing to get a First

"because he simply did not exert himself."[27] Blair seemed to shed his rebelliousness along with

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[25] Anthony Seldon, *Blair*, p. 12.

[26] Francis Beckett and David Hencke, *The Survivor: Tony Blair in Peace and War*, 25.

[27] John Rentoul, *Tony Blair: Prime Minister*, 47.

his Fettes school jacket, contenting himself with channeling his creative talents into playing

guitar for a rock band known as Ugly Rumours at student concerts. In later years, as prime

minister, Blair would again pick up the guitar which, he found was a great way to help relieve

the stress of office.[28] His life at Oxford was remarkably understated.   Unlike Benazire Bhuto,

future Prime Minster of Pakistan and one of Blair's contemporaries at Oxford, whose bold

personality and actions made her a huge presence at Oxford, Blair was never exposed as a future

world leader during his time at St. John's.[29] Instead he enjoyed a quiet but active social life at

the college organizing excursions to concerts and parties, and even though he had a string of

attractive girlfriends, he managed not to become seriously romantically involved with anyone.

Blair did, however, become involved with a group of young fellow students who met on a

somewhat regular basis to discuss politics, philosophy, and religion.   These meetings often

included discussions surrounding the philosophies of Marx, Engels, Trotsky and others, and may

have afforded Blair his first exposure to philosophies that would have an influence on his later

political thinking. However, his apparent interest in socialist/communist philosophies did not

appear to grow deep roots, nor did it lead to a role in student politics, nor did he ever indicate

having a respect for those who did become involved.[30] That is not to say that Blair's political

philosophy did not evolve during his college years, it did. Blair carefully examined the

relationship between Marxism and Christianity. He paid particular attention to the writings of

John Macmurray, a philosopher who had enjoyed a rather distinguished career as Jowett Lecturer

in Philosophy at Balliol College and Grote Professor of the Philosophy of the Mind and Logic in

London before becoming Professor of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh University where he

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[28] Philip Stevens, *Tony Blair: the Making of a World Leader*, 10.

[29] Anthony Seldon, *Blair*, 29.

[30] Ibid., 32.

suggested that when considering the individual's relationship to society neither should predominate, instead the ultimate reality was a "third way" which could be fully formed only in personal relationships. Macmurray's ideas, "helped crystallize in his [Blair's] mind the central importance of community."[31] Geoff Gallop, one of Blair's Oxford compatriots, has been quoted as saying, "[Blair] was someone who wanted to change the world for the better and suddenly he saw that he could do it through politics."[32] His intent to pursue a career in law or politics was evident as he attended dinners with visiting judges and latched on to any political insider information that might come his way.

While Blair was finishing his studies at Oxford, he learned that his mother was terminally ill with throat cancer. His family kept the news of her illness from him while he was still at school, wishing to spare him the distraction while he studied for his finals. She died shortly thereafter and her loss profoundly affected her younger son. She had been the Blair family's greatest source of strength, their rock. She truly had been a pivotal individual in Blair's life. Anthony Seldon says of her, "Not only did she help him with religious faith: it was her social conscience, commitment to others and her sheer kindness which coloured his outlook."[33] Blair later said that losing his mother was a loss of an important source of security, and a deeply sobering event that forced him to face his future with more "focus and determination."[34] Her death caused Blair to re-evaluate his world, to become a more intense and serious individual who focused on work during the day and reading the bible in the evening hours.[35]

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[31] Anthony Seldon, , *Blair,* 33.

[32] Ibid. 33.

[33] Anthony Seldon, , *Blair,*22.

[34] Philip Stevens, *Tony Blair: the Making of a World Leader*, 14.

[35] Anthony Seldon, *Blair,* 36.

Meeting Cherie

Blair came to London in the summer of 1975 to begin his internship as a young lawyer with an established barrister, Alexander (Derry) Irvine, who later helped groom Blair as a politician. In fact, without Irvine's patronage, Blair might not have risen in Labour ranks so quickly, or have ended up as party leader and subsequently Prime Minister.[36] Blair's rather mediocre scores on the bar exams normally would not have netted him this position, but he had been recommended by a friend. Blair made a positive first impression on Irvine who agreed to take him on even though he already had hired another intern, Cherie Booth. Cherie gained her spot with Irvine in spite of her somewhat disadvantaged childhood. The daughter of television actor Tony Booth, Cherie, her mother and sister spent most of her formative years living with Tony's parents in a terraced flat in Crosby. Tony, an absentee father, provided little in the way of support, forcing Cherie's mother Gale to work at a fish and chips shops to support the family. Gale worked very hard to give her girls a normal and happy childhood, but it was fortunate that Cherie was an extremely intelligent student. Strong academic performance gained her a place in the Seafield Convent School, a grammar school run by nuns where she earned four "A's" in A levels. Cherie's skill in debating led her into the study of law at the London School of Economics where she earned her degree summa cum laude.[37]

According to Cherie, she and Blair worked on a number of Irvine's cases together and got to know each other quite well when they had free time. Cherie was always aware that Blair was a potential rival for tenancy so she took every opportunity to prove that she would be the better candidate for the permanent position. Yet despite her best efforts and, according to Cherie, perhaps because Irvine felt that her gender put her at a distinct disadvantage at the Bar, it

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[36] Anthony Seldon, *Blair,* 48.

[37] Ibid, 63.

was Blair who was taken on as tenant.[38] According to Beckett and Hencke, Irvine simply felt

Blair was easier to get along with.[39] Cherie could never match the comfortable manner that Blair

employed when dealing with others of his class. This ability made him more valuable to Irvine

than Cherie, who, regardless of her intellectual gifts, would never match Blair's skills of

persuasion.

Despite their competition for a place with Irvine, Blair and Cherie seemed to hit it off and

soon they were dating. Blair was clearly smitten with Cherie, acknowledging that she was a

brilliant lawyer and that, when he found himself to be struggling, she helped him enormously[40].

Although Cherie admits to dating two other young men at the time she started dating Blair, she

had a sense by Christmas of 1976 that Blair was special, in her words, "a very good looking

young man, tall and slim, yet broad in the shoulders . . .his eyes . . . were a clear penetrating

blue."[41] By the spring of 1977 the two were dating exclusively. Cherie attributes her choice to

the fact that behind his charm, Blair had a "steely quality" and she believed him to be a person

who could give her a run for her money.[42] The two were engaged in Italy while they were on

vacation in 1977. Their last day there, Cherie was attacking the task of cleaning the villa they

had rented and was down on her knees scrubbing the toilet when Blair appeared to say that

maybe they should get married.[43] The future Mrs. Blair said yes without a moment's hesitation.

They were married in the chapel at St. John's in 1980.

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[38] Cherie Blair, *Speaking for Myself: My Life from Liverpool to Downing Street*, (New York: Little, Brown and Company), 2008, 52.

[39] Francis Beckett and David Hencke, *The Survivor: Tony Blair in Peace and War*, 37.

[40] John Rentoul, *Tony Blair: Prime Minister*, 55. (Quoted from BBC Radio 4, *Desert Island Disc.* 23, November, 1996).

[41] Cherie Blair, *Speaking for Myself,* 53.

[42] Ibid., 71.

[43] Ibid., 75.

Summary

Blair's early years provided a foundation on which his future political career would be based. He learned several valuable lessons in his childhood that would remain with him throughout his career. Durham Chorister School lessons in social etiquette insured that Blair continued to be unfailingly polite and courteous in his interactions with friends, co-workers, and political connections. His years at Fettes honed his skills as an actor enabling him to craft speeches that were incredibly persuasive and which allowed him to create a persona that best served his needs at any particular moment. His oratory skills also won the favor of the press who loved his ability to speak in sound bytes. His Oxford years provided him with training in the law and also exposed Blair to the philosophy of John Macmurray whose beliefs regarding a "third way" would become central to Blair's own doctrine of international community. Perhaps most importantly however, Blair drew on lessons from his family's experiences. He was inspired by his mother's courage and strength that carried the family through difficult years when his father was recovering from his stroke and his sister was afflicted with serious illness. Blair learned to be steadfast in the face of adversity and to rely on his faith to help him persevere in supporting what he believed to be a just cause.

CHAPTER 2

FROM PARTY TO PARLIAMENT – PROVING HIS METTLE

Forming a Political Philosophy

According to John Rentoul, "When Blair left Oxford . . . he was definitely left wing and saw the unfashionable Labour Party as the only possible vehicle for his political interest. His beliefs were still forming, but [he] could already be described as an ethical socialist."[44] Blair was somewhat unusual in the respect that his parent's political persuasion played no part in the forming of his own political philosophy. While his father was an atheist and a Tory, Blair was a Christian Socialist, his faith and his politics having germinated while at Oxford where he studied scripture and Karl Marx and had long conversations with the college chaplain Graham Dow who was struck by his excitement at his discovery of God.[45]

In an effort to find a group of like-minded people with whom he could associate, Blair joined the Labour party in 1975. [46]   He became a member of the newly reformed Redcliffe Branch of the Chelsea Labour, and, at its first meeting, was made Branch Secretary. After they were married, both Blair and Cherie transferred their party membership to the Queensbridge Branch of the Hackney South Labour Party. In 1980, they became involved in the Labour Coordinating Committee, which was in the process of disassociating itself from the hard left of the party. Blair was definitely anti-Militant, as evidenced by his efforts to have them expelled from the party; and he had little love for Tony Benn's purer form of socialism.   Blair was aggravated by the excessively bureaucratic party proceedings which he believed acted to drive

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[44] John Rentoul, *Tony Blair, Prime Minister*, (London: Sphere, an imprint of Little, Brown), 2001, 47.

[45] Anthony Seldon, *Blair,* (London: Simon and Schuster UK Ltd.) 2004, 2005, 33.

[46] Ibid., 50.

away party members and prospective members.[47] He believed that the far left wing hurt party credibility party and prevented it from winning national elections. Yet despite some speculation to the contrary, there is no evidence to suggest that Blair ever considered opting out of the Labour Party to join the more middle-left Social Democratic Party.[48] His relationship with trade union clients and his loyalty to Derry Irvine, and most particularly to Cherie, bound him to the Labour party. His deeply ingrained sense of loyalty kept him firmly it its ranks. Blair's loyalty to the Labour Party was beyond question; however he did take exception to several Labour policies and doctrines. During his earliest years in politics, he often expressed the little views of the party without the conviction of belief because he knew it was necessary to do so in furtherance of his career. It would take several years for his own beliefs to gel, and when that happened, he was not reluctant to challenge policy in an effort to modernize and reshape the party into an organization that could attract a wider following.

Entering Politics

By 1980, somewhat disenchanted with the Law, Blair became interested in actually seeking a parliamentary seat because, as an MP, he could feed his ambition and make a difference. To enhance his chances at gaining an entrée into this field, Blair began to do more trade union work. In order to stand as a Labour candidate, union membership was mandatory so Blair joined the Transport and General Workers Union. To make a name for himself, he began to give lectures at trade union conferences.   Cherie indicated her husband was not adverse to gaining credibility by drawing attention to his wife's working class origins.[49] Blair's public

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[47] Anthony Seldon, *Blair,* 52.

[48] Ibid., 53.

[49] Cherie Blair, *Speaking for Myself: My Life from Liverpool to Downing Street*, (New York: Little, Brown and Company), 2008, 89.

school background and Oxford education often made him an object of criticism from Labour hardliners who showed little interest in supporting Blair's efforts to seek office. Nonetheless, he persevered and began to search for a parliamentary seat as early as 1980. His efforts were met with some skepticism from fellow party members as his political experience at that point was almost nonexistent. He applied for the seat in Middlesbrough, but did not make the short list. However, he did not let this deter him from efforts to enhance his party visibility by writing articles for the *Spectator* and the *New Statesman*, and by networking with prominent party members such as John Smith and Dennis Healy whom he met through Derry Irvine and his father-in-law, Tony Booth.

In 1982, Blair, at the urging of Irvine and John Smith, decided to run for the seat of Beaconsfield which was vacant after the death of the Tory MP, Sir Ronald Bell. Although there was very little chance that Labour could win this seat, it was a good opportunity for the party to see the stuff of which the young barrister was made. Blair campaigned on pledges to take Britain out of the EEC and to support nuclear disarmament. He adopted a position on both issues that, in reality, he did not support, but did so because it was necessary in order to remain in the good graces of the party leadership. In fact, party leader Michael Foot, for whom Blair had shown earlier public support, went so far as to travel to Beaconsfield to have lunch with Blair while Healy, Smith, and Kinnock campaigned for him. Although he lost the election to the Conservative candidate, Blair clearly demonstrated his campaigning skills and proved he could be a force for the Labour party.

In 1983 Blair's affability and his social connections allowed him to garner the political support and resources necessary to be considered for the seat of Sedgefield as a Labour candidate. Sedgefield was considered a safe Labour seat because it was a new constituency

carved out of a territory that included several mining communities that would almost certainly

vote a Labour ticket. However Blair s winning this seat was truly far from a fait accompli. He

needed to find a local branch from which to secure a nomination; diligent research proved there

remained only one branch that had not already submitted a nomination, the constituency of

Trimdon. When he learned of the vacancy, Blair wasted no time in contacting John Burton,

Secretary of the Trimdon Branch of the Labour Party to express his interest in the seat. Burton,

intrigued by Blair's forthright conversation, invited him to his house to meet with other branch

members.

When Blair arrived at Burton's, the group was watching a European Championship

soccer match on television, so the first part of the evening was spent in very general conversation

about the match. Blair politely waited until the match was over before speaking to the group

about his views. According to Anthony Seldon, "what particularly struck home was what he said

about power in the party residing in unrepresentative groups in 'smoke-filled rooms' . . . and that

it needed to be opened up to a larger membership."[50] The Trimdon group were taken with Blair

and agreed that they believed him to be the best candidate for the seat. Their belief in Blair was

such that four members of this group would become a part of Blair's team, remaining with him

over the years. John Burton in particular would become almost a father figure to Blair.

However, winning over the Trimdon group was only the first step in the process that had

to be undertaken to gain the Sedgefield seat. Blair still needed to win the backing of the

Executive Committee of the Sedgefield Labour Party. This group was dominated by the left and

they were responsible for drawing up a short list of candidates for the position. When the list

was published, Blair's name was not on it. It was at this point that John Burton pulled the

proverbial rabbit from his hat. When the opportunity arose, he stood up and addressed the

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[50] Anthony Seldon, *Blair*, 78.

general assembly announcing that he had a letter written on Blair's behalf by Michael Foot. Blair's name was added to the short list. The next step was to win the selection against the other six candidates. Blair won the selection on the fifth round of voting.

With just nineteen days before the general election, Blair moved in with the Burtons so he could mount his campaign. His efforts to get out the vote received a special boost from the help of his celebrity father-in-law, television actor Tony Booth, and Booth's partner, Pat Phoenix who both were stars in the British drama *Coronation Street*, both actively campaigned for Blair, and their presence did much to enhance his popularity with the public. On polling day, a very nervous Blair was elated to win by 8,281 votes.

CHAPTER 3

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT TO PRIME MINISTER –

THE QUEST FOR A CAUSE

Blair gave his maiden speech in Parliament on July 6, 1983. He took this opportunity to cast himself as one who was not afraid to break with tradition by attacking the Thatcher government's finance bill, chastising the government for being complacent and uncaring about the high levels of unemployment. It is in this speech that Blair defined himself as a politician saying, "I am a socialist not through reading a textbook that has caught my intellectual fancy, nor through unthinking tradition, but because I believe, that at its best, socialism corresponds most closely to an existence that is both rational and moral. It stands for cooperation, not confrontation, for fellowship, not fear."[51] While this speech provided a small glimpse into the mind of the new MP from Sedgefield, it could not begin to provide insight into the man Blair was to become over the next ten years. His rise during this time from an unknown political neophyte to the highest political post in the nation is nothing short of meteoric, and is worth closer investigation.

Anthony Seldon says, "From the outset, Blair was seen as highly ambitious. Politics was now his life. Apart from his family . . . he had no outside interests or distractions."[52] He immediately began to meet important people in the party, to insert himself into party activities whenever possible, and in general, to take every opportunity to put himself forward in a positive and helpful way. At the time that Blair entered Parliament, the Labour Party was split into three main groups including Tony Benn's leftwing Campaign Group, Neil Kinnock's center-left

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[51] Paul Richards, Ed., *Tony Blair In His Own Words*, (London: Politico's Publishing), 2004, 32.
[52] Anthony Seldon, *Blair,* (London: Simon and Schuster UK Ltd.) 2004, 2005*,* 94.

Tribune Group and Roy Hattersly and John Smith's Solidarity Group on the right.[53] During the

campaign to see who would replace Michael Foot as the head of the party, after listening to all of

the candidates, Blair chose to support Neil Kinnock for leader, placing himself firmly in the

center-left camp.   He joined the Tribune Group and over the next nine years Blair worked with

Kinnock toward their mutually desired goal of party modernization. Blair believed the party had

to learn how to appeal to a broader base of constituents, saying in a *BBC Newsnight* interview on

June 22, just after the 1983 election, "The image of the Labour Party has got to be more

dynamic, more modern. Over 50 percent of the population are owner-occupiers – that means a

change in attitude that we've got to catch up to."[54]   As he continued to prove in his later career,

Blair was not one to hesitate in the pursuit of goals that were unpopular if he believed them to be

right.

Although Blair was originally allocated an office with Dave Nellist, a member of the

Militant faction of the Labour party, their lack of common ground soon led to relocation to an

office which he would share with another new MP, Gordon Brown.   Even though both men

entered Parliament in the same year, Brown was years ahead of Blair in terms of political

experience. Having earned his PhD in History at the University of Edinburgh, Brown had

already written a number of books on Scottish Labour policy and devolution, had been Chairman

of the Scottish Labour Party, and already was well known to a number of influential contacts

within the Labour Party.   In the early years of their relationship, Blair was often Brown's willing

pupil, eager to learn what Brown had to offer. For his own part, Blair had a better understanding

than did Brown, of the British middle-class, what they wanted and how they thought. And it

would only be a mere decade later when Blair would craft a somewhat Faustian bargain with

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[53] Anthony Seldon, *Blair,* 94.

[54] John Rentoul, *Tony Blair: Prime Minister*, (London: Sphere, an imprint of Little Brown & Co), 2001, 115.

Brown regarding party leadership that would color British politics for the next thirteen years. In 1983 however, Blair and Brown were simply interested in working together to help return the Labour Party to power.

Early Days in Parliament - Barlow Clowse

Labour Party Leader, Neil Kinnock, liked Blair and believed that he, along with Brown, had a bright political future.   Blair's abilities brought him notice both inside the party and out. Deputy party leader, Roy Hattersly, actively supported Blair and within a year of entering Parliament, Blair was appointed to the shadow Treasury team.   Blair won the general admiration of others because of his ability to understand complex legislation and to address issues in an intelligent, well spoken manner. When redefining party dogma, he utilized his skills as a trained barrister to make his case and to craft his arguments to gain the widest possible support from the public. According to Stephens, "his constant refrain was that values were what counted. Policies mattered, not for their own sake but only insofar as the promised to deliver those values."[55] Blair was media-friendly and as such, could be put to good use by the party. He looked good on television and was a natural orator.   He could think quickly on his feet and was a master at creating effective sound bites. By 1985 Blair's reputation had grown to the point that he was asked to appear on BBC's *Question Time*.[56]

By the mid 1980's Blair had met and become friends with a number of the people who would form a part of the "team" that would be, in large part, responsible for the rapid rise of his political career. Peter Mandelson, who had come on board as the Labour Party Director of Communications, was one of the first to recognize that Blair would be an effective media draw

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[55] Philip Stephens, *Tony Blair: The Making of a World Leader*, (New York: Viking Press), 2004, 43.
[56] Anthony Seldon, *Blair*, 99.

for the party. They had gone to Oxford at the same time, but had not run in the same circles because, as Mandelson put it, unlike Blair, "I was interested in politics." Alastair Campbell, a journalist with close connections to Neil Kinnock, also took note of Blair at this time indicating that, "For someone who was then quite young he was really quite a reassuring figure . . . [a person] who has an innate understanding of what makes people tick."[57] Blair was also introduced to Philip Gould, a pollster brought into the Labour elite by Mandelson who wanted to tap into Gould's communication skills. While Gould honed his skills as the political consultant to the Labour Party, Mandelson perfected the fine art of "spin-doctoring." Both men worked to present Blair and Brown as the "faces of the future" in Kinnock's newly restructured Labour Party.[58] Finally, Blair hired Anji Hunter, a friend from his youth to work in his office. Seldon asserts that, "Having met remarkably few political soul mates in his first thirty years, he now met in the space of just four years those he would rely on most heavily on the road to Number 10 and beyond."[59]

The 1987 general election gave the Labour Party little to cheer about. The party vote increased by a mere 3.2 percent giving Labour just 31.5 percent of the total vote. It became obvious to even the most obdurate party members that they were not offering the British public what it wanted and that fundamental changes in the Party platform were now an absolute necessity. For Blair, there was a small personal victory as he increased his majority in Sedgefield by almost 5,000 votes. However, his personal victory did little to mitigate the disappointment he felt regarding the results of the general election. Instead, he appeared to become even more motivated and dedicated to effecting serious policy changes within the party.

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[57] Philip Gould, *The Unfinished Revolution: How the Modernizers Saved the Labour Party* (London: Little, Brown and Company), 1998, 183- 4.

[58] John Rentoul, *Tony Blair: Prime Minister,* 132.

[59] Anthony Seldon, *Blair*, 99. (Quoting from *Guardian* (London) 27 June, 1987.)

He made a public call for a "broad sweep of new ideas and thinking" in the June 24, 1987 edition

of the *Guardian* and began a serious campaign for his own advancement in the party in an effort

to pursue these hoped-for changes.[60]

Blair, along with Gordon Brown, at the urging of Neil Kinnock, ran for a position in the

Shadow Cabinet.   While Blair might have feared losing, the benefits of securing a position as

one of fifteen Labour Front Benchers far outweighed the risks. Although he did not win a seat

on the shadow cabinet, Blair performed well in the election coming in 17th with 71 votes.

Recognizing this creditable performance, Neil Kinnock placed Blair on the Trade and Industry

team as City and Consumer Affairs spokesman. This position was considered to be one of the

most influential positions outside of the shadow cabinet and it afforded Blair the opportunity to

travel around the country with Kinnock putting on seminars and meeting businessmen.   Blair's

first real opportunity to make a name for himself came with his handling of a case involving a

group of pensioners who had lost their life savings with the investment group Barlow Clowes.

Blair effectively sold Labour's contention that the government had failed to properly monitor the

group's activities and had offered poor advice to the pensioners regarding their investments.

Blair, with lawyer-like precision, embarrassed the government by proving that they should have

known that the Barlow Clowes investment program was questionable and should never have

received government support.

Shadow Cabinet and Closed Shop

Blair's success with Barlow Clowes led to his winning a Shadow Cabinet post in 1988.

By now Blair was, "definitely starting to appear on the radar."[61] Neil Kinnock originally planned

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[60] Anthony Seldon, *Blair*, 100.

to place him in Shadow Employment to capitalize on Blair's experience with employment law, but when the privatization of energy became an issue, he decided Blair's talents could be utilized in fighting this flagship government policy.[62]   Blair took this opportunity and made the best of it by winning arguments in Parliament with his Conservative counterpart, Cecil Parkinson. In the 1989 Shadow Cabinet elections Blair came in 4th and Kinnock appointed him Shadow Employment Secretary.

In 1989, as Shadow Employment Secretary, Blair gained some attention beyond Parliament. The opportunity to do so presented itself only one month after he was appointed to the post. The House of Commons was debating the Social Charter of the European Union with Labour very much in favor of the charter because of the rights it offered to workers and because Labour wanted to be known as the party that supported the E.U. Although Blair stood at Beaconsfield on an anti-EEC ticket, Bryan Gould asserted, "I saw no evidence under Kinnock that Tony Blair took a strong view one way or the other on Europe."[63]   By 1989 however, Blair was showing an active interest in Europe and in developing closer ties with Britain's neighbors. While giving a speech in support of the Social Charter, Blair was challenged by a Conservative MP, Timothy Raison. Raison asked Blair for Labour's opinion on a provision of the charter which granted employees the right to choose not to belong to a union, a provision which would, in effect, end the closed shop. Blair responded by saying that "If it has that meaning, it also has the meaning that one has the right to be a member of a trade union."[64]

[61] Cherie Blair, *Speaking for Myself: My Life from Liverpool to Downing Street*, (New York: Little, Brown and Co.), 2008, 123.

[62] Anthony Seldon , *Blair*, 102.

[63] Ibid., 316.

[64] Ibid., 105.

Unhappy with being caught in a seemingly untenable position on this issue, Blair immediately set to work to formalize Labour's stance on open shop and to gain the necessary support to see the Charter approved. His first move was to seek advice from Neil Kinnock and Roy Hattersly in order to gain their support. With both men in his corner, his next move was to confront the unions. Rather than asking for union support, Blair took a different tack and told union leaders what he proposed to do, indicating that it was imperative that Labour reject closed shop so that its support of the Social Charter was uncompromised. He asked Union leaders to view this issue with open minds; certain that if they did so, they would understand why this was the only position Labour could take on this issue. While most Union leaders felt they had been ambushed by Blair and given little choice in how to respond, NGA leader Tony Dubbins was so angered by Blair's tactics that he demanded Blair come to his office to explain himself. Once there, Blair boldly faced a one-sided dressing-down. In the end, however, Dubbins and the other Union bosses were powerless to do anything about the situation and closed shop ceased to exist as part of the Labour Party platform. On December 17th, in a speech given to the Sedgefield Labour Party, Blair officially announced Party support of the Social Charter in its entirety including the abandonment of closed shop. While the issue was settled with most of the party willing to accept this policy change as necessary, Blair had to endure a continuing enmity from union leaders for some time to come. However, the political rewards Blair enjoyed as a result of his actions regarding closed shop far exceeded any negative outcomes.

Blair's handling of the closed shop issue garnered a tremendous amount of respect from party leaders such as Kinnock and Hattersly. He had acted quickly and decisively with a minimum of input from others, to formulate a policy and effectively push it through against significant potential opposition from powerful union bosses. Seldon explains the impact his

actions had on the opinions of others, "David Aaronovitch articulated a growing view when he said, 'This was the moment I realized he was going to be leader.' No one seriously thought of him in that way before 1989. It was closed shop that marked him out."[65] Harriet Harman noted that Neil Kinnock was thinking in much the same vein when, in January of 1990, she heard him say, "Here comes the next leader of the Labour Party" when Blair entered the room.[66]

Another important event occurred in 1990 that would have a long term impact on Blair's future as party leader and beyond. His friend and colleague, Peter Mandelson decided to run for the seat in Hartlepool. John Burton, Blair's agent in Sedgefield, recalled conversing with Blair about the seat. Burton harbored hopes of seeking this seat himself, so he was somewhat disconcerted when Blair indicated that his friend was interested in this seat and stated that he believed it was important that Mandelson win. Burton commented, "He [Blair] had a vision for the future, you know, with Peter, Tony had. He realized that this would be a great help to him if Peter was in the House."[67] When Mandelson won the seat, he was no longer able to retain his job forwith the party, but he did continue to act as an advisor, although most of his advisory efforts were undertaken on behalf of Blair and Brown.[68] Blair was to enjoy the benefits of this relationship for years to come.

In the dawning months of 1991, Blair faced another challenge as Shadow Employment Secretary, that of developing and supporting Labour's policy on minimum wage. The party had moved away from the policy of setting minimum wage by collective bargaining as early as 1986, and was now supporting a formula-based wage tied to median male earnings. Although Blair publically supported this policy, privately he entertained doubts about its efficacy as is evidenced

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[65] Anthony Seldon, *Blair*, 107.

[66] John Rentoul, *Tony Blair: Prime Minister*, 159.

[67] Donald Macintyre, *Mandelson*, (London: Harper, Collins) 1999, 201.

[68] John Rentoul, *Tony Blair: Prime Minister*, 160.

by his dropping the formula as one of his first acts as leader in 1994.[69] Blair was given the

opportunity once again to demonstrate a steely determination to stand his ground during the

course of handling a media incident that occurred when John Prescott indicated in an election

phone-in that the implementation of minimum wage would mean the loss of jobs. When Sky TV

asked about Prescott's comment, Blair boldly demanded that the story be pulled because he

could not make it to the studio to respond to Prescott's statement.[70] Blair called the studio's

bluff, and the Prescott story was not run. Once again Blair showed he was made of sterner stuff

and his steely determination won the day.

A Change in Labour Leadership

During the lead up to the 1992 election, Labour should have been set for a victory.

Margaret Thatcher had resigned, and John Major was generally not considered to be up to

fighting weight. Labour enjoyed gains in the polls and had a handful of rising stars like Blair

and Brown whose media profile was on the rise. Unfortunately, Neil Kinnock was not seen by

the voting public as a credible Prime Minister; the Sheffield rally, "a great, vulgar, triumphalist

television spectacular [held] a couple of days before the election, the brain child of Peter

Mandelson"[71], left Labour appearing to be cocky and overconfident about their chances of

winning and; according to Cherie Blair, "In spite of the traditional upbeat performance of

[Labour] politicians on the campaign trail, no one really believed we were preparing for

government"[72]. Her husband agreed with this assessment, telling John Burton on the day of the

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[69] John Rentoul, *Tony Blair: Prime Minister*, 167.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Francis,Beckett, *Gordon Brown: Past Present and Future*, (London: Haus Books), 2007 , 72.

[72] Cherie Blair, *Speaking for Myself*, 127.

election that the Conservatives would win by twenty seats.[73] And so it came to pass that while Labour was slightly ahead in the polls on Election Day, John Major was returned to office with a twenty-one seat majority. It was a devastating loss for Labour and there was no doubt that Neil Kinnock would have to be replaced as party leader.

John Rentoul contends that, in order to understand how Blair secured the leadership of the Labour Party in the hours after John Smith's death in May of 1994, one must understand what happened in the days after the 1992 Labour lost its fourth election in a row. Blair, Brown, and Mandelson met almost immediately after the loss to discuss who should be the next party leader. The men knew that John Smith would certainly be a contender. Blair felt however, that the nod should go to Brown. Brown, on the other hand, had a deep sense of loyalty to his old mentor and assured Smith that he would not interfere with Smith's chances to win the leadership post.[74] Brown went so far as to have Mandelson "let it be known through the press – *the Independent on Sunday* – that he would not compete against Smith for the Labour leadership."[75] Accepting that Brown did not want to compete for the leadership position, Blair next suggested that Brown stand for deputy. Smith was not interested in having Brown as deputy, believing that the Shadow Chancellor position he'd promised Brown was adequate reward for his loyalty. Blair considered standing for deputy himself, but Brown adamantly opposed such a move.[76] According to Anthony Seldon, Brown's great fear was that Blair might "make something of the job, outshine him, and establish himself as Smith's clear successor ahead of him."[77] Smith too, was luke warm on the idea of Blair as deputy because he thought it would be a divisive move, so

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[73] Anthony Seldon, *Blair*, 141.

[74] Anthony Seldon, *Blair*, 143.

[75] Donald Macintyre, *Mandelson*: *The Biography*, (London: Harper Collins), 1999, 234.

[76] Anthony Seldon, *Blair*, 145.

[77] Ibid.

he ultimately settled the question by selecting Margaret Beckett for the post.[78] Blair was

disappointed with the Smith – Beckett leadership team and firmly believed that Brown had

squandered a valuable chance to wrest leadership from the old guard. Brown's failure to grab

the brass ring may well have influenced Blair's future decisions about seeking the leadership

position for himself.

During the next two years Blair began to take more risks, to put himself forward and to

demonstrate a willingness and an ambition for leadership. He wrote articles on topics such as

"Why Modernization Matters" for *Renewal* and "A Battle We Must Win" for the *Fabian*

Review;[79] he attended conferences to meet people of influence who might help his career, and he

carefully cultivated the press.   Andrew Neil, editor of the Sunday *Times*, believed in Blair's

leadership potential from early on in his career and, "thought that Brown, in contrast, lacked the

language to communicate beyond the party faithful."[80] Cherie Blair relates, "Over the two years

of John Smith's leadership, Tony did what he was asked to do, gave policy speeches, and so on,

but felt increasingly frustrated."[81] Blair indicated to friends on more than one occasion in 1993

and early 1994 that he would embrace the chance to become party leader should the opportunity

present itself.[82]

As Shadow Home Secretary Blair formulated a party policy which found favor with the

general public and that served to advance his personal agenda. His "Tough on crime, and tough

on the causes of crime" campaign brought him into the public eye in January of 1993[83], and may

have played a definitive role in Blair coming in ahead of Brown in the NEC elections that same

[78] Andy McSmith, *John Smith: A Life 1938-1994*, (London: Mandarin Paperbacks), 1994, 277.

[79] Anthony Seldon, *Blair*, 152.

[80] Ibid., 153.

[81] Blair, Cherie, *Speaking for Myself*, 130.

[82] John Rentoul, *Tony Blair: Prime Minister*, 185.

[83] Francis Beckett, *Gordon Brown: Past Present and Future*, (London: Haus Books), 2007, 75.

year.[84] Blair articulated his philosophy in a Fabian Society pamphlet in which he stated, "We should never excuse the commission of criminal offences on the grounds of social conditions. To deny individual responsibility is to deny individuality."[85] Smith's response to Blair's anti-crime campaign was to tell him to "stop hogging the limelight."[86] This only served to increase Blair's level of anger and frustration with party leadership and the status quo.

It was during this time that Blair's concept of the idea of community began to crystallize. Founded in part on his Christian faith, Blair believed that one of the guiding principles of the Labour Party should be the acknowledgement that people prosper in strong communities. Blair understood only too well that most party members viewed the creation of a powerful centralized state as the equivalent of establishing a strong community. But, as he explained in an article written in October of 1991 for *Marxism Today*, "The state became large and powerful, a vested interest in itself, every bit as capable of oppressing individuals as wealth and capital . . .[and] socialists . . . appeared to be merely defenders of the status quo against new radicals from the right."[87] If they were ever to return to power, Labour needed to "modernize" which meant the party needed to focus on the community and the individuals of which it was comprised. John Smith gave voice to similar sentiments in his speech given at a European Gala Dinner on May 11, 1994, the night before his death. He explained:

> There is a new duality to be created, as Gordon Brown, our Shadow Chancellor constantly says. It is the connection between investment in technology and investment in people. And the investment in people has to be accompanied by the acknowledgement of the dignity of people. If we ask people to be responsible, we must give them rights as well.88

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[84] John Rentoul, *Tony Blair: Prime Minister*, 213.

[85] Tony Blair, "Crime and Society", *Fabian Pamphlet* 562, April 1994.

[86] Anthony Seldon, *Blair*, 180.

[87] Paul Richards, ed., *Tony Blair: In his Own Words*, (London: Politico), 2004, 43.

[88] Gordon Brown and James Naughtie, eds., *John Smith: Life and Soul of the Party,* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing), 1994, 144.

In the months before Smith gave this speech, Blair received little support from the party leader for changing Labour's priorities on this issue. He privately told Cherie that he felt the modernizers were grinding to a halt and he was convinced that the party was too complacent to effect the necessary changes without help.[89] This served to feed his discontent with the status quo and fueled his ambitions to place himself in a position where he hoped he could affect a sea change within the Labour Party. His chance to do so would come sooner than even Blair could have anticipated when, on May 12, 1994, John Smith died suddenly of a massive heart attack.

Vying for Party Leadership

Although Blair was personally saddened at the death of John Smith as a friend and mentor, little time could be given over to mourning his loss. The party required a new leader and the selection process would, of necessity, proceed without undue delay. Cherie Blair relates that as soon as she joined Blair after Smith's death, she attempted to convince him that he must put himself forward for the leadership position. She told him simply, "You're the best man for the job, and you can't let Gordon seize the moment through some misplaced sense of obligation."[90]

For Peter Mandelson, Smith's death was a crisis of significant proportions. While Mandelson may have been torn between his friendship with Brown and his admiration of Blair, there has been significant controversy over the years since Smith's death as to who Mandelson really wanted to see succeed Smith as party leader. He met first with Brown shortly after 11:00 AM on May 12th in Brown's apartment. During this meeting, it became clear to Mandelson that

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[89] Cherie Blair, *Speaking for Myself*, 131.
[90] Cherie Blair, *Speaking for Myself*, 131.

Brown expected to be the modernizing candidate despite Mandelson's repeated suggestion that he, Brown, and Blair needed to meet to discuss this issue in detail.[91]

While Brown may have believed himself to be the logical successor to John Smith, Mandelson knew that there were several potential road blocks to Brown stepping into the leadership role. Brown was single, having fully devoted his life to politics, and although he was the more experienced politician, Blair was the more polished orator with acknowledged leadership skills, and had, in the previous two years, acquired a significant following in the party.

Mandelson met with Blair that same afternoon around 6:00 PM. During this meeting Blair told Mandelson that several of the Shadow Cabinet members had come to him earlier to pledge their support for his candidacy including: Jack Straw, Mo Mowlam, Adam Ingram, and Peter Kilfoyle.[92] Blair asked for Mandelson's view about the advisability of running for the leadership post to which Mandelson, desperately wanting to avoid playing favorites, could only reply that Blair could certainly consider himself to be a viable candidate. Blair refused to be put off by Mandelson's less than enthusiastic reaction to his query. According to Cherie, "he knew in his heart that he was the better person to carry the modernizer's message, if only because he embodied it better."[93] So by the time he concluded his meeting with Mandelson, Blair knew he was going to stand, and fully believed he was going to win. What remained was to have a rather uncomfortable conversation with Gordon Brown.

Gordon Brown had not been as adept at reading Mandelson's carefully scripted neutrality as had Blair. When Cherie asked Blair about how Mandelson viewed the situation, Blair

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[91] Donald Macintyre, *Mandelson*, 53.

[92] Donald Macintyre, *Mandelson*, 256. See also Anthony Seldon, *Blair*, 225.

[93] Cherie Blair, *Speaking for Myself*, 132.

responded, "He's very conflicted."[94] Brown, on the other hand, had interpreted Mandelson's

ambivalent response at their meeting on May 12th to mean that he had Mandelson's full support.

He was amazed to later learn that Mandelson had any doubts as to which man should be the

candidate.   Brown felt monumentally betrayed by Mandelson's failure to endorse his candidacy

and it destroyed, that which Mandelson desperately had hoped to preserve, their friendship.

Consequently, it was a prickly Brown who met with Blair at Blair's brother's house that evening.

Blair told Brown he was being encouraged to run and asked for Brown's advice.[95] Little is

known about what was said by the two men in further meetings held over the next eighteen days

although Cherie Blair offers some insight into Blair's agenda during these meetings:

> My own belief is that he decided to go for it straightaway. For him the real question was
> not whether he should stand, but how to reconcile Gordon in order to preserve the
> modernizer's ticket. What he most feared was that if both of them stood, the modernizers
> would lose out through squabbling among themselves. Tony's main aim over those next
> few days was to persuade Gordon to give way to him.

Regardless of what was said during the meetings, Blair appeared reluctant to run when this issue

was addressed in public venues. However, Roy Hattersly believed that reluctance was feigned

out of Blair's desire to maintain his relationship with Brown, saying, "He is very close to

Gordon, and I think it was put on for Gordon rather than put on for the world."[96]

Almost immediately after John Smith's death, and perhaps too soon for decency's sake,

the media began to take up the banner for Blair. John Rentoul notes that, long before Smith's

death, Blair, "pursued a deliberate and cynical course of seducing the leading figures of the Tory

press . . . and 'brought an unselfconsciously moral tone to his pronouncements on law and

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[94] Cherie Blair, *Speaking for Myself*, 133.

[95] John Rentoul, *Tony Blair: Prime Minister*, 227.

[96] Ibid.

order.'"[97] Most of the national newspaper political editors found themselves in the Blair corner, believing as they did, that he was more electable than Brown. Alastair Campbell, when asked by interviewer Mark Mardell on *Newsnight* who would be the next Labour leader, responded by saying, "Tony Blair, no doubt about it."[98] Sarah Baxter, former political editor of the *New Statesman*, wrote an article for the London *Evening Standard* entitled "Why I Say Tony Blair Should Be the Next Leader", while John Smith's biographer, Andy McSmith, when asked to name the next Labour Party leader, told an interviewer that it would be Tony Blair.[99] Blair was running well ahead in the polls, and by May 16, the BBC News indicated that Blair had his own bandwagon that appeared to be unstoppable.[100]

At the same time Blair was resolutely determining how he should best move forward in his campaign for the leadership post without giving the appearance of trampling over the hopes and aspirations of Gordon Brown, Brown was working on a plan that would allow him to stand down with some dignity. The two men met at the Granita restaurant on May 31st. Rentoul recounts the result of this meeting as being the moment when Brown officially and unconditionally stood down deferring to Blair as the modernizer's candidate[101], while Seldon supports the more generally held belief that Blair had to make certain concessions to Brown in return for Brown bowing out of the race.[102] What is not known for certain, in the absence of any clarification given by Blair or Brown, is the extent of the concessions Blair was obliged to make. Was Brown officially granted full hegemony over domestic affairs including social and economic policy? And what agreement was made between the two men regarding the eventual

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[97] John Rentoul, *Tony Blair: Prime Minister*, 230.

[98] Donald Macintyre, *Mandelson*, 256.

[99] John Rentoul, *Tony Blair: Prime Minister*, .228.

[100] Donald Macintyre, *Mandelson*, 258.

[101] John Rentoul, *Tony Blair: Prime Minister*, 235.

[102] Anthony Seldon, *Blair*, 193.

transfer of leadership from Blair to Brown? Whatever the two men agreed had a significant impact on British politics for the next thirteen years.

Labour Party Leader

Blair was now set to run in the leadership race against Margaret Beckett and John Prescott. Mandelson worked more or less clandestinely behind the scenes to advise the Blair team on strategy and communications. Blair was garnering support from many different factions in the party and his team felt comfortable in assuming the victory was his for the taking.   The results were announced on July 21st at the Westminster Institute of Education. At the age of 41, Blair was elected Labour leader with John Prescott winning the position as deputy leader. In his acceptance speech at the Institute of London, Blair emphasized his belief in doing the right thing, no matter how difficult it might be, saying, "Of course, the world can't be put to rights over night . . . But there is, amongst all the hard choices and uneasy compromises that politics forces upon us, a spirit of progress throughout the ages with which we keep faith."[103] His speech offers a foreshadowing of the decisions he would make within the next decade. His pursuit of justice for those who were oppressed in Kosovo and Sierra Leone or who were the victims of violence in Iraq and Northern Ireland was most certainly in keeping with the belief he professed about making a better world for all. The *Daily Mail*, in an editorial written on July 26th, praised Blair as "one of the few politicians lately who has spoken with courage and conviction."[104]

Blair's ambition and future intentions were clearly evident when Cherie noted that the rooms used by the Opposition Leader were sadly in need of redecoration. Upon being told that the House of Commons would gladly have this done, Blair declined saying, "I don't intend to

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[103] John Rentoul, *Tony Blair: Prime Minister*, 246.
[104] Ibid., 50.

stay here very long. I don't want to make these rooms too comfortable, because I don't want to

get too comfortable in opposition."[105] Blair's plan was to get into government without

unnecessary delay and he wanted to create an effective team to move this process forward. To

this end Blair decided to hire Alastair Campbell as his press secretary. According to Campbell,

Blair wanted someone tough who understood both politics and the media and could make

decisions and stick to them.[106] Although Alastair at first declined the position, Blair went so far

as to take his family and join Campbell on a holiday in France in an effort to seal the deal. Blair

also needed to keep both Brown and Mandelson as vital members of the team and was forced to

contend with their fractious interactions with each other. Brown would frequently act as if

Mandelson was not present at a meeting, and if a Mandelson remark required a response, he

would address that response to Blair, while Mandelson, one observer noted, "got away with

murder in his acid and contemptuous asides."[107]

Clause IV- Slaying the Dragon

At the Labour Party's October conference Blair heralded a new beginning for the party

with a huge pistachio-colored banner that read, "New Labour, New Britain" and the new party

leader made clear his intentions that the nature of the Labour party would change as well. New

Labour was created as an electoral strategy. The priority was always winning, or rather not

losing, elections.[108] Blair began his efforts to redefine the Labour Party with a crusade to remove

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[105] Cherie Blair, *Speaking for Myself*, 140.

[106] Alastair Campbell, *The Blair Years: The Alastair Campbell Diaries*, (New York: Alfred A.Knopf), 2007, 7.

[107] Donald Macintyre, *Mandelson*, 258.

[108] Peter Riddell, *The Unfulfilled Prime Minister: Tony Blair's Quest for a legacy*, Rev. ed. (London: Methuen Publishing Ltd, 2006), x.

Clause IV from the party's constitution. Clause IV was the proverbial dinosaur in the room.

Written in 1917 during the month of the Russian Revolution, Clause IV stated:

> secure for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry and the most
> equitable distribution thereof that may be possible upon the basis of the common
> ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, and the best obtainable
> system of popular administration and control of each service.[109]

In 1918, Sidney Webb, early Fabian Society member and one of the founders of the

London School of Economics, drafted Clause IV to the Labour party Constitution in order to

clearly delineate the differences between Labour and the Liberals. According to Blair, Webb

saw this 'socialist clause' as a "fudge", and said Webb would have been astonished to learn that

Clause IV was still in existence seventy five years later. Blair suggested, "He would have been

amused that his clause had assumed totemic status on the left of the party. And he would have

been appalled that the party's whole economic and social debate was subsumed for so long under

the question of ownership."[110] Blair believed that even though nobody truly believed in

nationalizing the means of production of entire segments of industry and transportation, the fact

that the wording remained in the constitution made Labour vulnerable to forces on both the right

(Conservatives and the Tory press), and the far left (Militant) who might choose to use the

existence of this clause to derail the modernizers. Blair again showed a steely determination to

carry through with the elimination of Clause IV despite the concerns and doubts expressed by

many on his team. When Alastair Campbell tried to voice these concerns, explaining that for

some people the removal of Clause IV would be like going to church and taking down the cross,

Blair responded, "Oh for heaven's sake, people believe in God and they believe in Christ. Name

me a single person who believes in what Clause IV says.[111] Attacking Clause IV allowed Blair to

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[109] Cherie Blair, *Speaking for Myself*, 143.

[110] Paul Richards, ed., *Tony Blair: In His Own Words*, 111.

[111] Alastair,Campbell, *The Blair Years: The Alastair Campbell Diaries*, 17.

focus attention on New Labour's efforts to change the party by taking it in a new direction. In

his speech at the Labour Conference in October, Blair boldly pronounced:

> It is time we had a clear, up-to-date statement of the objects and objectives of our party.
> John Prescott and I, as leader and deputy leader of our party, will propose such a
> statement to the NEC. Let it then be open to debate in the coming months. I want the
> whole party involved, and I know this party will welcome this debate. And if that
> statement is accepted, then let it become the objects of our party for the next election and
> take its place in our constitution for the next century. This is a modern party living in an
> age of change. It requires a modern constitution that says what we are in terms the public
> cannot misunderstand and the Tories cannot misrepresent.[112]

The campaign to change the constitution was delayed until the National Executive

Committee scheduled a special Labour Party conference in the spring of 1995. John Rentoul

says, "Superficially it was merely a battle over words drafted seventy-seven years before. In

reality, it was a battle to change the party's soul."[113] In March, Blair made a significant move to

see that happen as he prepared to address the Scottish Labour Party conference regarding Clause

IV. When there were problems sorting out the wording of the final draft of the speech Blair

would give, Alastair Campbell told David Miliband that he was not worried because, "this was

all part of TB [Tony Blair] testing to the limit process and I was sure we would get there in the

end but it would be fraught and last minute and he would probably write it in the end himself and

we would force it through."[114] Somewhat surprisingly, Blair's speech was well received at the

conference. A computer problem forced Blair to abandon his notes and to give an improvised

address.   This may have been a blessing in disguise as it forced Blair to appeal directly to his

audience. His words seemed to resonate with the attendees, who after some impassioned debate,

voted in favor of a revision of the constitution.

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[112] Tony Blair Speech to 1994 Labour Conference, Blackpool England,
http://keeptonyblairforpm.wordpress.com/1994-first-blair-speech-to-conference-as-party-leader/, accessed 1/5/09.
[113] John Rentoul, *Tony Blair: Prime Minister*, 257.
[114] Alastair Campbell, *The Blair Years: The Alastair Campbell Diaries*, 51.

It was only after their success at the Scottish Labour Conference that Blair's team set out

to prepare the final draft of the new Clause IV. The new clause incorporated only a very diluted

expression of socialistic beliefs in the statement of Labour's core philosophy. The new Labour

Party Constitution Clause IV incorporates the following statement:

> The Labour Party is a democratic socialist party. It believes that by the strength of our
> common endeavour we achieve more than we achieve alone, so as to create for each of us
> the means to realise our true potential and for all of us a community in which power,
> wealth and opportunity are in the hands of the many, not the few, where the rights we
> enjoy reflect the duties we owe, and where we live together, freely, in a spirit of
> solidarity, tolerance and respect.

New Labour, which represented the center left of the Labour party, clearly enjoyed the

trust and approval of a majority of the party faithful whose ranks were augmented every day with

members who were often more middle class than blue collar. And the Labour party's center-left

clearly favored the new Clause IV. Even traditional labour was surprisingly on board with the

changes. When the leaders of Unison, the public services union, decided not to support Labour

leadership and, without having balloted its members, cast its block vote against the new clause,

the union membership confounded its leaders by voting 85% in favor of the changes in the local

balloting.[115] On April 29, 1995, at Westminster Methodist Central Hall, the wording of the new

Clause IV was approved with 65 percent of the vote. After the vote, clearly moved by the

support he had received, Blair spoke extemporaneously saying, "I wasn't born into this party. I

chose it. I've never joined another political party. I believe in it. I'm proud to be the leader of

it, and it's the party I'll always live in and I'll die in." According to John Rentoul, "By the time

of the Special Conference, Blair had changed the party's constitution, effectively changed its

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[115] John Rentoul, *Tony Blair: Prime Minister*, 262.

name and redrawn its policies."[116] Tony Blair had achieved yet another major victory on the road to Number Ten.

<center>The 1997 General Election- Labour Emerges Victorious</center>

The next step for Blair and his team was to prepare for the next general election. This would have been a more painless process had it not been for the internal wrangling that occurred among members of the team. Brown and Mandelson, while keeping their differences well hidden from public view, could barely contain their mutual animosity in private settings. Alastair Campbell explained how Mandelson and Brown got in a row over policy in a staff meeting on May 9, 1996. When Blair told both men to keep themselves under control, Mandelson stormed out saying, "I'm not taking any of this crap any longer."[117] Unfortunately, two days later on May 11th, *The Times* had a front page article which reported that Blair was trying to get the two men to settle their differences. The flood gates opened and the media blitz that resulted was awash with conflicting reports of what transpired between the two men. After exchanging several emotionally charged letters with Mandelson, in which Blair made it clear that he would not allow this unfortunate feud to hurt his own relationship with Brown, Blair was able to smooth things over between the two men; although Brown and Mandelson would never redevelop any level of mutual trust or amiability. The best that could be said of this situation was that Blair appeared to remain above the fray.[118] He was seen as a person whose lofty principals did not allow him to become personally involved in the petty rivalries and differences that were the bane of the common man's existence. Fortunately Blair was able to continue to

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[116] John Rentoul, *Tony Blair: Prime Minister*, 264.
[117] Alastair Campbell, *The Blair Years: The Alastair Campbell Diaries*, 119.
[118] John Rentoul, *Tony Blair, Prime Minister*, 276.

employ Mandelson's skills without unduly upsetting his number two man. Keeping the peace

between members of his team only temporarily distracted Blair from his primary goal, to see

Labour in power after the next general election.

Blair's campaign headquarters were set up in Millbank Tower which was ironically built

on the site of Sidney Webb's London home. Philip Gould set out an ambitious plan for winning

the general election in a memorandum published in March 1995, entitled "The Unfinished

Revolution." It was a thirty-six page document which advocated a unitary command structure in

which the party leader would serve to combine Labour party policy and message into a more

"cohesive and flexible organization."[119]   The New Labour Party headed by Tony Blair was a

disciplined organization in which every member carefully followed the party line. Being "on

message" was deemed absolutely necessary in order for the party to succeed in reconstituting its

new image. There would be no going back to the old ways.

The "Big Four", Blair, Brown, Cook, and Prescott would meet each week to strategize

before the shadow Cabinet. While most of what took place in these meetings moved the party in

the right direction, it was clear that each man still followed his own agenda. Prescott emerged as

Blair's staunchest supporter while Brown and Cook often were sidetracked by their attempts to

gain control while jockeying for a desirable position when the party came to power.

Blair too had an agenda, making moves to distance New Labour from the party of the

past. He removed old timers from long-held positions, replacing them with fresh faces who were

known to be firmly in the Blair camp. He redefined Labour's relationship with the unions by

removing them from their favored position as party insiders and making it clear that they would

not receive any special consideration from New Labour. He sought to break away from Labour's

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[119] Anthony Seldon, *Blair*, 269.

"tax and spend" past by pledging no new taxes even though he knew he might not be able to make good on this promise, believing that, "it was better for Labour to lack principles than to be saddled with a caricature of the old ones."[120]

Blair also looked to Margaret Thatcher to discover how she had exerted such control over the nation, and to Bill Clinton to learn how the New Democrats had built consensus and sold the American public on Clintonian values. Blair wanted to establish New Labour as a party of the political center; a party that most British subjects could believe would best meet their needs. Blair was able to cultivate a connection with Thatcher through Jonathan Powell whom he had met at the British Embassy in Washington in 1993. Powell's brother was Thatcher's private secretary, and it was via this connection that Blair was able to seek Thatcher's advice, and ultimately receive an unsolicited endorsement from her when, at a private dinner held at the Reform Club on January 23, 1997, she announced, "Tony Blair is a man who won't let Britain down." The comment was overheard and reported by Peter Stothard, editor of *The Times,* and subsequently was picked up by other London papers.[121] Blair himself referred to Thatcher's comment when responding to her jibe at New Labour in which she described him as a "boneless wonder." Blair's response in The *Sun* pointed out that anti-Labour statements notwithstanding, Thatcher had been overheard saying that he, Tony Blair, would not let Britain down.[122]

Blair initiated a serious courtship of the media shortly after becoming party leader. Hiring Alastair Campbell was a major step in the effort to gain the support of major media outlets. Blair already had dangled a carrot to the more conservative press with his admiration of Margaret Thatcher, and his expressed views on religion helped identify him as a "moral

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[120] John Rentoul, *Tony Blair: Prime Minister*, 297.
[121] *The Times*, 8 March 1997.
[122] John Rentoul, *Tony Blair: Prime Minister*, 277.

force."[123] An intense effort was put into winning over Rupert Murdoch and his News

International which owned the *Sun*, *The Times* and *Sunday Times*. Murdoch did not care for

John Major and consequently was inclined to be open to overtures from Tony Blair and New

Labour.

Blair was thrilled to be asked to speak at a conference for senior executives of the News

Corporation hosted by Murdoch in Australia in July, 1995 because he recognized this as a great

opportunity to showcase his policies and skills for a large group of influential media personnel.

His speech was well received, perhaps because the content was not too controversial to be

acceptable to either side of the political spectrum. And even though he was criticized at home

for flirting with the Tory Press, he felt the potential for a positive outcome far outweighed the

negative. Blair was correct in making that assumption because the trip did result in a big payoff

for Labour. In March of 1997, shortly after John Major asked the Queen to dissolve Parliament

and set the date for the next general election as May 1st, Murdoch made the decision to back

Labour; and when he felt the *Sun*'s endorsement lacked strength and sincerity, he demanded that

the paper beef it up.[124] Blair and Campbell were pleased at having accomplished the nearly

impossible. Campbell relates, "One of the sweetest moments of the day was phoning

Montgomery [chief executive of the Mirror Group from which Campbell had experienced an

acrimonious parting] to tell him 'as a courtesy' that the *Sun* was coming out for us."[125]

The timing was right for a Labour win.   John Major failed to perform up to the standards

the country demanded of him. Conservatives offered little in the way of new ideas and had

grown complacent. The party was plagued by scandal and suffered costly defeats in by-elections

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[123] Anthony Seldon, *Blair*, 255.
[124] Anthony Seldon, *Blair*, 253.
[125] Alastair Campbell, *The Blair Years*, 162.

which virtually eliminated Major's majority in the House of Commons.[126] For many observers

of the political scene, Labour's victory in the next general election was almost a foregone

conclusion.

The campaign began in earnest after Easter. Cherie Blair recounts that she and Blair

crisscrossed the country in the back of the campaign "battle bus." Every evening, Blair would

give a speech to the local party faithful. "He always spoke so well, and so passionately, that

each night there was this extraordinary feeling of moving forward, a momentum that was

unstoppable."[127] However, it must be noted that Blair began the campaign on the tentative note

of one who was not a seasoned campaigner. His first television interviews seemed to catch him

off guard, fishing for satisfactory answers to tough questions such as, "Did you believe in Old

Labour?"; to which Blair responded that he had always been New Labour.[128] Blair was reluctant

to appear too programmed and by April 17th, he decided to give his speech without the help of

notes or a teleprompter. The positive response he received from this speech encouraged him to

speak extemporaneously at future engagements as well.

The days leading up to the election would pass in a flurry of activity that hardly allowed

for a moment's rest for any member of Blair's team. One of the most frustrating aggravations

Blair was to experience during this time was the continued infighting between Mandelson and

Brown. Although the two men hid their animosity from the campaign staff, it stewed beneath the

surface and would come to a roiling boil during the early morning campaign meetings attended

by Blair, Brown, Campbell Powell and Mandelson.   According to Seldon, "as a result of this

tension, which was more about personality than substance, Blair had to maintain a tighter

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[126] Philip Stevens, *Tony Blair*, 79.

[127] Cherie Blair, *Speaking for myself*, 172.

[128] John Rentoul, *Tony Blair: Prime Minister*, 308.

strategic grip on the campaign than ideally he would have wanted."[129] And, although Blair

maintained good relations with Brown, he was concerned about what he might expect once they

were in government together.

Blair's distress over the Brown - Mandelson contretemps was merely one of his worries.

In addition, he suffered intense anxiety about the election outcome. Blair could not shake his

concern that the growing Labour momentum, which seemed to give others reason to envision a

landslide on Election Day, would dissolve before a Labour win became a reality. His fears were

largely based on what happened in the 1992 general election where Labour saw a slim lead

dissolve in a matter of days after the Sheffield rally as a result of the excessive hubris of Labour

leaders, which left the public quite out of sympathy with the party. Determined not to revisit this

experience, Blair suppressed any anticipatory celebrations, and the weight of this fear did not lift

from his shoulders until Election Day. Even then, Cherie Blair said that, when the polls closed

around 10:00 PM, a reporter commented to her husband that predictions were for a Labour

landslide. Blair responded "I accept that we are going to win, but a landslide, no. It's

ridiculous."[130]

Blair's fears proved unfounded as did his notion that Labour would not win by a

landslide.   Alastair Campbell relates that Blair received a call later that evening from John

Major conceding the election and commenting that it was obvious there would be a clear Labour

majority. Both Blair and Campbell admitted to feeling oddly deflated after the win, with Blair

offering the explanation that they probably felt flat because they had to start all over again the

next day.

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[129] Anthony Seldon, *Blair*, 257.
[130] Cherie Blair, *Speaking for myself*, 177.

Summary

Blair's tenure in parliament from 1983 until he became Prime Minister in 1997 was a time filled with opportunities for growth and development. By the mid 1980's, Blair had already formed a team that would remain his advisors into his premiership. Peter Mandelson, Alastair Campbell, Philip Gould, and Anji Hunter gave advice, formulated policies, and helped Blair remain focused on his goals. Blair's first opportunity to make a difference for people came with Barlow Clowse. His success in battling the government on this issue increased his confidence and his political cachet. He was now on the Labour Party's radar as someone to watch. In his campaign for Open Shop Blair learned how to work within the party to garner support for his position. He showed his mettle when facing off against union leaders over this issue and he gained the respect of Labour party leaders, Kinnock and Hattersly as a result of his efforts. In his efforts to support minimum wage, Blair proved he was adept at manipulating the press and countering opposition arguments.

By 1992, Blair's efforts were paying dividends. He had attained the status as one of the key party decision makers called upon to help select a new party leader. By this time Blair knew that he wanted to be party leader and was actively pursuing a plan to achieve this goal. He wrote articles to increase his public exposure, attended conferences where he could make useful contacts, and cultivated a positive relationship with the press. He created his "Tough on Crime" campaign and articulated his beliefs about the importance of the individual functioning within the larger community. Perhaps most importantly, he, along with Brown, and Mandelson, became the core of New Labour. The essential change in the Labour Party platform (as exemplified by the rewording of Clause IV) brought about by this group ultimately helped Labour win a majority in 1997. Finally, with the death of John Smith, Blair seized the opportunity to seek the

leadership post even though his long-time friend Gordon Brown had thought himself to be the heir apparent. This move would have a lasting impact on how the Labour Party would function under Blair as Prime Minister. As is discussed in Part II, the change in the Blair-Brown relationship would have a significant impact on Blair's involvement in Iraq. By the time Tony Blair assumed the mantle of Prime Minister in 1997, he was fully formed as the man who would make the decision to go to war in Iraq in 2003.

Blair's early experiences in the political arena and in parliament provided valuable lessons that may have predisposed him to make the decision to go to war in Iraq. His success with the Barlow-Clowse affair, the campaign for open shop, and for the change in Clause IV, proved that he could effect significant changes in government through the strength of his will and perseverance. This enhanced Blair's belief that he could put himself at the forefront of risky policy decisions and come away relatively unscathed. This, coupled with his strong desire to pursue the deliverance of the innocent victims in Iraq from the clutches of Saddam Hussein, predisposed Blair to make the decision to "do the right thing" by involving Britain in this war.

PART II

THE ANATOMY OF A DECISION
TONY BLAIR AND THE CAUSATIVE FACTORS FOR GOING TO WAR IN IRAQ

CHAPTER 4

THE ANATOMY OF A DECISION

When President George Bush sent U.S. armed forces into Iraq in March of 2003 Prime

Minister Tony Blair was America's staunchest ally in this endeavor. According to Blair his

reasons for doing so were fairly straightforward and uncomplicated:

> The price of influence is that we do not leave the US to face the tricky issues alone. By
> tricky I mean the ones which people wish weren't there, don't want to deal with, and, if I
> can put it a little pejoratively, know the US should confront, but want the luxury of
> criticizing them for it. So if the U.S. acts alone, they are unilateralists; but if they want
> allies, people shuffle to the back. International terrorism is one such issue . . .When the
> U.S. confronts these issues, we should be with them.[131]

Blair's alliance with Bush was a partnership that broke all the rules. This close bond between a

Labour Prime Minister and a Republican neo-conservative president was a connection that, in the

normal scheme of things, should never have worked. Yet after the terrorist attacks on New York

and Washington D.C. on September 11, 2001, these two men forged a relationship that was

stronger than any transatlantic alliance since World War II.[132] Blair's unswerving commitment to

the United States and the invasion of Iraq came after years of hard work dedicated to becoming

Labour Party leader and ultimately Prime Minister. It seems almost incomprehensible that he was

willing to risk his position and standing at home in support of a cause that garnered almost no

popular support in Britain and placed him at odds with most of the countries in the European

Union.[133] Yet, as the Coalition forces in Iraq began to deal with a virulent post-war insurgency and

many countries chose to withdraw their troops, Tony Blair elected to stay the course alongside the

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[131] Tony Blair: *Speech to British Ambassadors and Senior Advisors, London*, 7 January 2003.

[132] James Naughtie, *The Accidental American: Tony Blair and the Presidency* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004),
xii.

[133] Jürgen Schuster, and Herbert Maier, "The Rift: Explaining Europe's Divergent Iraq Policies in the Run-up of the
American-Led War on Iraq", *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 2, (2006): 223.

United States. [134] Blair's decision to do so came at a very high political price to the Prime Minister who, in post-invasion years, was viewed in Britain as a "naïve and vainglorious fool and the poodle who loyally followed the President."[135] His drop in popularity as a result of the war was significant. In fact, as early as July of 2003, his approval rating dropped from the plus seven he enjoyed in 2001 to a minus seventeen according to a MORI poll, conducted on behalf of the *Sun* newspaper.[136] Blair, when faced with his plummeting popularity, responded by saying, "The time to trust a politician is not when they're taking the easy option. Any politician can do the popular things. I know – I used to do a few of them."[137]

What truly motivated Blair to join President Bush in the quest to bring down Saddam Hussein and establish a new democratic government in Iraq? Blair was unequivocal in his belief that Saddam must be removed from power. In a television interview with on April 4, 2003, he was asked, "Can Tony Blair today accept to stop the war under certain conditions?" To which he replied, "This is not a war against Iraq, it is a war against Saddam, it is a war against him and his elite that have plundered the country, that live in wealthy palaces whilst the people go hungry, whilst 60% of the population of Iraq is dependent on food aid, and who brutally repress and torture their people. It is a war against him and it can only be finished once he has gone, and it is important that we do that most of all for the Iraqi people who will need a different and better future." When the interviewer pressed further, asking, "Then we have to understand that you cannot accept any peace deal which would allow Saddam Hussein to remain in power?" Blair

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[134] Major countries that chose to withdraw troops as of November 2006 included: Italy, Ukraine, Hungary, Spain, Japan, Thailand, Norway, Portugal, New Zealand, and Iceland, on-line: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multinational_force_in_Iraq , accessed 2/15/09.

[135] Tom Baldwin "Blair's gold medal dilemma has two very different faces,", *Times Online,* 25 May 2006 www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/Print.do?articled=725694 , accessed 4/14/2007.

[136] Katherine Baldwin and Kate Kellend "Blair's Ratings Plunge After Iraq Scientist Suicide," *Reuters*, 22 July 2003 www.commondreams.org/cgi-bin/print.cgi?file=/headlines03/0722-08.htm, accessed 3/15/09.

[137] James Naughtie, *The Accidental American*, 25.

responded by saying, "Absolutely not. There is no question of allowing him to remain he has got to go." [138]

What role did Britain's traditional relationship with America play in influencing Blair's plans? As with any complex problem, a multiplicity of reasons and circumstances figured into Blair's decision. While Britain's relationship with the United States is one of long standing friendship and mutual support, Blair's choice to involve Britain in the Iraq war was not solely predicated upon the supposition that it was necessary to do so in order to maintain the "special relationship" between the two countries, although this was indeed an important consideration.[139] While Blair's Trans-Atlantic relationship will be explored to discover the nuances that made it "special", other major factors that seem to have played a part in Blair's decision must be examined as well. Although individually each of these factors may not have been sufficient in and of itself, to cause Blair to commit Britain to go to war in Iraq, and subsequently, to remain there while other coalition countries withdrew their troops; together they exerted a powerful influence on the British Prime Minister as he committed Britain to this decision.   A thorough review of these factors will provide insight into Blair's motivations for actively supporting and aggressively campaigning to garner support from other Western nations in order to form the aforementioned coalition to fight Saddam Hussein.   His work on behalf of this cause fell somewhat outside the realm of any of Blair's previous political experiences, although his efforts at resolving the Northern Ireland affair did show evidence of the same crusading techniques he would use in his attempt to forma a coalition; and yet he attacked this activity with the same sense of steely determination that he demonstrated in his steady and resolute march to the door of No. 10 Downing Street.

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[138] *Prime Minister's interview with Arabic Television*, 4 April 2003, online:
http://collections.europarchive.org/tna/20040315011120/http://pm.gov.uk/output/Page3434.asp, accessed 3/1/09.

[139] Con Coughlin, *American Ally: Tony Blair and the War on Terror*, (New York: Harper Collins, 2006), 14.

Blair's decision to go to war in Iraq cannot be considered to have been an unexpected response for him. His belief in taking a moral stand against evil in the world was clearly evident in a number of his early speeches given in Parliament, even before he was Prime Minister. He spoke out on behalf of the persecuted refugees in Bosnia and expressed his concerns about the British response to the violence in Northern Ireland. For example, in late 1992 Blair addressed the House of Commons regarding Bosnian refugees, telling his fellow Members of Parliament on November 30th:

> Although we can all unite against bogus refugee claims, we must not be stampeded into a fortress Europe policy which will not simply shut the door on genuine refugees who fear for their lives but be a serious betrayal of Europe's long-term future? Does the Minister agree that it is better for policy in Europe and Britain to be determined by balancing calmly practical reality with humanitarian causes, not by bending in the wind of racially motivated attacks?[140]

This statement clearly was a product of Blair's philosophy that, "Labour must once again be the party that stands up for the individual . . . where ever they are, using the power of community to achieve what people are unable to achieve on their own."[141] When airstrikes on Bosnia resulted in the Serb response of taking hostages, Blair demonstrated some of the same resolve to stay the course that was so evident in his stance on remaining in Iraq. He told his fellow members of Parliament on May 31, 1995:

> "I believe that talk of withdrawal in Bosnia in response to the taking of hostages is deeply unhelpful at this time. It is hardly a message of firm resolve in the face of what is effectively an act of coercive blackmail. . . I do not believe, however, that the international community realistically could ever have walked away from Bosnia. Having become

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[140] Tony Blair, Speech to the House of Commons November 30, 1992, Hansard Debates, , Col. 31, http://www.publications.parliament.uk/cgi-bin/newhtml_hl?DB=semukparl&STEMMER=en&WORDS=tony%20blair&ALL=&ANY=&PHRASE=&CATEGORIES=&SIMPLE=&SPEAKER=Tony%20Blair&COLOUR=red&STYLE=s&ANCHOR=Debate-1_spnew34&URL=/pa/cm199293/cmhansrd/1992-11-30/Debate-1.html#Debate-1_spnew34, accessed 2/28/09.

[141] Paul Richards, *Tony Blair in His Own Words*, (London: Politico), 2004, 52. (Excerpt from "Pride Without Prejudice", *The Fabian Review* , May, 1992).

involved, there is no easy option of walking away. Even withdrawal, without some agreed solution, would be painfully difficult." [142]

In 1995 Blair expressed the belief that most conflict could be viewed as a construct of good versus evil. In a speech given to Parliament on April 25, 1995 commemorating the 50th anniversary of the end of WWII, Blair could have been constructing his argument justifying his decision to go to war in Iraq eight years later:

> We learn humankind's deadly potential, amidst progress, for regression to primitive barbarity. We know now that if we choose to appease evil as it grows, we shall in the end be forced to fight it when it is fully grown. We think that with all the knowledge of our modern world, such evil can never happen again, but that generation thought that it would never happen at all. [143]

Northern Ireland presented yet another situation that required Britain's attention and Blair attacked this problem with zeal. He believed that Britain had a duty to help resolve the problems in Northern Ireland because they were intrinsically involved and it would be wrong to ignore the plight of the Irish people who were being victimized by the violence. Blair framed the Labour response to the situation in Northern Ireland in terms of the party's responsibility to do what was right, arguing that:

> For 15 months, although unacceptable violence of a sectarian nature still continues, there has been without doubt a transformation in the lives of the people of Northern Ireland. Their liberation from the bomb and the bullet has brought new hope and the chance of renewed prosperity. Peace is now too precious to squander. The duty lies on all parties to make this process work. From the outset, the Labour party has regarded this issue as

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[142] Tony Blair, Speech to the House of Commons, May 31, 1995, Hansard Debates, Cols. 1007 -1009, http://www.publications.parliament.uk/cgi-bin/newhtml_hl?DB=semukparl&STEMMER=en&WORDS=tony%20blair&ALL=&ANY=&PHRASE=&CATEGORIES=&SIMPLE=&SPEAKER=Tony%20Blair&COLOUR=red&STYLE=s&ANCHOR=Debate-1_spnew8&URL=/pa/cm199495/cmhansrd/1995-05-31/Debate-1.html#Debate-1_spnew8 ,accessed 2/27/09.

[143] Tony Blair, Speech to the House of Commons, April 25, 1992 , Hansard Debates, Col. 668, http://www.publications.parliament.uk/cgi-bin/newhtml_hl?DB=semukparl&STEMMER=en&WORDS=tony%20blair&ALL=&ANY=&PHRASE=&CATEGORIES=&SIMPLE=&SPEAKER=Tony%20Blair&COLOUR=red&STYLE=s&ANCHOR=Debate-1_spnew14&URL=/pa/cm199495/cmhansrd/1995-04-25/Debate-1.html#Debate-1_spnew14, accessed 2/27/09.

transcending party politics. We have supported the Government in their search for peace because we believe it to be right[144]

Until his ascendency to the premiership, Blair was primarily limited to offering

persuasive arguments on behalf of those he believed to be victims ethnic cleansing or other

atrocities and, although he had a driving desire to make a difference, his ability to act was

hampered because it was not in his purview to do so. Consequently, as a member of parliament,

and as Labour Party leader, Blair focused on domestic concerns and re-shaping the Labour party

into a party that could win a majority in the general elections. He directed his efforts toward

redefining party priorities and policies so that they were more centrist and consequently more

attractive to a wider segment of the British electorate. Blair consistently demonstrated a distinct

need to embrace causes that served the greater good; and he believed that it would take the

power of individuals functioning as a community to make this happen. In an article written for

the Fabian Society Blair explains, "The task is to develop social solidarity in a modern form,

based on citizenship of mutual rights and responsibilities. In other words, we avow the

inseparable nature of society and individuals."[145] The need to respond to society's ills as a

community was to become a recurring element in Blair's political philosophy. Blair suggested

that government and society should be partners in ventures to eradicate problems such as crime,

welfare reform, and economic change. In "Power with a Purpose" written for *Renewal*, in

October 1995 Blair laid out what would become key themes of Labour's election campaign in

1997. These included:

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[144] Tony Blair, Speech to the House of Commons on Northern Ireland, November 29, 1995 Hansard Debates, Col. 1202 - Northern Ireland, http://www.publications.parliament.uk/cgi-bin/newhtml_hl?DB=semukparl&STEMMER=en&WORDS=tony%20blair&ALL=&ANY=&PHRASE=&CATEGORIES=&SIMPLE=&SPEAKER=Tony%20Blair&COLOUR=red&STYLE=s&ANCHOR=51129-14_spnew0&URL=/pa/cm199596/cmhansrd/vo951129/debtext/51129-14.htm#51129-14_spnew0 , accessed 2/25/09.
[145] Tony Blair, "Crime and Society", What *Price a Safe Society*, London: Fabian Pamphlet 562, April, 1994.

- Partnership between the private sector and public enterprise to prepare for economic changes
- Partnership at work to end conflicts between management and the workforce.
- Reform of the country's educational system
- Reform of welfare to be a "platform of opportunity, not a recipe for dependency.
- Accountable public services that are decentralized
- A program to fight crime that recognizes both prevention and punishment as necessary parts.
- A constructive engagement with Europe to reshape it to meet Britain's needs.[146]

It is interesting to note that even in anticipation of achieving majority status, and thus control of the government, Blair's primary focus was still limited to the need to create a partnership with the people to address purely domestic issues. Even constructive engagement with Europe is mentioned strictly in the context of how this would help Britain. In 1996 Blair again speaks of a shared responsibility to accomplish goals:

> My argument is that if a government is genuine about wanting a partnership with the people who it is governing, then the act of government itself must be seen in some sense as a shared responsibility and the government has to empower the people and give them a say in how that politics is conducted. [147]

By June of 1997 however, Blair acquired the mandate to act in a larger, more international capacity for Britain, and began to demonstrate his ability to direct his message to a larger audience beyond England's shores. At a press conference in Denver, Colorado, Blair explained his belief in a concept known as the third way as a means to address social problems:

> Our essential message is that the way to deal with the problems of the underclass is education and welfare reform. You have got to give people the education they require otherwise they are never going to be able to compete in today's market. But secondly, you have got to reform your welfare system so that you are building into it incentives to work and get on, not to spend a life on benefit. And I think that different way, that third way if you like, between the old-style state intervention and then just saying well it is up to the market, the market rules, it doesn't matter if you have got a whole lot of people left out -

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[146] Paul Richards, ed., *Tony Blair: In His Own Words*, 130.

[147] Speech by the Rt.Hon. Tony Blair MP, Leader of the Labour Party at the Campaign for Freedom of Information's annual Awards ceremony, 25 March 1996, http://www.cfoi.org.uk/blairawards.html, accessed 2/23/09.

that third way is where we are, where the Americans are and where I think we can build upon a common position. [148]

The employment of a third way required the partnership between government and the people that Blair had pressed for in the past. Over time, and although his belief in the power of community remained a constant theme, the focus of Blair's efforts evolved from dealing simply with domestic policy issues to pursuing ideological goals that addressed the needs of a wider world than Great Britain. For example, in the speech Blair made just weeks after having becoming Prime Minister welcoming Bill Clinton to address the British Cabinet in May 29, 1997, Blair was already thinking about an international agenda:

> I think you, like me, have always believed that Britain does not have to choose between its strong relationship in Europe and its strong transatlantic relationship with the United States of America.   I think the one strength deepens the other. And a Britain that is leading Europe is a Britain capable of ever closer relations also with the United States of America. And we will obviously be wanting to discuss today many of the issues that concern Europe and the United States, the issues of englargement and NATO. We will obviously be discussing Bosnia and Northern Ireland as well.

Aside from the obvious need to address Anglo-American relations for the sake of protocol, Blair made a point of mentioning the need to discuss the situations in Bosnia and Northern Ireland. The situations in both countries, which had captured his interest several years prior to this cabinet meeting, now could be addressed from a position of power. Senseless violence and the victimization of innocent parties still triggered Blair's moral outrage, and the need to be a part of resolving these problems soon would equal his concerns for domestic issues. Gordon Brown's inclination to take the lead regarding domestic affairs afforded Blair the opportunity to focus on these critical issues and allowed him to establish a foreign policy that was particularly his own.

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[148] Tony Blair Press Conference, Denver, Colorado, June 12, 1997, http://collections.europarchive.org/tna/20040315011120/http://pm.gov.uk/output/Page1043.asp , accessed 2/23/09.

In November of 1997, Blair made his seminal speech at the Lord Mayor's Banquet on foreign policy, clearly outlining what he believed to be Britain's role in the area of world affairs. He indicated a clear belief that Britain had a larger role to play on the world stage. He explained:

> We can make the British presence in the world felt. With our historic alliances, we can be pivotal. We can be powerful in our influence - a nation to whom others listen. Why? Because we run Britain well and are successful ourselves. Because we have the right strategic alliances the world over. And because we are engaged, open and intelligent in how we use them. [149]

Two years later Blair intensified his push for international cooperation in dealing with what he believed to be the intolerable situation in Iraq in his famous 1999 speech made to the Economic Club of Chicago. It was in this speech that Blair proposed the Doctrine of International Community:

> This is a just war, based not on any territorial ambitions but on values. We cannot let the evil of ethnic cleansing stand. We must not rest until it is reversed. We have learned twice before in this century that appeasement does not work. If we let an evil dictator range unchallenged, we will have to spill infinitely more blood and treasure to stop him later. [150]

To counter the problems faced in the post Cold War World, Blair voiced a previously oft expressed theme, that issues are best resolved as a community. He put forward his belief that international cooperation would be essential to secure a better future for all. Expanding on his earlier statements of shared responsibility and partnership he explained:

> Today the impulse towards interdependence is immeasurably greater. We are witnessing the beginnings of a new doctrine of international community. By this I mean the explicit recognition that today more than ever before we are mutually dependent, that national interest is to a significant extent governed by international collaboration and that we need a clear and coherent debate as to the direction this doctrine takes us in each field of international endeavour. Just as within domestic politics, the notion of community - the belief that partnership and co-operation are essential to advance self-interest - is coming

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[149] Tony Blair, Speech at the Lord Mayor's Banquet, 10 November 1997, http://collections.europarchive.org/tna/20040315011120/http://pm.gov.uk/output/Page1070.asp , accessed 2/22/09.

[150] Tony Blair, Speech on the Doctrine of the International community at the Economic Club, Chicago, 4/24/1999. http://collections.europarchive.org/tna/20040315011120/http://pm.gov.uk/output/Page1297.asp, accessed 2/22/09.

into its own; so it needs to find its own international echo. Global financial markets, the global environment, global security and disarmament issues: none of these can he solved without intense international co-operation. [151]

Blair was infused with an almost religious zeal to eliminate ethnic cleansing and other abuses in places such as Kosovo, Sierra Leon, Bosnia, and Iraq. After September 11, Blair's campaign against terrorism and "the forces of evil" in the world became even more pronounced. James Naughtie says of Blair's reaction to the attacks on the Twin Towers, "It is often possible to detect in Blair a moment when he changes gear. The language becomes fiercer and imbued with the feeling of a personal crusade." [152] In a press conference given the day after the attack, this intensity was apparent as Blair again emphasized taking action as part of a larger community of nations:

> Well of one thing I've no doubt and that is that this was an attack upon the whole of the world and that is why I think it is so important that in addition to whatever action America considers appropriate that the world as a whole is prepared to act. . . . This was an act of terrorism on a scale I don't think anyone had contemplated before and it shows the new menace that there is that threatens our world. And it is important therefore that the international community, as a whole as well as responding to this particular atrocity, considers the nature of these groups, how they are financed, how they operate and how we defeat them.[153]

The following year Blair narrowed his concerns focusing his attention on an old foe, Saddam Hussein. For Blair, Hussein was the personification of evil; a man guilty of launching biological and chemical attacks against Kurds in Iraq and who also possessed weapons of mass destruction. In a speech given on September 10, 2002, Blair expressed his concerns:

> Because I say to you in all earnestness: if we do not deal with the threat from this international outlaw and his barbaric regime, it may not erupt and engulf us this month or

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[151] Prime Minister's speech: Doctrine of the International community at the Economic Club, Chicago, 24 April 1999, http://collections.europarchive.org/tna/20040315011120/http://pm.gov.uk/output/Page1297.asp, accessed 2/22/09.

[152] James Naughtie, *The Accidental American*, New York: Public Affairs, 21.

[153] Prime Minister's Statement including Questions and Answers, 12 September 2001, http://www.number10.gov.uk/Page1597 , accessed 2/23/09.

next; perhaps not even this year or the next. But it will at some point. And I do not want it on my conscience that we knew the threat, saw it coming and did nothing.

The key characteristic of today's world is interdependence. Your problem becomes my problem. They have to be tackled collectively. All these problems threaten the ability of the world to make progress in an orderly and stable way . . . Terrorism and weapons of mass destruction combine modern technology with political or religious fanaticism. If unchecked they will, as September 1 showed, explode into disorder and chaos.[154]

While over the years, Blair's causes ranged from fighting crime in Britain to fighting dictators such as Milosevic and Saddam Hussein, the tenor of Blair's rhetoric remained fairly constant. In speeches and interviews, Blair always addressed his cause célèbre, whether foreign or domestic, with a sense of exigency. He has always demonstrated considerable ability as an orator to persuade his audience to believe in the rightness of his cause, what ever that happens to be at the time. For example, Blair spoke with equal passion and urgency about his tough on crime campaign; the need for open shop; and the importance of eliminating Clause IV from the Labour constitution, as he did for the need to support the United States in the War in Iraq. There is something almost evangelical in his tone when he speaks about issues he wants to see resolved. This has been a constant in Blair's public speaking career, and remains so even today when he pleads the case for mosquito netting to save children in Africa, or addresses the importance of achieving a settlement between the Palestinians and Israelis. Blair has always infused his ethical or moral beliefs into his position on major topics. But the eventual references to God and his faith became an important motivating factor in his crusade against Saddam Hussein. The importance of faith as a motivating factor for going to war in Iraq will be explored further in Chapter Seven.

A number of other potential underlying motivations are addressed in Part II, including Blair's attitudes about America, his relationship with Bill Clinton, his beliefs as an internationalist;

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[154] Prime Minister's speech to TUC conference in Blackpool, September 10, 2002, http://collections.europarchive.org/tna/20040315011120/http://pm.gov.uk/output/Page1725.asp , accessed 2/28/09.

his relationship with Gordon Brown; and the role of Blair's unique personality type in making

decisions regarding issues like Iraq's possession of weapons of mass destruction. Other factors

such as U.S./U.K. military relations, and Blair's perception of Britain's "manifest destiny" will be

considered as well. While each will be discussed as a unique contributor to Blair's decision

making, it is important to note that not all carry equal weight in terms of their significance as part

of the process. Certainly some had greater impact than others on Blair's decision. However, the

simple fact remains that they all factored into the totality of his thought processes regarding the

invasion of Iraq. Because it is not possible to ascribe a weight to these factors as they are

discussed individually, the order of presentation in this paper is not meant to indicate any

particular prioritizing of significance. Individual motivational factors have been grouped into

broad categories and are addressed in chapters six, seven and eight.

CHAPTER 5

ANGLO-AMERICAN RELATIONS

Blair and the United States – Making Friends and Learning Tactics

Any effort to understand why Blair was so staunch in his support of the United States'

decision to go to war in Iraq must certainly include an exploration of Blair's experiences with,

and attitude toward, the United States, both as a young politician in the process of forming his

political philosophy, and as a New Prime Minister taking his first tentative steps on the World

Stage.   Blair first visited the United States in 1986 to lobby against "unitary" taxes on British

companies doing business in the United States.[155] He made a second trip to the U.S. that same

year to study economic policy in hopes of contributing new ideas to the Shadow Treasury team.

It was during this particular trip that Blair received briefings from the Pentagon on NATO and

SDI and visited multiple U.S. cities where he attended informational sessions on economics and

welfare.

Anthony Seldon claims that, with the exception of Australia, the United States is the only

country outside Britain to have a significant impact on Blair. He notes, "It would be wrong to

suggest that [Blair's 1986] trip made him an America-phile overnight. But the cumulative

impact of meeting so many people in so many locations would have had a powerful effect in

opening his mind to a country he hitherto barely knew."[156]   In 1988 Blair made a joint visit to

the United States with Gordon Brown. This first joint visit with Brown was undertaken to attend

the Democratic National Convention in Atlanta. Both men believed they learned much from the

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[155] John Rentoul, *Tony Blair: Prime Minister*, New Ed.,(London: Time Warner Paperbacks), 2001, 128. (Note: U.S. Treasury Secretary James Baker had plans to impose a unitary tax on British companies operating in America. Blair was one of three MP's tapped by a lobbying firm, Ian Greer and Associates, on behalf of a British business pressure group called the Unitary Tax Campaign to lobby the U.S. government on their behalf.)

[156] Anthony Seldon, *Blair*, (London: Simon and Schuster), 2005, 120.

American political process that could be translated into actions that would help the Labour cause. In 1991 Blair and Brown made a second trip which was sponsored by Philip Morris in return for a speech which they made to the business community in New York. While they were still too junior to be able to meet with anyone of note on this visit, they did establish a connection with Jonathan Powell in the British Embassy, a connection that would prove useful to both men in the future. The outcome of these joint Blair/Brown visits was that both men gained a fresh perspective on how one might go about reshaping a political party and how they might conduct a successful campaign to return Labour to power.

On his own Blair began to formulate a theory that there was a commonality to be found with other political parties around the world that could lead to a cooperative effort to pursue a common philosophical cause. In 1993 both Blair and Brown again undertook a trip to the United States during the course of which Powell was able to arrange for them to meet key members of the Democratic Party. Observers noted that Blair took copious notes during these meetings and that he came away with the conviction that, in order to change the Labour Party, it would be necessary to let go of long-held associations that tied Labour exclusively to the poor, unions, minorities and special interest groups.[157] Blair reaffirmed his belief that. if Labour were to regain power, it must, like Bill Clinton's New Democrats, move the party firmly to the center of the political spectrum.

The Clinton campaign in 1992 offered proof of success of this policy. Philip Gould, who advised the Clinton campaign team in 1992, acknowledged that, "Bill Clinton's election in 1992 showed the world that the left could win, and it showed the left *how* it could win. It was the

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[157] Anthony Seldon, *Blair*, 123.

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moment the tide of history and events tilted from right to left."[158] Bill Clinton's 1992 election

victory had been central to Blair's own political strategy. Seldon points out: "Not only did his

election in 1992 provide a blueprint, but Blair regarded Clinton's re-election in 1996 as critical to

making New Labour seem mainstream rather than backwater."[159]   After his visit to the United

States in 1993, Blair was better able to articulate his beliefs on "social moralism", which

provided one segment of the platform he developed for the leadership of the Labour Party.[160]

Blair used the similarities in modernizing ideas from both the United States and Great Britain

when creating his platform, but found it particularly effective to apply the vivid imagery of the

language employed by American Democrats when expressing his new philosophies on

community and the need to be tough on crime. When Blair assumed the mantle of Prime

Minister in 1997, Bill Clinton clearly indicated his positive regard for his frriend saying, "Blair

was young, articulate, and forceful, and we shared many of the same political views. I thought

he had the potential to be an important leader for the UK and all of Europe, and was excited at

the prospect of working with him."[161]

　　　Blair borrowed much more than a means to effectively express a philosophy and new

ideas regarding campaign strategies from his connections in the United States. Upon becoming

Prime Minister, he demonstrated his continuing affinity for American operational methods by

choosing to be a much more presidential Prime Minister than his predecessors. His operations at

Number 10 looked, "like a scaled-down version of the Executive Office of the President", with

Blair adopting a presidential style, trying to remain above the fray.[162]

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[158] Philip Gould, *The Unfinished Revolution: How the Modernizers Saved the Labour Party,* (London: Abacus/Little Brown & Co.), 2007, 171.

[159] Anthony Seldon, *Blair,* 422.

[160] John,Rentoul, *Tony Blair, Prime Minister*, 195.

[161] Bill Clinton, *My Life*, (New York: Random House Vintage Books), 2005, 756.

[162] Anthony Seldon, *Blair*, 126.

Blair's prior positive interactions with government officials and office holders in the

United States also predisposed him to feel a close connection with this country. He enjoyed his

visits both to Washington and other US cities and came to appreciate American ingenuity and

straightforward thinking. He was inclined to believe that a positive connection between the

United States and Britain was something to be nurtured.   As a New Prime Minister, Blair's own

close connection with Clinton served to encourage this relationship. Clinton writes warmly of

their bond when relating the details of the Blair's state visit to the U.S. in February 1998, saying

of Tony and Cherie, "They made us laugh, and Tony gave me strong support in public,

emphasizing our common approach to economic and social problems and to foreign policy"[163]

For her part Cherie, too, found her American experiences to be positive and she was very

much an admirer of Hillary Clinton. Hillary took Cherie under her wing, showed her how things

were done in her own office at the White House, and gave Cherie a piece of advice which proved

helpful for Mrs. Blair's future dealings in her public life, "You're not going to please everyone

the whole time, and you're certainly not going to please the press, and therefore you should just

do what feels right to you . . . and don't get too upset about what other people say."[164] Blair's

close friendship with Clinton strengthened the bond he felt with the United States as a nation. It

was this bond that helped preserve the connection with the United States after a Republican

assumed the office of President in 2000.

 Somewhat surprisingly, given their significant political differences, Blair was able to

maintain a warm, if not intimate, association with the next American president, George W. Bush.

This was an accomplishment perhaps made easier by the fact that, while domestic politics under

Bush would be radically different from the centrist liberal policies of his predecessor, U.S.

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[163] Bill Clinton, *My Life*, 778.

[164] Cherie Blair, *Speaking for Myself: My Life from Liverpool to Downing Street,* (New York: Little Brown & Co.), 2008, 200.

foreign policy tended to remain more static. Blair had worked closely with Clinton on foreign policy issues such as Northern Ireland, Kosovo, and Iraq. Concerning Iraq, both men worked to build support around the world for launching air strikes on this country in response to the expulsion of the UN inspectors in 1998.[165] On December 16, 1998, the United States and the United Kingdom launched a series of attacks on suspected sites of chemical, biological and nuclear lab sites in Iraq. Tony Blair and Bill Clinton both agreed that the attacks were necessary to prevent Iraq from dispersing its forces in order to protect its weapons caches. Blair's support of Bush's plan to eradicate weapons of mass destruction four years later clearly was not a departure from policies he pursued in concert with Bill Clinton and truly could be viewed more as the pursuit of a consistent joint Anglo-American foreign policy rather than as a surprising departure into "right wing" politics that came out of left field.

<div align="center">Blair and Britain – Constructing a Transatlantic Bridge</div>

Margaret Thatcher cautioned Tony Blair that the primary duty of a British prime minister was to maintain a relationship with the United States, and its president "at all costs."[166] With respect to the Anglo-American relationship, Blair would not disappoint the former Prime Minister. In fact, Thatcher came to admire Blair greatly for his strong support of the United States in the operations in Iraq and Afghanistan and his strong stand against terrorism.[167] Blair exhibited little reluctance in following Thatcher's advice; after all his experiences with the United States had proved positive and beneficial to his own early career.

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[165] Bill Clinton, *My Life*, 779.

[166] Con Coughlin, *American Ally: Tony Blair and the War on Terror*, (New York: Harper Collins), 2006, 14.

[167] Anthony Seldon, *Blair*, 450.

However, as Prime Minister, Blair recognized the need to pursue a relationship with

Europe as well. Strengthening this relationship was one of the defining characteristics of New

Labour and an important plank in the party platform.[168] Blair's personal feelings about Britain's

relationship with Europe were pragmatic – it was absolutely necessary for Britain to foster a closer

connection with its closest neighbors regardless of any former ambivalence he may have felt

regarding the Anglo-European relationship.[169] Recognizing that it was necessary to redefine

Britain's role in Europe, during his earliest days in office, Blair argued that Britain's global

influence was, "dependent on its influence in the EU and he promised that Britain should not

remain at the edge of Europe."[170] Consequently, Blair focused on creating a new, more dynamic

relationship with the European Union and European leaders.[171] Blair's election in 1997 had been

positively received in Europe and he hoped that in light of this he would be able to renew a strong

working relationship with French president, Jacques Chirac, and German chancellor, Helmut Kohl.

Yet because of his personal experiences, i.e. the connection he felt to America as a result of

his earlier visits and the bond he had forged with Bill Clinton, Blair did not wish to relinquish a

strong British bond with America. His goal was to for Britain to play a significant role in affairs

on both sides of the Atlantic.[172] Blair truly believed that there was no impediment to having a

special relationship with the U.S. and, at the same time, to still be involved in Europe.[173] He

believed he was uniquely positioned to help each one better understand the other.[174] His feelings

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[168] Robin Cook, *The Point of Departure*, (New York: Simon & Schuster), 2003, 169.

[169] John Rentoul, *Tony Blair: Prime Minister*, 84.

[170] Peter Riddell, *The Unfulfilled Prime Minister: Tony Blair's Quest for a Legacy,* (London: Politico's), 2005, 130.

[171] Anthony Seldon, *Blair*, 320.

[172] Peter Riddell, *Hug Them Close: Blair, Clinton, Bush and the 'Special Relationshi*p, (London: Politico's), 2004, 62.

[173] Tim Dunne, "Fighting for Values: Atlanticism, Internationalism and the Blair Doctrine," (Paper presented to the ISA Conference, Hawaii, 1-5 March 2005), 15.

[174] Anthony Seldon, *Blair*, 407.

were on this subject were so transparent that Robin Cook relates, "Tony Blair's favourite image of Britain's relationship with the US is that we are its bridge to Europe."[175]

In keeping with his own moral and ethical values, Blair felt that being a transatlantic bridge would serve to promote international human rights and the spread of democratic principles. After his experience in Kosovo, he believed his efforts would help preserve an Atlantic relationship that was absolutely essential to the maintenance of a liberal world order.[176] To that end, Blair proposed an international order for the twenty-first century that was based on utilizing the United Nations as the locus of legitimacy and international security with a united western world spreading these principles around the globe.[177] In a joint press conference held with President Bush on July 19, 2001, Blair described the tenure and depth of his belief in an international order by saying,

> This is a passionate belief I have that I held in theory when I was an opposition leader, and has strengthened in practice over the last few years that I've been Prime Minister. And that is not merely, is the relationship between Britain and America key -- and we are and always will be key allies -- but when Europe and America stand together, and when they approach problems in a sensible and serious way and realize that what unites them is infinitely more important than what divides them, then the world is a better, more stable, more prosperous place. When we fall out and diverge, and when people try and put obstacles in the way of that partnership, then the only people rejoicing are the bad guys.[178]

Blair feared that failure to forge this transatlantic bridge could have negative consequences, which could potentially result in a world in which chaos would be a constant threat. "That threat can come from terrorism, producing a train of events that pits nations against each other. . . It can come through the world splitting into rival poles of power; the U.S in one corner;

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[175] Robin Cook, *The Point of Departure*, (New York: Simon & Schuster), 2003,133.

[176] Anthony Seldon, *Blair*, 407.

[177] Christopher Bluth, "The British road to war: Blair, Bush and the decision to invade Iraq," *International Affairs*, 80, No. 5 (2004): 875.

[178] President Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair (Press conference given at Halton House in Halton England, 19 July 2001), www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/07/print/20010719-5html , accessed 3/14/07.

anti-U.S. forces in another."[179] During a speech made at the Lord Mayor's Banquet on November

10, 1997, Blair explained, "Strong in Europe and strong with the U.S. There is no choice between

the two. . . Our aim should be to deepen our relationship with the U.S. at all levels. We are the

bridge between the U.S. and Europe. Let us use it."[180] It is interesting that Blair actually explored

the rationale behind his desire to form this relationship between Europe and the United States in

1997 in his book *New Britain: My Vision of a Young Country* in which he wrote, "The two main

partnerships for Britain are the European Union and the transatlantic relationship. We need to use

them to maximize our influence so that we can promote and protect our interests around the world.

But to be effective we have to participate fully in each relationship."[181] Blair goes on to say:

> My argument here is that Britain has to understand that its strength comes from its position
> at the junction of these two relationships. . . . It is only if we are at the heart of decision-
> making in Europe that we will be taken seriously in Washington. And it is only if we have
> a new, strong, post-Cold War relationship with the U.S. that we will have the same degree
> of influence in Europe.[182]

It is apparent Blair believed that the "bridge" he envisioned was critical not only from a

security standpoint, but also because it would insure that Britain's increased stature in international

affairs enabled the country to be a respected partner in alliances with both the United States and

the European Union. Robin Cook supports this assertion by contending that the situation in

Kosovo would not have been so successfully resolved without this connection. He states, "The

turning point in the Balkans came with the defeat of Milosevic in Kosovo, which was more

feasible because the strong axis between Washington and London gave the alliance a spine." And

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[179] Tony Blair, "Prime Minister's speech at the Foreign Office Conference", (given in London, 7 January 2003), http://collections.europarchive.org/tna/20040315011120/http://pm.gov.uk/output/Page1765.asp, accessed 3/17/09.

[180] Tony Blair, "Speech at Lord Mayor's Banquet" (Given in London, 10 November 1997), http://collections.europarchive.org/tna/20040315011120/http://pm.gov.uk/output/Page1070.asp, accessed 3/17/09.

[181] Tony Blair, *New Britain: My Vision of a Young Country*, (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1997), 263.

[182] Ibid., 267.

he goes on to say, "It was a time when Britain did indeed prove its value as a bridge between the US and Europe."[183]

Shortly after coming into office Blair took substantive steps to develop and maintain a working association with leaders on both sides of the Atlantic by forging relationships in Europe with the German chancellor, Helmut Kohl, and the French president Jacques Chirac, and in the United States with President Bill Clinton.   His affiliation with Bill Clinton was particularly worthwhile and personally gratifying. His close relationship with the American president, gave him the opportunity to learn a great deal from the more experienced politician. Blair even went so far as to re-label his party New Labour after the fashion of Clinton's New Democrats, and he adopted many of the Clinton's policies and strategies.[184] He also enjoyed the position afforded him as the leader of the country generally recognized as being first among American allies. Later, when Bush entered the White House, despite political and philosophical differences, the transition from dealing with Clinton to working with the new Republican president regarding issues of foreign policy, was almost seamless, facilitated in part by Blair's foreign policy advisor, David Manning, who, after September 11, had almost daily interaction with Condoleezza Rice.[185] Unfortunately, Blair's close working relationship with Bush came at the expense of the rapport he had tried to nurture with Kohl and Chirac. Blair found his connection with Europe and the United States was more like a toggle switch than a bridge. Press on with one and the other is switched off. This was most certainly the view held in Europe. Former German Chancellor and member of the German Social Democratic Party, Gerhard Schröder, generally considered a friend of Blair's, was

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[183] Robin Cook, *The Point of Departure*, 103.

[184] Con Coughlin, *American Ally*, 8.

[185] James Naughtie, *The Accidental American: Tony Blair and the Presidency*, (New York: Public Affairs), 2004, 54. See also Peter Riddell, *Hug Them Close*: *Blair, Clinton, Bush and the 'Special Relationship*,   (London: Politico, 2004), 144.

frequently quoted as saying that the traffic across Blair's bridge always seemed to be going in one direction.[186]

The Iraq War ultimately may have been the undoing of Blair's attempt to be a "transatlantic bridge", but his efforts to accomplish this goal resulted in the forging of a much stronger bond between Britain and the United States than it otherwise might have. John Dumbrell concurs, indicating that while US-UK ties were at a weak point in 2001, this relationship changed primarily as a result of Blair's reaction to the Bush response to 9/11 because it was driven by, "Blair's own beliefs about international politics and about the obligations and opportunities of the Special Relationship. . . These beliefs were intense, dynamic, and pivotal to Blair's decision making." [187] By September 11, Blair's sense of loyalty to America was fairly intense. The distress he felt for the American people at the time of the event was almost palpable. In his statement delivered to the media on September 11, 2001, his commitment to support the U.S. was unequivocal. "This is not a battle between the United States of America and terrorism, but between the free and democratic world and terrorism. We, therefore, here in Britain stand shoulder to shoulder with our American friends in this hour of tragedy, and we, like them, will not rest until this evil is driven from our world."[188] In speaking to the House of Commons on the 14th of September Blair said:

> But one thing should be very clear. By their acts, these terrorists and those behind them have made themselves the enemies of the entire civilised world. Their objective we know. Our objective will be to bring to account those who have organised, aided, abetted and incited this act of infamy; and those who harbour or help them have a choice: either to cease their protection of our enemies or be treated as an enemy themselves.

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[186] Peter Riddell, *Hug Them Close*, 138.

[187] Terrence Casey, ed. *The Blair Legacy*, John Dumbrell, "US-UK Relations: Structure, Agency and the Special relationship", 275-276.

[188] Paul Richards, ed. *Tony Blair: In His Own Words*, (London: Politico's), 2004, 215.

Secondly, this is a moment when every difference between nations, every divergence of interest, irritant in our relations, should be put to one side in one common endeavour. The world should stand together against this outrage.

NATO has already, for the first time since it was founded in 1949, invoked article 5 and determined that this attack in America will be considered as an attack against the alliance as a whole. The UN Security Council on Wednesday passed a resolution which set out its readiness to take all necessary steps to combat terrorism. From Russia, China, the EU, from Arab states, Asia and the Americas, from every continent of the world, has come united condemnation. This solidarity must be maintained and translated into support for action. [189]

Blair's forceful expression of a firm commitment to action presaged the beginning of a close collaboration between Bush and Blair in dealing with the issues of terrorism and "immoral" regimes which would eventually lead to the invasion of Iraq in March of 2003.

U.S. – U.K. Military Relations – Forging the Tie that Binds

One factor that facilitated Blair's desire to support the United States in the war in Iraq was the pre-existing close ties between the military and intelligence establishments of both countries. For Britain, working in concert with the United States in military operations is almost a force of habit. Electing to alter this arrangement would have been an exception to the generally accepted mode of operation. Although there have been times in the past when Britain opted not to participate in certain American military actions such as in Vietnam, and although the United States allowed Britain to "go it alone" in the Falklands, in most instances the two countries have enjoyed a close military connection for over sixty years. Lieutenant Colonel James K. Wither states that an 'institutionalized habit' of security cooperation exists between Britain and the United States.[190]

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[189] Tony Blair, Speech to the House of Commons, September 14, 2001 Hansard, col. 605, http://www.publications.parliament.uk/cgi-bin/newhtml_hl?DB=semukparl&STEMMER=en&WORDS=tony%20blair&ALL=&ANY=&PHRASE=&CATEGORIES=&SIMPLE=&SPEAKER=Tony%20Blair&COLOUR=red&STYLE=s&ANCHOR=10914-01_spmin0&URL=/pa/cm200102/cmhansrd/vo010914/debtext/10914-01.htm#10914-01_spmin0 , accessed 3/01/09.

[190] James K. Wither, "British Bulldog or Bush's Poodle? Anglo-American Relations and the Iraq War", *Parameters,* Vol. 33, No. 4, (Winter, 2003-04): 68.

This close cooperation of long standing is what Wither refers to as a "familiar confidence" that the defense establishments of both countries have in their dealings with each other.[191] The US-UK Mutual Defense Agreement was most recently renewed in 2004 and there are approximately 11,000 U.S. servicemen and women stationed on British soil.[192] This relationship runs so deep that Britain shares intelligence with the United States that it does not share with fellow members of the European Union; and American members of the CIA regularly attend the UK's Joint Intelligence Committee meetings.   This cooperation has manifested itself in Britain's willingness to train more with the Americans than with any other ally. Wither indicates, "The close partnership between US and British marines was acknowledged when, for the first time since World War II, a substantial force of US troops was placed under the command of the UK's 3 Commando Brigade for operations in southern Iraq.[193]

In a sense Britain, and on a much smaller scale, Canada may be the only two nations that have comparable capabilities to that of the United States in terms of arms, technology, and specialized equipment which, in turn, enables these countries to interact effectively in battle.[194] Amazingly, Britain seems to be able to accomplish this at little cost to the British public. According to *The Times*, British military spending is a mere fraction of its GDP (2.5 percent) and that figure has remained constant since 1997.[195] This comfortable meshing of US/UK military

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[191] James K. Wither, "British Bulldog or Bush's Poodle? Anglo-American Relations and the Iraq War", 75.

[192] Terrence Casey, ed. *The Blair Legacy*, John Dumbrell, "US-UK Relations: Structure, Agency and the Special relationship", 274.

[193] James K. Wither, "British Bulldog or Bush's Poodle?",75.

[194] Former Defense Analyst with the Canadian Department of National Defence and author of *The Revolution in Military Affairs*, (McGill-Queens, 2002), Prof. Elinor Stone of Carleton University in Canada confirmed that Canada's military capabilities are similar to those of Britain but on a much smaller scale. A recent major development is that Canada is now buying C-17's and tanks. E-mail dated Sunday, 15 April, 2007 from Elinor Sloan at elinor_sloan@carleton.ca to Kim LaCoco at lacoco47@hotmail.com Elinor Stone, online: http://www.cdfai.org/fellows/elinorsloan.htm .

[195] *The Times*, 7 January 2009 as reported in *Timesonline* http://timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/leading_article/article5461848.ece?, accessed 1/8/2009.

operations contrasts sharply with the problems the United States encountered in Kosovo when it was obliged to work with other western European countries.   According to Peter Riddell, the Kosovo campaign exposed the large disparity in military capabilities between the United States and Europe, especially in the area of missile guidance and electronic warfare. "EU forces are not geared towards power projection. Combat support capabilities (particularly airlift, sealift, and air-to-air refueling), precision guided munitions, command and control, interoperable secure communications, and intelligence are among the chronic deficiencies of European military operations." [196]   At the time of the Iraq war, Europe had over one million soldiers in uniform but almost all were ill-equipped and suffered from inadequate training.[197]   The outcome of this disparity was that, even when the United States was prepared to work with other European allies, the results were far from satisfactory.[198] Blair viewed Europe's military weakness as another justification for nurturing a close military relationship with the United States.

Until members of the European Union proved willing to increase defense spending and make an effort to field mobile forces on a par with British and American forces, Blair believed Britain should elect to work with the United States in potential military actions. It was something that almost all British Prime Ministers, with the exception of Heath, had chosen to do since the days of Churchill; and doing so would merely be honoring a venerable tradition. In addition,

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[196] J. Oudraat, 2004, 181 as quoted in: John Dumbrell, *Special Relationship: Anglo American Relations from the Cold War to Iraq*, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), 239.

[197] David Lindsay, and Parag Khanna, "All Style No Substance", Foreign Policy. No. 145 (Nov. – Dec., 2004), 13, Published by: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4152933 , accessed 1/8/2009.

[198] Peter Riddell, *Hug Them Close*, 112. Riddell quotes the Defense Select Committee of the Commons report "Lessons of Kosovo"(Fourteenth Report, 1999-2000, p. xlviii) which states: "The alarming deficit in European capabilities for suppressing and destroying even relatively unsophisticated air defences suggests that Europe must either accept that its scope for action independent of the US is very limited indeed, or face up to the requirements of improving its capabilities sufficiently for it to act independently."

continuing to work closely with the United States military would insure that the British military enjoyed a favored connection with the most potent military force in the world.

Blair may not have consciously factored the pre-existing close military ties into his decision to join the United States war in Iraq, but the ability of the two forces to work almost seamlessly based on shared language, intelligence, comparable technical capabilities, and long standing familiarity with each other's military operations meant that this was one step on the road to war that was unfettered with unforeseen complications. Unlike European/American military action in Kosovo, this operation would require few patches to make it work. The close military connections between the two nations certainly facilitated, Blair's decision to go to war.

Summary

The closeness Blair felt toward America after 9/11 was in large part based on his previous American experiences. Blair's trips to the United States, alone and with Gordon Brown, left a favorable impression on the young politician. He liked the people he met and appreciated the differences in the American political system. He admired Bill Clinton and believed the Labour Party could learn important winning strategies from Clinton's New Democrats; and recognized that, like Clinton's party, Labour needed to reposition itself away from its old ties to the poor, minorities and special interest groups and toward the political center, where young upwardly mobile middle class home owners could be found to swell Labour's dwindling ranks. When he became Prime Minister, he adopted a very presidential style, running Number 10 more like the White House while he attempted to remain above the fray.

Blair's positive disposition toward America, his friendship with Bill Clinton and his subsequent connection to George W. Bush inclined Blair to respond emotionally to the attacks on America. His tireless efforts to fight terrorism and to rally other nations to the cause of

forcing Saddam Hussein to allow UN weapons inspectors to resume their duties were made, in large part, out of a sense of deep personal loyalty to his American friends. Blair believed he could facilitate helping the United States and Europe interact more positively with each other by using Britain as a "transatlantic bridge." Although his efforts to accomplish this were not particularly successful, Blair's tireless efforts did result in a closer relationship between the United States and Britain. This closeness, coupled with the existing cooperation between the military organizations of both nations, gave impetus to Blair's decision to support the U.S. by sending troops to Iraq as part of the invasion force.

CHAPTER 6

PERSONALITY – A DRIVING FORCE

Blair and Brown – The Partitioning of Influence

Blair's relationship with Gordon Brown spans almost the entirety of his political career, and the nature of this association has run the gamut from Brown as teacher with Blair as his eager pupil, to fast friends pursuing a common cause, to Blair as leader and Brown as second- in-command, and finally to enemy combatants with both men bound together in a devil's bargain, each seeking to carve out a realm of authority. It is this last metamorphosis that is of greatest interest when determining how this relationship influenced Blair's decisions regarding Iraq. However, in order to understand fully why this is so, it is necessary to explore the process by which the friendship between two men who had so much in common transformed over time into a relationship where heated arguments were overheard in the halls of Number 10 and the media frequently alluded to the ongoing feud between the two men.

Gordon Brown entered Parliament 1983 in the same freshman class as Tony Blair. However, in terms of political experience, he was many years Blair's senior. The son of a Scottish church minister and dedicated socialist, Brown's politics were imbued in his personality at a very early age. Brown was actively involved in Labour politics even as a college student at Edinburgh University. In 1983, he won the seat of Dunfermline East and subsequently found himself sharing an office with Tony Blair. Seldon says, "Brown was unstinting in his help and support of his young protégé. He educated Blair in the ways of Parliament, the Labour Party and politics, finding his companion bright and eager but surprisingly naïve and innocent for a new

MP.[199] Their teacher-pupil relationship would continue for some years based on their mutual

desire to effect a change in the Labour Party that would guarantee its return to power. After the

defeat in in 1987 General Election, Blair and Brown agreed that the Labour party had to move

toward a more centrist position, out of the pockets of the unions, and into a friendlier stance

regarding business and private enterprise.

For both men, these were halcyon days, working in the Shadow Cabinet while trying to

effect substantive changes in the Labour Party platform. According to Philip Gould, "Blair and

Brown had ability; they were a breath of fresh air; they were attractive on television."[200] In fact

it was performance on television that would cause the first, albeit tiny, crack in their relationship.

Brown was awkward, over-rehearsed and prone to speaking in "sound bite-babble" when on

camera, which led one of the BBC news bulletins to seek to ban him from appearing because he

was so frequently interviewed, and had so little to say.[201] Additionally, the Labour party had

been using a research technique known as "people metering" to gauge audience response to

politicians they viewed on television. Almost all Shadow front bench MP's were tested and

Blair consistently recorded the most positive response of any tested politician.   Philip Gould

notes, "It was a response qualitatively different from that to any other politician. This quality,

which is hard to pin down, was central to Blair's emergence as eventual leader of the Labour

party and to some of the frustrations resulting from the contest for leadership."[202] Brown's media

failings, coupled with Blair's success, contributed to Blair's eclipse of Brown in the public eye.

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[199] Anthony Seldon, *Blair*, (London: Simon & Schuster), 2005, 659.

[200] Philip Gould, *The Unfinished Revolution: How the Modernizers Saved the Labour Party,* (London: Abacus/Little Brown & Co.), 1998, 184.

[201] John Sopel, *Tony Blair, the Modernizer*, (London: Bantam Press) 1995, 178.

[202] Philip Gould, *The Unfinished Revolution*, 185.

Consequently, from 1990 to 1992, the relationship of the two men began to shift from, Brown owning the senior role toward parity between the two, to Blair as emergent rising star.

The death of John Smith brought the matter of who would assume party leadership to a head. Brown certainly had the seniority in terms of the breadth and depth of his knowledge and service to the Labour Party, but his support in the party was at a low ebb, while support for Blair, as Labour's new rising star "crystallized" immediately after Smith's death.[203] In fact this support built into a full fledged campaign with such speed that, according to Nick Brown, Gordon would have struggled to get the required number of nominations.[204]   He was angered by the rapidity with which the Blair team began their campaign upon the announcement of Smith's death, while Brown himself insisted upon observing a period of inactivity out of respect for the fallen leader. Blair's supporters believe that both sides were working to see their man elected to the leadership post and accused Brown's team simply of operating in stealth mode. Brown also felt betrayed because he truly believed that Blair had given his promise to support Brown in any leadership contest. However, Blair's people, while acknowledging that Blair had previously viewed Brown as the senior partner, claim that Blair never entered into any formal agreement to throw his support to Brown.[205] While the spin doctors tried their best to insure that both men appeared to have equal standing in terms of party support, an article in the *Guardian* on June 6, 2003, indicates, "Opinion polls, as well as newspaper leaders, MP's caucuses and the rest had pointed to Blair's victory . . . But it was helpful to party unity that Brown be presented as standing aside for his former protégé from a position of magnanimous strength."[206] For his part, Brown, agreed to step aside but not before exacting certain guarantees from Blair. According to Donald

[203] John Rentoul, *Tony Blair: Prime Minister*, New Ed. (London: Timer Warner Paperbacks), 2001, 223.

[204] Francis Beckett, *Gordon Brown: Past Present and Future*, (London: Haus Books), 2007, 81.

[205] Anthony Seldon, *Blair,* 664.

[206] *Guardian*, 6 June, 1993 http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2003/jun/06/uk.labour , accessed 2/01/09.

Macintyre, "The principle argument was over Brown's insistence that he should be 'guaranteed' not only the Chancellorshipship in a future Labour government but also autonomous control over the whole range of economic policy.[207]

Whatever truly was transacted during Blair and Brown's fateful meeting at the Granita restaurant where the "deal" was purportedly hammered out, the fact remains that in 1997, when the two entered the doors at Number 10 and Number 11, Gordon Brown, as the new Chancellor of the Exchequer in Tony Blair's government, did indeed work to gain total control over domestic and economic policy. Mark Bennister indicates:

> The bi-lateral relationship between Blair and Brown set the style, tone and agenda for government and was reflected in the emergence of 'policy fiefdoms'. [With] schools, health, crime, transport, Northern Ireland, foreign and defence and intelligence and security to Blair and pensions, child and youth policy, welfare to work, enterprise, science and technology, structural change and region development to Brown.[208]

While their relationship after 1994 had been tenuous, it began to disintegrate from the moment Blair became Prime Minister. Although he did not actually plot against Blair's leadership during his first term in office, according to Rentoul, "Brown's heavy-footed position was already a significant irritation."[209] When Paul Routledge's biography of Brown, which boasted that it was written with Brown's full cooperation, was released in early 1998, it further fanned the flames of the Blair-Brown controversy. Alastair Campbell relates that he was so angry with Brown's Press officer Charlie Whelan regarding his cooperation with Routledge that he, "totally lost it with him, and in between screaming abuse at him . . . said [he] was not prepared to put up with his nonsense any more . . . his efforts to pursue a pure GB agenda were

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[207] Donald,Macintyre, *Mandelson: The Biography*, (London: Harper Collins), 1999, 268.

[208] P. Hennessy, "Rules and Servants of State: The Blair Style of Government 1997 -2004" *Parliamentary Affairs*, 58 (1) 10. Quoted in *The Blair Legacy*, Terrence Casey, ed. Ch. 11, Mark Bennister, "Tony Blair as Prime Minister, (London: Palgrave Mac Millan), 2009, 171.

[209] John Rentoul, *Tony Blair: Prime Minister*, 383.

pathetic and doing GB more harm than good." [210] Routledge's suggestion that Blair broke the

"secret pact" made with Brown to turn over leadership, resulted in Blair's angry albeit muted

admonition that Brown's cooperation with Routledge was "daft and ill-advised."[211] That same

month, Whelan informed the media in a briefing that Brown was the government's chief

executive and that Blair was merely its chairman.[212] Infuriated, a highly placed member of

Blair's team responded with an extremely inflammatory comment that Brown, while brilliant,

possessed psychological flaws. This episode demonstrated the intensity of animosity the

respective Brown and Blair camps felt for the other.

This animosity would soon flow over into the daily operation of government. While

initially both men tended to agree on economic policy, ultimately they argued over Brown's

belief in spending money on tax credits. Blair continued to lose influence over domestic matters

as ministers learned that Brown would be reluctant to assist them if it were known they had first

sought help from Number 10.[213] The gulf between the two men widened as Brown continued to

court the unions even though Blair sought to distance himself from their influence. In order to

keep the peace during the 2001 general election campaign, Blair allowed Brown to run the

campaign from headquarters while he took his show on the road. A Blair aide recalled,

"Frankly, the campaign was awful and Gordon was a real bully."[214]

By the time the election was over, the hostility between the two men was so great that

Blair and Brown could hardly bring themselves to shake hands. At this time there was a

considerable anti-Brown undercurrent amongst the staff at Number 10. According to Seldon,

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[210] Alistair Campbell, *The Blair Years*: *The Alastair Campbell Diaries*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf), 2007, 271.

[211] John Rentoul, *Tony Blair: Prime Minister*, 384.

[212] Ibid., 383. (See also, Anthony Seldon, *Blair*, 671.)

[213] Anthony Seldon, *Blair*, 674.

[214] Anthony Seldon, *Blair Unbound*, (London: Simon & Schuster), 2007, 28.

"Several in his den argued for a change, believing Blair could not continue to function as Prime Minister properly if Brown remained *in situ*."[215] Although Blair indicated that he believed he could move Brown to another position, "there was always something deep inside Blair – love, fear, compassion – that held him back."[216] Regardless of his motivations for refusing to remove Brown, the fact remains that Brown continued as chancellor and his grip on economic and domestic policy remained as firm as ever.   The Prime Minister's economic advisor, Derek Scott, noted the polarization of power almost immediately, indicating, "Once in government, Gordon Brown still wanted to run everything on the domestic front. It is a puzzle to me why the Prime Minister went along with this. . . . Perhaps the reluctance to rein in Gordon was just a mater of personal inclination . . . or maybe it was just a personal style that generally like to smooth away animosities if at all possible."[217]   Scott goes on to explain that Brown made it clear as early as 1997 that he intended to keep No. 10 out of the loop regarding economic policy. Blair sought to remind Brown that his office needed to be kept up to date. He had Scott draft a letter to the Chancellor in which he made it clear that:

> Gordon was to ensure that his private office made it clear to officials in both the Treasury and Inland Revenue that it was part of their function to discuss issues with the policy unit at No.10 and papers on important policy areas were to be sent across as a matter of course . . . This had no effect on Gordon Brown, even when the Prime Minister raised the problem again at subsequent meetings or over the telephone . . . and it soon became known throughout Whitehall that, in some areas at least, the Chancellor could defy the Prime Minister with impunity.[218]

Scott believed the Blair-Brown relationship was a significant factor in how the Blair government operated. He devoted an entire chapter in his book to exploring how the interplay

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[215] Anthony Seldon, *Blair Unbound*,33.

[216] Ibid.

[217] Derek Scott, *Off Whitehall: A View from Downing Street by Tony Blair's Advisor*, (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd) 2004, 19-20.

[218] Ibid., 24.

between the two men evolved into an almost farcical game of cat and mouse with Treasury officials sneaking via back doors into special briefings at Number 10 to avoid discovery by Brown or his minions.[219]

Ultimately reports began to surface about a rift existing between the two men over spending plans, the Euro, foundation hospitals, student tuition plans, and the eventual change of leadership of the Labour Party.[220] While both Brown and Blair had at one time held a common belief that Britain should eventually adopt the Euro, Brown's close relationship with the Treasury officials, who were adverse to this change, caused a reversal in his position that put him at odds with Blair on this issue. Although actively denied by Downing Street, it was apparent to many that the two were engaged in a battle of wills. In late 2002, Brown publically derided Blair for his plans for top-up fees for university students and allowing NHS hospitals the use of private money.   In May of 2003, Anne Mc Elvoy wrote in the *Evening Standard* that Brown was guilty of, "emphasizing every difference with the Prime Minister and playing down any show of support until his silence has become a talking point. This produces an equal and opposite reaction from Mr. Blair's close circle, who mutter that the Chancellor is getting very good at being (as one put it) a "road block"[221].

The lack of cooperation between the two men resulted in heated telephone arguments and fueled rumors that Brown was making daily requests that Blair stand down and allow Brown a chance at the job.[222] Brown's deliberate efforts to keep Blair out of the loop on domestic policy

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[219] Derek Scott, *Off Whitehall,* 25.

[220] *Evening Standard - London*, November 19th, 2001.
http://www.bookrags.com/highbeam/blahtastic-what-no10-says-of-blair-20011119-hb/ , accessed 2/1/2009.

[221] *Evening Standard*, February 5, 2003.

[222] *Telegraph*, 1 December 2002, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1414963/Brooding-Brown-gathers-allies-as-his-fe, accessed 2/6/2009.

played a major role in causing Blair to increasingly focus on foreign policy[223] Seldon says one

Brown supporter told him that "part of their agreement was that Gordon left Tony a free hand on

foreign policy." [224] At one point, Blair considered the possibility of moving Brown to the

Foreign Office; however the prospect that Brown would block him on foreign policy as he

continued to do with domestic policy was not a pleasant one, and that, coupled with the belief

that Brown would refuse to make such a move, was sufficient to cause him to table the idea.[225]

Blair already viewed foreign relations as one area where Brown's lack of interest would keep his

interference to a minimum, allowing Blair to act untrammeled by the unpleasant prospect of a

conflict with Brown. Seldon claims that both men benefitted from this separation of

responsibility, the Prime Minister enjoyed an unfettered opportunity to manage foreign affairs

while, "Blair's preference for taking direct control in crises suited Brown in one way, as it

removed him from the scene and left him a freer hand. What Brown had achieved in the first

term was to carve out a vast empire for himself in Whitehall."[226]

As the rift with Brown grew in the early days of his premiership, Blair began to retreat

from efforts to effect domestic policy and to focus increasingly on foreign policy. Prior to this

time, Blair had been concerned about Britain's relationship with Europe vis-à-vis membership in

the EU and the Euro, but he had expressed little desire to cast Britain in a larger role by actively

seeking to fight evil on the international scene. However, the need to alleviate the frustration he

felt at being hampered at home in exercising his duties to enact domestic policy, drove Blair to

seek a larger role for himself and for Britain in the arena of international affairs. Northern

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[223] *Guardian*, 7 September, 2006 http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2006/sep/07/uk.labourleadershi6/print, accessed 2/6/2009.

[224] Anthony Seldon, *Blair*, 680.

[225] Anthony Seldon, Blair *Unbound*, 33.

[226] Anthony Seldon, *Blair*, 676.

Ireland was one of his earliest opportunities to play a part in significant negotiations to resolve issues that had plagued previous Prime Ministers in years past.

Blair's concern regarding Northern Ireland, in actuality, predated his becoming Prime Minister in 1997. He carefully studied John Major's policies regarding this issue in an effort to learn from his mistakes, and he told President Clinton that Northern Ireland would be one of "the most important priorities of his premiership."[227] Gordon Brown did not have any interest in becoming involved in Northern Ireland which made it a perfect issue for Blair because he could control the decision making process from Number 10 and have the opportunity to interact with other world leaders, especially Clinton. [228] For many, Blair's role in the negotiating of peace in Northern Ireland is considered to be one of the most significant achievements of his first term as Prime Minister.[229] This was the first time that he had a "clear moral vision" of what needed to be done and it was the first time he became actively involved in dealing with terrorism. Seldon suggests, "Making a success of it, in an area without input from Gordon Brown, boosted his self-confidence immeasurably . . . Had agreement not been reached, it is unlikely he would have felt emboldened to go on and take tough decisions over wars abroad in the future."[230]

Blair seemed to use his success in Northern Ireland, unfettered by interference from Brown as a point of embarkation. His ability to explore his Prime Ministerial prerogative in international affairs afforded Blair a comfortable venue where he could function without fear of Brown making attempts to undermine his actions. It was not surprising then that, in early 1998, Blair's concern for Saddam Hussein's possession of weapons of mass destruction led him to authorize British air strikes against Iraq in an effort to force the Iraqi leader to allow UN

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[227] Anthony Seldon, *Blair*, 353.

[228] Ibid., 351.

[229] John Rentoul, *Tony Blair: Prime Minister*, 417. (See also, Anthony Seldon, *Blair,* 363.)

[230] Anthony Seldon, *Blair*, 363.

weapons inspectors to complete their task. At the same time, he and Robin Cook were working

very hard in the international community to line up support for taking action against the Serbs in

Kosovo.[231] In December of that same year, Blair joined Bill Clinton in a joint British-American

action against Saddam Hussein in an operation named Desert Fox. Blair's ethical foreign policy

was beginning to take shape. In Kosovo he pledged himself to see that the Serbians were driven

out, even thought this was not entirely within his power to deliver. In his landmark speech made

to the Economics Club in Chicago on April 24, 1999 Blair gave clear evidence of the depth of

his commitment:

> This is a just war, based not on any territorial ambitions but on values. We cannot let the
> evil of ethnic cleansing stand. We must not rest until it is reversed. We have learned
> twice before in this century that appeasement does not work. If we let an evil dictator
> range unchallenged, we will have to spill infinitely more blood and treasure to stop him
> later.[232]

Blair's unflinching stance in Kosovo won him plaudits at home where the press

and the public alike approved of his actions, and he seemed to shine when his efforts were not

overshadowed by conflict with his chancellor. Blair was not plagued by the need formulate

foreign policy in the same contentious atmosphere that stifled his efforts to contribute to

domestic policy, and consequently, he pressed forward with a singleness of purpose that would

come to define his style of international diplomacy. The experience he gained in Northern

Ireland and Kosovo helped crystallize Blair's ethical foreign policy which was clearly spelled

out in his Chicago speech. These earliest efforts to affect positive outcomes in international

affairs gave him great personal satisfaction and provided a significant incentive to pursue

involvement in other areas that met the criteria set out in his Chicago Speech. Of course the

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[231] John Rentoul, *Tony Blair: Prime Minister*, 514.

[232] Tony Blair, Speech: *"Doctrine of the International Community"* given to the Economic Club. Chicago, 24 April 1999.   http://collections.europarchive.org/tna/20040315011120/http://pm.gov.uk/output/Page1297.asp , accessed 3/2/09.

biggest challenge that Blair elected to take on in the wake of his early successes was supporting the United States in the invasion of Iraq.

Conflicting theories have been proposed to explain why Gordon Brown after weeks of silence only chose the support Blair decision to go to war in Iraq at the eleventh hour. Former Home Secretary David Blunkett offered the following explanation for Brown's decision in his taped diary of March 17, 2003: "Gordon has made a real effort to bat in this week and I think there's been a realization by him that Tony isn't going and that he's got a choice. He either bats in and holds on to the Chancellor's job or he fails to bat in and Tony will take him out when the military action is finished."[233] Tim Dunne argues, however, that in the Cabinet Meeting held on March 17, 2003 when Lord Goldsmith explained his revised opinion regarding the legality of military action, Brown could have threatened to resign which would have certainly divided the cabinet and caused a large number of Labour MPs to vote against Blair's plan. Dunne notes that it is interesting that Brown "robustly defended Mr. Blair's strategy" during the meeting even though "before then, he had been virtually silent on the issue."[234] If Dunne's assessment is correct, Brown's support of Blair's Iraq policy was key to its continuation, which in turn, insured that Blair would focus on foreign affairs leaving the development of domestic policy to Brown.

For his part, Gordon Brown's role in Blair's decision regarding Iraq was more one of omission rather than commission. His silence in the weeks leading up to the war insured that Blair had the requisite support from the Cabinet and with Labour MPs to press forward with his plan. Although Brown, like Blair was ardently pro-American, he never shared the same sense of moral obligation that drove Blair's passion for pursuing this cause. His decisions then, were

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[233] David Blunkett , excerpts from taped diaries Evening Standard, October 10, 2006, http://www.thisislondon.co.uk/mailFrameset.do?url=http://www.dailymail.co.uk/pages/live/articles/news/news.html?in_article_id=409742&in_page_id=1770 , accessed 2/14/09.

[234] Tim Dunne, "What did you do in the Iraq War, Gordon?", Times Higher Education, March 27, 2008, http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storyCode=401243&sectiondoce=26 , accessed 2/10/09.

more calculated and based on factors other than a sense of moral outrage. Francis Beckett claims that the deal struck in 1994 at the Granita Restaurant, "required Brown to leave Blair alone on the world stage."[235] Sadly too, Brown was distracted from any concerns he may have had about the war, by the death of his infant daughter in early January of 2003. Ultimately, however, Brown weighed other factors when making his decision to remain silent on the issue of Iraq until the last possible minute. Eager to become Prime Minister when Blair stepped down, Brown was not interested in gambling with his chances. Simon Jenkins wrote in *The Sunday Times*, "If Blair's judgment has become warped by a craving for legacy and longevity, Brown's is warped by gnawing ambition for his [Blair's] job."[236] To oppose Blair would have proven risky, and in the end, it was not possible for Brown to know if he could have garnered the necessary support in the Cabinet, or among the Labour MP's to change the outcome. Ultimately, his silence about the war became an issue and Brown was pressured to voice his support. But it could be said that he safely hedged his bets. If the war had a positive outcome, Brown could accurately claim that he had supported the venture. If the results were not positive, Brown's reluctance to come out in support of the venture was well noted.

Blair's decision to go to war in Iraq was indeed facilitated by the unique relationship that developed between the two men after John Smith's death. Whether as a result of a deal drawn up at the Granita restaurant which created spheres of influence for each man, or because both simply gravitated to their particular area of strength, the fact remains that Brown exercised a considerable amount of control over the domestic front, leaving Blair to pursue his own agenda in foreign affairs. Regardless of his reasons for doing so, Brown, who would stubbornly refuse

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[235] Beckett, Francis, *Gordon Brown: Past Present and Future*, 135.

[236] Simon Jenkins, "Blair cracks as the Sharks and the Jets run riot in Downing St.", *The Sunday Times*, 10 September, 2006, http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnist/guest_contributors/article634212.ece, accessed 2/2/09.

to acquiesce to many of Blair's plans for domestic policy, chose not to interfere with Blair's activities in the area of foreign affairs. As a result, Blair's need to create a legacy was more easily realized in international diplomacy. Unfettered by opposition from Brown, Blair was free to seek a larger role for himself and for Britain in world affairs. Indeed, Brown essentially allowed this to happen, standing by while Blair involved Britain in Northern Ireland, Kosovo, Sierra Leon, and in conducting joint air strikes over Iraq. He could have thrown up road blocks as he held the power of the purse for all Blair's ventures, but he did not. The war in Iraq would prove to be no different. Brown's reticence to become involved granted Blair a free reign to act as he deemed appropriate.

<div align="center">Religion and Ethics – A Moral Cause for War</div>

While it may be tempting to downplay the role that faith had in the forming of Blair's decision to invade Iraq, his actions prior to and after 2003, make it difficult to discount the importance of Blair's belief in God and the ethical and moral code he has established for himself as a result of that belief. Tony Blair's relationship with God essentially defines who he was, as a politician, and who he is now as the head of his own world faith foundation. John Rentoul conceded in the preface to his most recent Blair biography that Blair's "contemplative Christianity ran deeper and was more established earlier than I realized."[237] Anthony Seldon too, explains that Blair's relationship with God is of ultimate importance to him and it has affected his response to all major turning points in his life. He adds, "His religion explains why he became the person he did, why he holds his beliefs, how he relates to others, and from where he derives much of his inner strength and convictions."[238] Blair found his way to religion during his later years at Oxford

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[237] John Rentoul, *Tony Blair: Prime Minister*, x.
[238] Anthony Seldon, *Blair*, 515.

where he took religious instruction and was confirmed in the Anglican Church by the college chaplain at St. John's. Christianity quickly became a moving force in his life and his commitment to his faith seems only to have grown over the years. After his marriage to Cherie, Blair began to attend Roman Catholic services with his wife. Their children were all baptized in the Catholic Church. He himself converted to Roman Catholicism after leaving Number 10 in 2007.

Blair's political style has always been defined by his faith which makes him a unique political figure in what is a typically very secular British society. In fact Blair was unashamedly an avowed Christian although he was not evangelical: he was less concerned with gaining converts to the faith than he was with applying his faith to make the world a better place.[239] This was true to the extent that even when faith was not supposed to be a factor in the formation of government policy, Blair found a way to allow his faith to drive certain key decisions, most especially those that had to do with Britain's response to terrorism, genocide, or the eradication of regimes guilty of perpetrating these acts.

It is not surprising that Blair drew heavily on his religious and ethical values when formulating his policy for dealing with Iraq. His doing so is entirely consistent with his approach to handling many of the tasks he carried out since first holding public office. Evidence of Blair's desire to accommodate his moral and ethical beliefs when drafting government strategies can be found in his early political speeches. In his maiden speech in the House of Commons on July 6, 1983 Blair, in an attack on the Thatcher government's Finance Bill that cut taxes for the wealthy, indicated that he was a socialist because, "at its best, socialism corresponds most closely to an existence that is both rational and moral."[240] Blair has a well developed sense of religious and moral conviction that one must always work very hard to do the right thing. He expressed this

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[239] Anthony Seldon, *Blair*, 516.
[240] Paul Richards, ed., *Tony Blair: In His Own Words*, (London: Politico's), 2004, 32.

view at the Labour Party Conference in 1992 when he purposefully differentiated Labour from the Conservative Party by using moral language and Christian references, indicating in his speech, "We are trying to establish in the public mind the coincidence between the values of democratic socialism and those of Christianity."[241] In 1993 Blair outlined his beliefs about his faith saying, "Christianity is a very tough religion. It may not always be practiced as such. But it is. It places a duty, an imperative on us to reach our better self and to care about creating a better community to live in . . . There is right and wrong. There is good and bad."[242]

Blair's religious beliefs shaped his moral values and determined the course he would take in his political career. Blair's faith-based ethical and moral values were woven into the fabric of his foreign and domestic policy from the early years of his premiership. In his introduction to the *1997 Labour Party Manifesto*, Blair wrote that Britain will, "be an advocate of human rights and democracy the world over." He then stressed that the protection and promotion of human rights would be a central part of the Labour Party foreign policy.

Blair singled out certain foreign governments, most particularly Iraq and Kosovo, identifying them as oppressive regimes where human rights issues needed to be addressed. In a speech given to European leaders in The Hague on January 20, 1998, Blair stated his intention to remove Britain from the vestiges of Thatcherism by finding, "a third way, between unbridled individualism and laissez-faire on the one hand: and old-style government intervention – the corporation of the 1960's social democracy – on the other." He told his audience, "But we don't want to live in a society without rules, without compassion, without justice, without any sense of

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[241] Anthony Seldon, *Blair*, p. 517.
[242] Paul Richards, ed., *Tony Blair: In His Own Words*, 70.

obligation to our fellow citizens. I want the politics of Britain . . . to be based on solidarity, on the common good."[243]

As early as February 5, 1998, in a speech made at the White House, Blair focused on Saddam Hussein, referring to him as someone who is a danger to the international community. He told his American audience, "We have stood together before in the face of tyranny. Today, in the face of Saddam Hussein, we must stand together once more. We want a diplomatic solution to the crisis. But the success or failure of diplomacy rests on Saddam. If he fails to respond, then he knows that the threat of force is there, and it is real."[244] Blair previously described the perceived crisis in his speech at the Lord Mayor's banquet when he said:

> We face another critical test of international resolve today. Saddam Hussein is once more defying the clearly expressed will of the United Nations by refusing to allow UN inspectors to fulfill their task of ensuring Iraq has no remaining weapons of mass destruction. It is vital for all of us that they be allowed to complete their work with no suggestion of discrimination against our US allies. Only then can the question of relaxing sanctions arise.[245]

The depth of Blair's concern and his commitment to take steps in the United Nations to address this issue is evident in the effort he put forward to garner international support for a resolution to force Iraq once again, to accept UN weapons inspections. It is significant that this speech, made when Bill Clinton was still in the White House, appears to have been driven more by Blair's faith-based ethical standards than by pressure applied by an American president. Blair's hope for a just and good society eventually found expression in his Doctrine of International Community which he explained during his 1999 speech to the Economics Club in

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[243] Tony Blair, *"Change: A Modern Britain in a Modern Europe,"* (speech given at Church of En in the Ridderzaal, The Hague Netherlands, January 20, 1998), http://collections.europarchive.org/tna/20040315011120/http://pm.gov.uk/output/Page1150.asp, accessed 3/17/09.

[244] Tony Blair: Speech "Arrival Ceremony at the White House," (given 5 February 1998), http://collections.europarchive.org/tna/20040315011120/http://pm.gov.uk/output/Page1152.asp, accessed 3/17/09.

[245] Tony Blair: Speech at the Lord Mayor's Banquet, London , (given 10 November 1997).

Chicago. "Now our actions are guided by a more subtle blend of mutual self interest and moral purpose in defending the values we cherish. In the end, values and interests merge. If we can establish and spread the values of liberty, the rule of law, human rights, and an open society then that is in our national interests too. The spread of values makes us safer."[246] In February of 2003 in his speech to the Labour Party Convention when speaking of the unpopularity of his intentions to involve Britain in the war, Blair explained that he was willing to pursue his moral values despite the potential cost, "I do not seek unpopularity as a badge of honor. But sometimes it is the price of leadership. And the cost of conviction."[247]

Blair's political style has always been defined by his faith, although he is not evangelical and is less concerned with gaining converts to the faith than with applying his faith for the benefit of the international community.[248] This was true to the extent that even when faith was not supposed to be a factor in the formation of government policy, Blair found a way to allow his faith to drive certain key decisions, most especially those that had to do with Britain's response to terrorism, genocide, or the eradication of regimes guilty of perpetrating these acts. Blair shared this inclination with George W. Bush. During their first meeting at Camp David in 2001, Blair and Bush, while on one of their walks, interspersed talking about God between sharing views on Europe and the Middle East.[249]

Paul Richards states, "If you want to trace the provenance of Blair's politics you should start with Christianity."[250] There is no doubt that Blair's belief in the necessity of defending values and supporting a "moral" government stems, in part, from his personal religious beliefs. Blair was

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[246] Tony Blair, "*Doctrine of the International Community,*" (speech given to the Economic Club in Chicago, 24 April 1999).

[247] David Gordon, "Iraq, War and Morality", Economic *and Political Weekly*, Vol. 38, No. 12/13, (Mar. 22 – Apr. 4, 2003), 1117.

[248] Anthony Seldon, *Blair*, 516.

[249] Alastair Campbell, *The Blair Years*: *The Alastair Campbell Diaries*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf), 2007, 507.

[250] Paul Richards, ed., *Tony Blair: In His Own Words*, 215.

indeed, a fundamentally faith-based politician.[251] As a member of the Christian Socialist

Movement, Blair believes there is a natural connection between faith and politics, and that faith

plays a fundamental role in supporting values which bind Britain together as a nation.[252] While

most political observers acknowledge Blair's religious mindset, separation of church and state is

more literally observed in Britain than it is in the United States, and Blair's senior advisors actively

intervened to prevent his discussion of God in a public venue. Blair's advisors even prevented him

from ending his address to the nation at the start of the war in Iraq with a simple, "God bless

you."[253] When, in an interview with *Vanity Fair* magazine writer David Margolick, it became

evident that the topic was turning to how his religious beliefs influenced in Blair's political

decisions, Blair's director of strategy and communications, Alistair Campbell, quickly interrupted

the conversation with, "We don't do God. I'm sorry. We don't do God" [254]   In August of 2003

the *Guardian's* executive editor, Kamal Ahmed stated, "Blair knows that many of his key officials

feel uncomfortable about the central role that God plays in his life."[255] The unspoken implication

here was that Blair understood the potential political cost of his acknowledged affirmation of his

belief in God and chose to ignore the potential consequences of allowing faith to be a driving force

in his foreign policy.

There were occasions when Blair had had the opportunity to express his faith openly

without being censored by his staff. Blair told ITV1 chat show host Michael Parkinson that he

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[251] Mark Seddon, "America's Friend: Reflections on Tony Blair" *Logos Journa*l 3.4 (Fall 2004), http://www.logosjournal.com/issue_3.4/seddon.htm , accessed 3/17/09.

[252] Prime Minister Tony Blair's "speech to the Christian Socialist Movement," (given at Westminster Central Hall, 29 March 2001), http://collections.europarchive.org/tna/20040315011120/http://pm.gov.uk/output/Page3243.asp , accessed 3/1/09.

[253] Colin Brown "Campbell interrupted Blair as he spoke of his faith: 'We don't do God', " *Telegraph Media Group*, 5 March 2003, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1429109/Campbell-interrupted-Blair-as-he-spoke-of-his-faith-We-dont-do-God.html , accessed 3/16/09.

[254] Ibid.

[255] Kamal Ahmed, "And on the seventh day Tony Blair created . . .," Observer, Sunday, 3 August 2003 http://observer.guardian.co.uk/print/0,,4725586-102279,00.html, accessed 3/16/09.

"prayed to God" when deciding whether to send troops to Iraq and also stated in the same interview, "In the end, there is a judgement that, I think if you have faith about these things, you realize that judgement is made by other people . . . and if you believe in God, it's made by God as well." He later added, "The only way you can take a decision like that is to do the right thing according to your conscience."[256] Blair's outrage at the act of terrorism committed on September 11th further cemented his relationship with another avowed Christian, George W. Bush. Through the tough weeks and months leading up the Iraq war, it seemed apparent to many that both men were indeed sustained by their faith. Each demonstrated a singular determination to act on the dictates of his conscience rather than the advice proffered by their advisors and staff. Both Blair and Bush appeared to believe that they were serving the will of a higher authority and, like modern day martyrs; they were willing to throw themselves on the funeral pyre of public opinion.

A perfect example of Blair's single-mindedness about doing what he believed to be "right" occurred in February of 2003, when Blair and wife Cherie were granted a papal audience. Blair was afforded the opportunity to discuss the looming Iraq War with Pope John Paul. According to Anthony Seldon, Blair did not receive the hoped-for understanding he sought from his audience with the Pope. Instead the Vatican released a statement indicating that the Pope had urged Blair to do everything he could to avoid war in the Middle East.[257] Cherie Blair has a slightly different view about what happened. She recounts that Blair indicated to her that, while the Pope made it clear he was against all violence, the Pontiff had concluded his conversation with Blair by saying, "In the end it's your decision and your conscience. It's your job to take these decisions, and what ever you do, I'm sure you'll do the right thing." Cherie indicated that Blair, in light of the momentous decisions he had to make regarding this issue, took a great deal of comfort from these

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[256] BBC News "Blair ' prayed to God' over Iraq," 4 March 2006, http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/uk_politics/4772142.stm, accessed 3/16/09.
[257] Anthony Seldon, *Blair*, 523.

words.[258]   Regardless of which version is the most accurate, Blair's determination to forge ahead

with plans to participate in the war points to the depth of his feelings regarding the rightness of his

decision.   His decisions appear to have been made based on the strength of his own personal faith-

driven values and he was not easily swayed by even the most influential religious figures.   During

that same month Blair delivered a speech to the Labour Party Conference in which he made a

moral case for war saying, "The moral case against war has a moral answer: it is the moral case

for removing Saddam . . . it is the reason, frankly, why if we do have to act, we should do so with a

clear conscience." He added, "And we must live with the consequences of our actions, even the

unintended ones."[259]

Another aspect of Blair's moral and ethical motives for joining the United States in the war

effort and for remaining a steadfast ally may be best understood in the context of childhood

experience. John Rentoul, states that Blair referred to lessons he learned when his father suffered

his debilitating stroke by saying, "When that happened, the fair-weather friends – they went.

That's not unusual. But the real friends, the true friends, they stayed with us for no other reason

than it was the right thing to do. . . I learned a sense of values in my childhood."[260] Blair's

constancy in his support of the United States in the Iraq war may have been based, in part, on his

aversion to being cast in the role of fair-weather friend. Blair expressed this sentiment in his 1999

speech to the Economic Club in Chicago when he promised, "Realize that in Britain you have a

friend and an ally that will stand with you, work with you, fashion with you the design of a future

built on peace and prosperity for all, which is the only dream that makes humanity worth

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[258] Cherie Blair, *Speaking for Myself: My Life from Liverpool to Downing Street*, (New York: Little Brown & Co.), 2008, 333.

[259] David Gordon, "Iraq, War and Morality", Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 38, No. 12/13 (Mar. 22 – Apr. 4, 2003), p. 1117.

[260] John Rentoul, *Tony Blair: Prime Minister*, 3. (Rentoul relates that Blair related this incident in a 1996 Labour Party Conference Speech.)

preserving."[261]   James Naughtie, who interviewed Blair on numerous occasions, suggested Blair's

penchant for mixing politics, personal ethics, and religion may have derived from a strong sense of

obligation, and it was "that obligation as much as an understanding of the power of the

transatlantic alliance that drew him to Bush after 9/11."[262]

Blair – The Personality of a Leader

While it is frequently argued that Bush, and the American political establishment, pressured

Blair to become involved in the war in Iraq, there is ample evidence suggesting that this was not

the case. Riddell says, "[Blair] developed a distinctive international view point and image well

before George W. Bush became president in January 2001. This was largely as a result of working

with Clinton over the previous two and a half years [when] he became partly disillusioned with

Clinton's inability to deliver on his promises, especially after the Kosovo conflict."[263] "Blair was

in some respects more worried about the threat from Iraq than Bush himself.[264] In his book, *What

Happened*, Scott McClellan discusses a Bush Blair meeting in February of 2001 held at Camp

David, and implied that it was Bush who actually followed Blair's lead in formulating a policy to

deal with Saddam Hussein. He refers to Bush, "echoing Blair" about restructuring the sanctions on

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[261] Tony Blair, Speech: *"Doctrine of the International Community"*
http://collections.europarchive.org/tna/20040315011120/http://pm.gov.uk/output/Page1297.asp accessed 3/17/09

[262] James Naughtie, *The Accidental American*: *Tony Blair and the Presidency*, (New York: Public Affairs), 2004, 231. (Note: Blair himself explains this sense of obligation to others in a forward to the book, *Reclaiming the Ground: Christianity and Socialism* in which he writes that Christianity "is about compassion, the recognition that we will have to and should pay a price to help those less fortunate than ourselves . . . as a means of allowing them to achieve a better life for themselves. . . A return to what we are really about, what we believe in would be a healthy journey for our country as well as the Labour Party. It would also help us comprehend more fully the importance of personal responsibility in our lives and its relationship to society as a whole." Quoted in: *Tony Blair, In His Own Words*, Paul Richards, ed.)

[263] Peter Riddell, *Hug Them Close*, 61.

[264] Ibid., 4.

Iraq.[265] The dangers of weapons of mass destruction had regularly appeared in Blair's public statements going back to 1997. The language he used in February and March of 2003 was strikingly similar to what he had been saying more than five years earlier.[266] Blair himself addressed this issue saying, "People say you are doing this because the Americans are telling you to do it. I keep telling them that it's worse than that. I believe in it." [267]

Following the United States into war was not a mandated response simply because Britain was a close ally. Today's Britain is much more integrated into the European economy and most Britons identify more closely with Europe than with the United States.[268] Blair would have been acting in accordance with prevailing public opinion in Britain had he chosen to withhold British troops from the conflict. Further proof that Blair was not coerced into joining the coalition is that the Prime Minister chose to participate in the war in Iraq even though President Bush had clearly expressed his concern for the political price Blair might pay at home. According to Bob Woodward, "Blair was apparently given the explicit option of being involved only in an Iraqi 'second wave' as 'peacekeepers'. The Prime Minister declined the offer, avowing that he 'absolutely believed' in the invasion."[269] In his speech to the Foreign Office Conference on January 7, 2003 Blair supplied further credence to the depth of his personal commitment by saying, "The price of British influence is not as some would have it, that we have, obediently to do what the U.S. asks. I would never commit British troops to a war I

[265] Scott McClellan, *What Happened: Inside the Bush White House and Washington's Culture of Deception,* (New York: Public Affairs), 2008, 94.

[266] Peter Riddell, *Hug Them Close*, 4.

[267] Peter Riddell, "How the Road to War began Six Years Ago", quoting Tony Blair, "Remarks made to the Parliamentary Labour Party," (February, 2003), *Times Online* 30 September 2003, http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/article1164367.ece?token=null&offset=0&page=1, accessed 3/16/09.

[268] John Dumbrell, "Working with Allies: The United States, the United Kingdom, and the War on Terror", *Politics and Policy*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (2006): 452.

[269] Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, (New York: Simon & Shuster, 2004) 338.

thought was wrong or unnecessary."[270] Blair was absolutely unequivocal in his belief in the

rightness of his decisions based on opinions he had held for several years and he was not about to

give in to outside pressure.

Blair's abhorrence of Saddam Hussein's regime predated the George W. Bush's

presidency by several years. By 1997, the Prime Minister had thrown down the gauntlet,

challenging the Iraqi leader to cooperate with United Nations weapons inspectors, arguing for

stronger sanctions if Saddam failed to comply.   In a speech given at the Clinton White House in

February of 1998, he clearly expressed his convictions, "We have stood together before in the

face of tyranny. Today, in the face of Saddam Hussein, we must stand together once more. We

want a diplomatic solution to the crisis. But the success or failure of diplomacy rests on Saddam.

If he fails to respond, then he knows that the threat of force is there, and it is real."[271]   Based on

this rhetoric, it is evident that Blair needed little convincing to support action against Iraq if

Saddam continued to subvert United Nations directives. His policy on this issue was clearly

spelled out even before Bush came into the White House, and he continued to support the use of

force in 2003, even though the United States was prepared to understand if Britain did not

actively participate in the war.[272]

Blair's decision to participate in the war was based in part on his very concise notion of

when military intervention in another country's internal affairs might be appropriate. In the

speech he gave to the Economics Club in Chicago in April of 1999, Blair spelled out the criteria

he believed must be met before such intervention would be acceptable and appropriate: "*First*,

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[270] Tony Blair, "Speech to the Foreign Office," (January 7, 2003),
 http://collections.europarchive.org/tna/20040315011120/http://pm.gov.uk/output/Page1765.asp , accessed 3/1/09.
[271] Tony Blair, "Arrival ceremony at the White House", 3/1/09.
[272] Stephen Benedict Dyson. "Personality and Foreign Policy: Tony Blair's Iraq Decision", *Foreign Policy Analysis*, Vol. 2, (2006):303.

are we sure of our case? . . . *Second*, have we exhausted all diplomatic options? . . . *Third*, on the basis of a practical assessment of the situation, are there military operations we can sensibly and prudently undertake? *Fourth*, are we prepared for the long term? . . . And *finally*, do we have national interests involved?"[273] Included as part of Blair's doctrine of International Community, this policy was developed without input from either the Clinton or Bush administration. In fact, Blair was quite comfortable with formulating his own foreign policy with little assistance from anyone but his closest aides.[274] The guiding principles for determining the necessity of intervention established in the Chicago speech were destined to become a course of action a few years later when, after a failure to obtain a further United Nations resolution to mandate the use of force in Iraq, Foreign Secretary Jack Straw explained to the House of Commons on March 17, 2003, "It was my belief up to about a week ago that we were close to achieving the consensus that we sought on the further resolution. Sadly, one country then ensured that the Security Council could not act. . . . I deeply regret that France has put a Security Council consensus beyond reach.[275] Believing now, that all diplomatic options had been exhausted, and the other criteria spelled out in his Chicago speech for intervention had been met, Blair decided that Britain would join the Americans in the invasion of Iraq. He discussed the reasons behind his decision in the House of Commons on March 20, 2003:

> To stand British troops down now and turn back, or to hold firm to the course that we have set. I believe passionately that we must hold firm to that course. . . . So why does it matter so much?. Because the outcome of this issue will now determine more than the fate of the Iraqi regime and more than the future
> of the Iraqi people who have been brutalized by Saddam for so long . . .It will determine the way in which Britain and the world confront the central security threat of the 21st century, the development of the United Nations, the relationship between Europe and the

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[273] Tony Blair, "Speech to Chicago Economics Club"

[274] Con Coughlin, *American Ally: Tony Blair and the War on Terror*, (New York: Harper Collins), 2006, 22.

[275] Hansard House of Commons Debate, Statement by Jack Straw, Foreign Secretary, on Iraq, 17 March 2003, Vol. 401 c. 703-23.

United States, the relations within the European Union and the way in which the United States engages with the rest of the world. . . . It will determine the pattern of international politics for the next generation."[276]

In his address to the nation on that same day, Blair told the British people that the threat posed by Iraq was very real and of a different nature than any threat that Britain had faced in the past. He explained,

> Tonight, British servicemen and women are engaged from air, land and sea. Their mission: to remove Saddam Hussein from power, and disarm Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction . . .This new world faces a new threat: of disorder and chaos born either of brutal states like Iraq, armed with weapons of mass destruction; or of extreme terrorist groups. . . My fear, deeply held, based in part on the intelligences that I see, is that these threats come together and deliver catastrophe to our country and world.[277]

That Blair acted independently of American influence or pressure to participate in the war in Iraq, can be reasonably posited. In fact, if one takes Blair at his word, one must accept that not only did he believe in this cause, but that he believed that all possible steps had been taken to avoid conflict. What is more difficult to ascertain, however, is *why* Blair appears to have been "hardwired" to respond in such a "risky" fashion, placing his political career and his reputation on the line.   His inclination to act in this fashion was evident as early as 1994 when as the new Labour leader he gave his now famous address to the party in Blackpool. According to the *Guardian*, "He could have played it safe, striking balances, fudging differences, and pandering to household gods . . . There were moments when Mr. Blair defied his audience to deny or disown him."[278]   One very interesting answer to why Blair held such firm beliefs regarding his moral convictions has been suggested by Stephen Benedict Dyson, a professor of

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[276] Hansard House of Commons Debate on a Motion to approve the actions of Her Majesty's Government in Iraq, March 18, 2003, Vol. 401 c 760-761.

[277] Tony Blair , "Prime Minister's Address to the Nation" (speech given on 20 March 2003), http://collections.europarchive.org/tna/20040315011120/http://pm.gov.uk/output/Page3327.asp, accessed 3/1/09.

[278] *Gaurdian*.co.uk, Tuesday 4 October 1994, http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/1994/oct/o4/speeches.comment , accessed 1/8/2009.

Political Science at Wabash University. According to Dyson, Blair's personality played a

substantial role in shaping the process and outcome of British decision making in the Iraq war.

To substantiate this claim, using responses to foreign policy questions found in *Hansard's*

Parliamentary Debates from 1945 to 2004, Dyson was able to evaluate the responses of all

Prime Ministers since 1945. Blair's scores were compared to all other Prime Ministers who held

office in that time frame. The use of a single reference source (*Hansard's*) eliminated differential

audience effects which might have biased results. In Blair's case, Dyson collected and analyzed

the Prime Minister's responses to parliamentary questions that focused on foreign policy from

his first day in office, May 5, 1997 to March 19, 2003 (the beginning of the Iraq War). Dyson

also explains that, since much of this material was spontaneous, it reduced the risk that

evaluation of prepared material might skew the outcome of the analysis. Using *Hermann's*

Leadership Trait analysis,[279] Dyson then analyzed 140,000 + words spoken by the Prime

Minister (a far larger sampling than the suggested minimum 5,000 words).   This study measured

seven distinct personality traits including: 1) Belief in ability to control events, i.e. the

individual's perception of the world as an environment that the leader can influence, 2)

Conceptual complexity, i.e. the capability of discerning different dimensions of the environment

when describing actors, places, ideas, and situations, 3) Distrust of others, 4) In-group bias, i.e.

the perception of one's group as holding a central role, accompanied by a strong sense of

national identity and honor, 5) Need for power, 6) Self-confidence and, 7) Task orientation, i.e.

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[279] Steven Benedict Dyson, "Personality and Foreign Policy", 291 (Note: The textual analysis software "Profiler Plus", developed in conjunction with Margaret Hermann's technique is used to analyze content of the verbal output of the individuals being analyzed. The assumption is made that the frequency of word usage can be used to measure the word's saliency to the individual. The procedure consists of the identification of opportunities within the evaluated text for exhibiting verbal use associated with the trait variables. A ratio "trait score" of 1 -100 is then calculated for the person evaluated. Dyson, "*Prime Minister and Core Executive in British Foreign Policy: Process Outcome and Quality of Decision"* Doctoral Dissertation, Washington State University Department of Political Science, December 2004) 48-50 online:
http://research.wsulibs.wsu.edu:8443/dspace/bitstream/2376/266/l/s_dyson_112304.pdf , accessed 3/13/07.

relative focus on problem solving versus maintenance of relationship with others.   Blair's scores

were in excess of two standard deviations from the mean in three of the seven areas when

compared against fifty-one political leaders and the twelve aforementioned British Prime

Ministers. Blair scored higher than the norm in two areas: 1) that of belief in ability to control

events, and 2) the need for power. He scored lower than the norm on the third trait which was

"conceptual complexity."[280]

The manifestation of Blair's high score in the category identified as 'belief in ability to

control events' was his conviction that he could exercise considerable control over the political

environment. Dyson concluded that this belief in his ability to control events led Blair to fashion

a proactive foreign policy orientation based on interventionist principles. [281]   Confirming this

result, Eoin O'Malley contends, Blair had an "almost mystical faith in his powers of

persuasion"[282]

Dyson indicates that Blair's lower conceptual complexity explains his penchant for

framing issues in black and white, or as good and evil. His tendency to do this caused Blair to

view the situation in Iraq as a moral issue, an opinion he comfortably shared with his American

counterpart, George W. Bush. This may go some way toward explaining the close relationship

that developed between the two men. Bush's categorization of Iraq and the al-Qaeda terrorists as

part of the Axis of Evil,   while perhaps a bit overdramatic for Blair's more reserved British

personality, essentially confirmed his own assessment about the potential risk they represented.

Coughlin concurs that, "Blair was driven by his personal conviction that there was moral

justification for taking a firm stand against those who desired to do harm in pursuit of their own

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[280] Steven Benedict Dyson, "Personality and Foreign Policy",, 294.

[281] Ibid.

[282] Eoin O'Malley, "Setting Choices, Controlling Outcomes: The Operation of Prime Ministerial Influence and the UK's Decision to Invade Iraq," *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 9, No. 1: 10.

political and nationalistic goals." [283]   As a result, many of Blair's public pronouncements on the

topic of Iraq included a recitation of Saddam's atrocities inflicted on his own people. For

example, in his Chicago Speech, he denounced Saddam for waging a vicious campaign against

sections of his own community, reducing the country to poverty and leaving political life there

"stultified through fear."[284]

Dyson's findings that Blair demonstrated an above average need for power suggested

that this personality trait, "disposed him to concentrate decision making within small groups of

like-minded, hand-picked advisers [which] insulated the decision making process from the full

range of viewpoints and debate within the cabinet and the Foreign office." [285]   According to

Riddell, one former senior civil servant indicated that Blair would rather have liked to have been

a president, one who could remain above the legislative battles, while at the same time being a

major figure on the world stage.[286] However, accepting that this was not possible, Blair made

every effort to insure he was able to maintain a desired level of power over his "inner circle."

John Rentoul recounts that one of Blair's close personal advisors, Philip Gould, indicated that the

Prime Minister's preferred management style was to adopt a "unitary command structure" which

others likened to "Napoleonic" control.[287]   Peter Stothard, who shadowed Blair for thirty days in

2003, noted that Blair was constantly surrounded by this special team of players who shared an

outlook similar to Blair's, and with whom most major decisions about the Iraq war were made.[288]

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[283] Con Coughlin, *American Ally*, 42.

[284] Tony Blair, Speech to the Economics Club of Chicago.

[285] Stephen Benedict Dyson, "Personality and Foreign Policy", 303-304.

[286] Peter Riddell, *Hug Them Close: Blair, Clinton, Bush and the "Special Relationship'*, (London: Politico's), 2004, 9.

[287] John Rentoul, "*Tony Blair, Prime Minister*", 544.

[288] Peter Stothard, *Thirty Days: An Inside Account of Tony Blair at War*. (New York: Harper Collins, 2003), 98.

According to Eoin O'Malley, working with a small group gave Blair the opportunity to establish unilaterally policies to deal with the Iraq situation by defining the alternatives from which others in the policy-making process had to choose. However, when Blair found he needed a broader base of support for sending troops to Iraq he utilized yet another strategy frequently adopted by those with a higher need for power, that of manipulation of information to achieve a desired result. In order to acquire the needed votes in the House of Commons and to win over the British public, O'Malley asserts Blair released three carefully selected information dossiers. The first dossier released on September 24, 2002 detailed intelligence information on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. Saddam's purported human rights abuses were the subject of the second dossier released on December 2, 2002. The third dossier, released January 30, 2003 explored the dangers of failure to respond to Saddam's crimes. [289] This strategic release of information was a highly successful maneuver which resulted in swaying public opinion and giving Blair the votes he needed in the House of Commons to approve the commitment of British troops to the Iraq War.

Summary

Blair's decision to involve Britain in the war in Iraq was the product of several motivating factors that included the partitioning of responsibilities between himself and Gordon Brown, the faith-based belief that defeating Saddam was the morally right thing to do, and the fact that Blair's personality type predisposed him to make this decision. The arrangement arrived at between Blair and Brown that determined how the Labour government would function effectively prevented Blair from any significant involvement in domestic affairs without adversarial interference from Brown. Brown, however, left foreign policy in Blair's hands, and

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[289] Eoin O'Malley, "Setting Choices, Controlling Outcomes", 12.

it was in this area that Blair would prove that he could make a difference. Dyson indicates that

Blair's personality type predisposed him to have a need for power and a tendency to frame issues

in black and white. These traits meshed nicely with Blair's religious and ethical beliefs, that

good and evil existed and that one had a duty to fight evil for the benefit of the world

community. Blair has proven through his efforts to solve the problem of ethnic cleansing in

Sierra Leone, Kosovo, and Iraq to resolve religious conflict in Ireland and Palestine that he is by

nature and by faith a crusader who believes he must actively seek to right wrongs and attempt to

make the world a better place.

CHAPTER 7

BRITAIN'S "MANIFEST DESTINY"

Britain – International Power and the Road to War

In 1997 Blair told the people of Manchester, "Century upon century it has been the destiny

of Britain to lead other nations. That should not be a destiny that is part of our history. It should

be part of our future. We are a leader of nations or nothing."[290] Blair began expressing his

perception of Britain's role in international affairs shortly after he became Prime Minister when he

explained in his 1997 Speech at the Lord Mayor's Banquet, "By virtue of our geography, our

history and the strengths of our people, Britain is a global player."[291]   In this same speech Blair

described Britain, not as a superpower, but as pivotal power, positioned at the center of alliances

and international politics. "We can make the British presence in the world felt. With our historic

alliances, we can be pivotal. We can be powerful in our influence - a nation to whom others

listen."[292] In his first major foreign policy statement Blair clarified his belief that Britain was a

global player because of its position as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, its role in

the Commonwealth, and its membership in G8.[293] It is obvious that Blair felt very strongly about

Britain's role as a world power as he did not reserve his opinions solely for domestic audiences,

but was more than willing to broadcast his view about Britain's global status to the world as well.

In his February 6, 1998 speech to the United States State Department, Blair explained, "We are

never going to be as powerful, certainly in military terms as we once were. What we can be is a

shining example to all of what a modern state should aspire to. . . A new more confident Britain

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[290] Tony Blair (speech at Bridgewater Hall, Manchester, UK 21 April 1997) as quoted in: John Kampfner, *Blair's Wars*, (London: The Free Press, 2003), 3.

[291] Tony Blair,   'Speech at Lord Mayor's Banquet".

[292] Ibid.

[293] Kirsty Hughes and Edward Smith, "New Labour-New Europe?", *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-), Vol. 74. No. 1, (Jan. 1998), 95.

will play our part, along with our allies, friends, and partners in the USA, in shaping a better world"[294] Robin Cook explains the reasoning behind Blair's belief in the importance of maintaining Britain's image as a world power, "Only for Britain was European entry not accompanied by a sense of national regeneration, but, on the contrary, angst over our declining international power. In that context, the adventure in Iraq was an immense historic anachronism. It encouraged the delusion that Britain had recaptured a global role . . ."[295]

Lieutenant Colonel James K. Wither, Deputy Director of the Executive Program in International and Security Affairs at the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, contended that Blair's identification of Britain as a pivotal power was an attempt by the Prime Minister to define the essence of the country's post-imperial role.[296] Blair harbored a pragmatic concern that, without a certain level of influence, Britain would not be able to protect its own interests adequately, let alone be a force for good in the world. Consequently, although almost all his prior political experience had been in the domestic arena, upon becoming Prime Minister, Blair proved himself to be a quick study in foreign and military affairs.[297] He soon saw the wisdom of Margaret Thatcher's advice, becoming convinced that in order to maximize Britain's cachet as a first tier nation, a very close relationship with the world's sole remaining superpower was essential. John Dumbrell explains however, that Blair's desire to forge this path was not unique, British policy makers have traditionally attempted to improve British international prestige and influence by cultivating a "special closeness" with the United States, nurtured by the combination of defense, intelligence, cultural and linguistic ties, producing a unique relationship between the

[294] Tony Blair, (Speech to the U.S. State Department in Washington, D.C. 6 February 1998) http://collections.europarchive.org/tna/20040315011120/http://pm.gov.uk/output/Page1155.asp, accessed 3/1/09.
[295] Robin Cook, *The Point of Departure*, (New York: Simon & Schuster), 2003, 132.
[296] James K. Wither, "British Bulldog or Bush's Poodle? Anglo-American Relations and the Iraq War," *Parameters,* 33, No. 4, (Winter, 2003-04): 71. (Note: James K. Wither is a serving officer in the British Army presently on secondment from the UK Ministry of Defence.)
[297] Con Coughlin, *American Ally: Tony Blair and the War on Terror*, (New York: Harper Collins), 2006, 26.

two countries.[298] Dumbrell goes on to say that, "proximity to power allows Britain to punch above its international weight."[299]

Blair's establishment of a strong bond with Bill Clinton and his concerted efforts to kindle a similar friendship with Bush simply followed a long established protocol of cultivating a positive working relationship with the United States in hopes of affirming Britain's place as a world power. Blair's "special relationship" with both leaders placed him directly at the center of international diplomacy when the war on terror escalated after September 11th. Robin Cook contends, "the real mortar in the relationship is power. . . .He is programmed to respect power not to rebel against it."[300] Blair saw the opportunity to pursue the redefinition of Britain's international role after the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, by becoming a leader in Europe and the primary ally of the United States in the fight against terrorism.[301] But the Prime Minister had to go to work. Britain, under Blair's leadership, had to be as active in pursuing a new United Nations resolution as it wanted the United States to be. For the balance of 2002 Blair "left no stone unturned in his public campaign to build support - both domestically and globally - for a new UN resolution demanding the . . . return of a weapons inspectorate to Iraq.[302] Despite the exhausting schedule he was forced to keep, Blair believed that the upside of assuming this responsibility was that Britain could be a dominant force for good, promoting values such as those he espoused in his Chicago speech on the Doctrine of International Community. To Blair's credit, he accomplished far more in the diplomatic arena than any American could have done under the circumstances. Yet this activity cost him dearly in the European Union where some European leaders worried that

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[298] John Dumbrell, "Working with Allies: The United States, the United Kingdom, and the War on Terror," *Politics and Policy*, 34, No. 2 (2006): 457.

[299] Ibid., 462.

[300] Robin Cook, *The Point of Departure*, 104.

[301] Inderjeet Parmar, "I'm Proud of the British Empire: Why Tony Blair Backs George W. Bush", *The Political Quarterly*, 76, No. 2, (April, 2005): 219.

[302] David Coates, and Joel Krieger*, Blair's War*, (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2004), 52.

Blair was more the missionary for the United States than a messenger for Europe.[303] At home he was caricatured as "Bush's poodle" which, while it may have been disheartening, did not cause Blair to alter his direction or modify his convictions about the rightness of his task.

As a leader who took his international responsibilities seriously, Blair genuinely believed that as a powerfully ally, Britain would be in a better position to convince the Americans to work within the international framework via the United Nations especially with respect to Iraq. There is no doubt that Britain enjoyed a far more favorable place in the American hierarchy of allies than did any other nation; this, coupled with the close military ties between the two nations and a powerful personal connection between Blair and Bush, placed Britain in a favorable position when the time came to persuade the Bush Administration to seek a United Nations mandate before using force against Saddam. In this instance, Blair's Britain was able to "punch above its' weight." This effort proved to be successful, at least until decisions made in the United Nations Security Council rendered a United Nations mandate for war in Iraq impossible. At this point, Blair was to learn that power also had its price.

In retrospect, it is difficult to determine to what extent the need to be recognized as a significant world power was a factor in the Prime Minister's decision to go to war in Iraq. It is conceivable that based on Blair's perception of Britain's role as a world leader, he believed that going to war was Britain's duty. As he stated in the fourth of his "guiding light" principles mentioned in his speech at the Lord Mayor's Banquet, "We use power and influence for a purpose: for the values and aims we believe in. Britain must be a key player in transnational issues: the environment, drugs, terrorism, crime, human rights and development. Human rights may sometimes seem an abstraction in the comfort of the West, but when they are ignored human

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[303] Peter Riddell, *Hug Them Close: Blair, Clinton, Bush and the 'Special Relationship',* (London: Politico's), 2004, 163.

misery and political instability all too easily follow."[304] Consequently, believing it was Britain's

duty to fight to end Saddam's human rights abuses, and as a man of his word, Blair honored his

commitment to support his American allies as they went to war. As late as September, 2006 Blair

continued to hold fast to the correctness of his decision. At the Labour Party Conference Blair told

party members, "Yes, it's hard sometimes to be America's strongest ally. . .At the moment I know

people only see the price of these alliances. Give them up and the cost in terms of power, weight

and influence for Britain would be infinitely greater."[305]

<center>Avoidance of Unilateralist Agenda</center>

In a 1999 speech given at the Ronald Regan Presidential Library, George W. Bush

established his plan for "American Internationalism" which stressed that American interests would

supersede international agreements in setting the framework for United States agreements made

with other countries. Bush clearly stated he would never put American troops under United

Nations command. He envisioned the United Nations role as being that of peacekeeping, weapons

inspections and providing humanitarian assistance where needed. Secretary of State, Condoleezza

Rice, further explained American policy as proceeding "from the firm ground of the national

interest, not from the interest of an illusory international community." [306]

Tony Blair harbored a very valid concern, that left to its own devices, the United States

might not only become more isolationist in its approach to foreign policy, but that when it did

choose to involve itself in foreign affairs, it would do so unilaterally, its leaders believing that

acting in concert with other allies was at best an awkward activity and at worst could lead to the

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[304] Tony Blair, Speech at the Lord Mayor's Banquet.

[305] Jennifer Quinn, "Blair Says Strong Ties with U.S. Crucial" *ABC News/Associated Press*, 26 September 2006, http://www.netscape.com/viewstory/2006/09/26/blair-says-strong-ties-with-us-crucial/?url., accessed 2/20/07.

[306] Condoleezza Rice, "Promoting National Interests," *Foreign Affairs*, 79, No. 1 (January/February 2000): 62.

sort of mild form of chaos they experienced when attempting to work with the Europeans in Kosovo.[307] Blair's fear of American unilateralist tendencies reached new heights in the wake of the terrorist attacks on September 11th, when the attitudes of even the more traditionally liberal segments of American society underwent a radical change, paving the way for the implementation of a "more robust, unilateral, pre-emptive and preventive, more lethal foreign military strategy."[308] John Dumbrell suggests that Blair might have believed in the "Greeks and Romans logic that America was most dangerous and irresponsible when denied the civilizing wisdom of its British ally."[309]

Blair, himself profoundly affected by the tragedy of September 11, was aware of this fundamental change in the direction of American Foreign policy. Without hesitation he sought to insinuate himself, and Great Britain, into the American decision making process in hopes of ameliorating the effects of foreign policy done "cowboy" style. Frequently criticized for his attempt to involve himself into American affairs, when Blair's colleagues told him that his involvement in Washington's politics did nothing to subvert American unilateralism he countered that, without him, the Bush doctrine would have been, "cruder, more dangerous, and much more unpalatable to those who were now telling him he should never have become involved as a partner."[310] A United States left completely alone and developing policy without guidance from a trusted ally with an international perspective, such as Britain, could be a dangerous loose cannon, one with the power to wreak havoc on a world powerless to defend itself from a hegemonic

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[307] Peter Riddell, *Hug Them Close*, 112. (According to Riddell, many Pentagon officials believed that working the European allies imposed unacceptable political constraints when the U.S. was perfectly capable of performing such operations on its own.)

[308] Inderjeet Parmar, "I'm Proud of the British Empire", 218.

[309] Terrence Casey, Ed. *The Blair Legacy*, John Dumbrell, "US-UK Relations: Structure, Agency and the Special relationship", 277.

[310] James Naughtie, *The Accidental American: Tony Blair and the Presidency*, (New York: Public Affairs), 2004, 17.

superpower. Robin Cook alludes to this fear in his journal entry of 27 February, 2003 in which states, "I share the deep concerns about how quickly the United States has moved from building a global coalition against terror to reverting to a unilateralist foreign policy." [311] Blair believed that the preservation of the special relationship was a necessary response to US unilateralism in order to keep America engaged with the international community and international institutions.[312] The risks of a unilateral American action outweighed the risks of going to war in spite of the potential for domestic and European hostility. [313] Blair frequently referred to six key points prior to making his decision to commit to the war in Iraq. The last of these points being, "It would be more damaging to long-term world peace and security if the Americans alone defeated Saddam Hussein than if they had international support to do so."[314]

Summary

Blair believed that Britain was destined to play a larger role in world affairs than was warranted based on its size and population. He clearly envisioned himself as more than the leader of a small island nation, but as a world leader. As Robin Cook suggested, Blair believed that Britain's involvement in Iraq enhanced its status on the world stage. James K. Wither offers a slightly different view, claiming that Blair was actually seeking to redefine Britain's post imperial role and that a close relationship with the U.S. was essential for doing this.

While Blair may have been seeking to recast Britain's role in international relations, he was equally concerned about exercising, if possible, some control over what role the U.S. would

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[311] Robin Cook, *The Point of Departure*, p. 112.

[312] Christopher Bluth, "Iraq: Blair's Mission Impossible: A Rejoinder to Paul Hoggett", *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 7, No. 4, (Nov., 2005): 599.

[313] Peter Riddell, *Hug Them Close*, 18.

[314] Peter Stothard, *Thirty Days: An Inside Account of Tony Blair at War*, (New York: Harper Collins), 2003, 87.

chose to play in a post 9/11 world. He worried that without the guidance of Britain as a close friend and ally, the U.S. would revert to a comfortable level of isolationism leaving the Americans free to act out unilaterally against perceived enemies. Blair hoped to keep the U.S. engaged in the international community fearing the consequences of the American potential to become a rogue super power if left without a strong ally to mitigate this tendency. Blair's desire to see Britain punch above its weight on the world stage was complimented by his efforts to prevent the U.S. from operating as a hegemonic power. However, by acting on this desire Blair drew Britain inextricably into the war in Iraq.

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CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

Few people would argue that Blair, regardless of how strongly he felt about Iraq's failure
to comply with United Nations directives, would have considered, even remotely, the unilateral use
of force. So it must be said that Bush's decision to intervene in Iraq had a significant impact on
Blair's choices. However, this does not mean that Bush pressured Blair into making the decision
to go to war. Blair involved Britain in the Iraq war on his own volition and not simply out of
some misguided sense of obligation to the United States. While it might assuage the sensibilities
of some to believe that Blair was bullied into joining the war effort, available documentation of
Blair's speeches, press conferences, etc. does not support this assumption. Blair's decision was
based on a number of factors, none of which were substantial enough on their own to have been
the sole motivator for his actions but, taken together, they help make sense out of a choice that
would prove to be one of the most expensive made by Blair in his entire political career.

Blair's vision of Britain as a "pivotal" power drew him inexorably to the world stage.
He had a very strong sense of his country's destiny and had little desire to see Great Britain
identified as second rate power, or as just another cog in the European wheel. His keen
assessment of the Iraq situation in the weeks leading up to the decision to go to war allowed
Blair to see the possibility for Britain to play above its weight on the international scene. This
response should not be surprising as Blair offered the rationale for his reasoning years earlier in
the speech he made in April of 1995 commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the end of WWII
in which he reminded his fellow MP's of the heady feeling that accompanies exercising the

power to fight evil and affect change:

> So what, at this distance of half a century, are the lessons of the war that we can learn? We learn about pride in our country--there are few nations, if any, that can claim without exaggeration to have helped save the world from tyranny. We learn about the strength of freedom and democracy as motivators of the human soul.[315]

Pursuit of an influential place in the international arena may have been a laudable activity, however, Blair's New Labour party had an ambitious domestic agenda that was not yet fully implemented in 2003 and still required a great deal of attention. The activities undertaken during his years in parliament suggest that, under normal circumstances, Blair would have made domestic policy his first priority. However, Blair's problematic relationship with Gordon Brown altered what would have been the usual scheme of things. Put simply, Gordon Brown aspired to be Prime Minister and when Tony Blair "usurped" that position, the previously friendly relationship that had existed between the two men since their first year in parliament, was permanently altered. While still in opposition, Brown exercised broad control over the party's purse strings and its economic policy, and according to Blair economic advisor Derek Scott, "Once in Government, Gordon Brown still wanted to run everything on the domestic front."[316] Scott suggests that Blair may have allowed this as a matter of personal style because Blair liked to "smooth away animosities if at all possible."[317] Another theory as to why Brown was granted such a broad mandate on the domestic front is that Blair and Brown made a deal at the Granita Restaurant in 1994 in which Blair ceded control of domestic policy to Brown in exchange for Brown taking himself out of the running for

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[315] Tony Blair's speech to the House of Commons, Fiftieth Anniversary of the end of World War II, .April 25, 1995 Hansards, C. 668, http://www.publications.parliament.uk/cgi-bin/newhtml_hl?DB=semukparl&STEMMER=en&WORDS=tony%20blair&ALL=&ANY=&PHRASE=&CATEGORIES=&SIMPLE=&SPEAKER=Tony%20Blair&COLOUR=red&STYLE=s&ANCHOR=Debate-1_spnew14&URL=/pa/cm199495/cmhansrd/1995-04-25/Debate-1.html#Debate-1_spnew14 , accessed 2/29/09.

[316] Derek Scott, *Off Whitehall: A View from Downing Street by Tony Blair's Advisor*, (London: I.B. Taurus & Co. Ltd.), 2004, 19.

[317] Ibid.

Labour party leader. Regardless of how the division of influence came about, the fact remains that Gordon Brown assumed a far greater role in domestic policy formation and implementation than almost any previous Chancellor of the Exchequer. It was not in Blair's nature however, to surrender an opportunity to make a difference without having a contingency plan. Consequently, while Blair may have played a somewhat peripheral role in creating, or implementing, domestic policy, he faced little interference from Brown when formulating foreign policy. This coupled with the fact that, his involvement in foreign affairs served his need to be able to influence others propelled Blair into an active role in international affairs**.**

Blair's belief in community meant that he viewed violent acts perpetrated against one person or one country as an act committed against the community as a whole. His outrage over the September 11 bombings, expressed before Parliament on September 14, 2001, clearly illustrates this. He stated, "I thought it particularly important in view of the fact that these attacks were not just attacks upon people and buildings; nor even merely upon the United States of America; these were attacks on the basic democratic values in which we all believe so passionately and on the civilised world."[318]   Blair truly believed in the existence of a moral imperative that would allow for the use of intervention in cases of extreme necessity. Since his early days in parliament, Blair spoke out for the helpless victims of violence in Bosnia, Northern Ireland, and Iraq. It is not surprising then that he continued to speak out against oppression and acts of terrorism as Prime Minister. The actions of Saddam Hussein in Iraq met all the requisite qualifications to be singled out by Blair as a problem that should be addressed by the world community.

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[318] Tony Blair's Speech to the House of Commons concerning September 1l, September 14, 2001 Hansards, col. 604, http://www.publications.parliament.uk/cgi-bin/newhtml_hl?DB=semukparl&STEMMER=en&WORDS=tony%20blair&ALL=&ANY=&PHRASE=&CATEGORIES=&SIMPLE=&SPEAKER=Tony%20Blair&COLOUR=red&STYLE=s&ANCHOR=10914-01_spmin0&URL=/pa/cm200102/cmhansrd/vo010914/debtext/10914-01.htm#10914-01_spmin0 , accessed 3/1/09.

Blair's relationship with the United States, was in almost all ways, a positive one. He and Gordon Brown enjoyed their joint trips to the U.S. on fact-finding missions; and Blair learned a great deal about how he wanted to make changes in the Labour Party from Bill Clinton's new Democrats. As Prime Minister, he forged a close relationship with President Clinton and the two worked on crafting a settlement in Northern Ireland, resolving issues in Bosnia, and conducting joint air strikes in Iraq.[319] Blair was comfortable in his relationship with the United States to the extent that the change in leadership in the U.S., from a New Democrat to a neo con Republican, did not appreciably alter the nature of his association with the American government. With respect to most issues of foreign policy, Blair and Bush shared common goals. They also shared a belief in God and in the importance of faith in their daily lives. Having worked in tandem with leaders in the U.S. to fight terrorism over the years of his premiership, refusing to go to war in Iraq would have been at variance with everything that Blair believed about acting as part of a larger community.

Finally, it is important not to underestimate the role of faith in Blair's decisions. Blair factored his faith-based moral code into most major decisions he made. He was driven to do the right thing, even when the choice to do so could come at a significant cost to him personally. Blair was fully aware that his decision regarding Iraq was a risky one that could mean that he could lose what he had worked for so long to achieve, and yet he persevered in his commitment to the war. His beliefs compelled him to take the stance that he did. As Blair puts it, "Christianity is a very tough religion. . . . It places a duty, an imperative on us to reach our better self and to care about creating a better community to live in . . . There is right and wrong. There is good and bad."[320] Blair was certainly cognizant of the ramifications of his decision and he most certainly did not take

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[319] Bill Clinton, *My Life*, (New York: Vintage Books), 2004, 778.

[320] Paul Richards, ed., *Tony Blair: In His Own Words*, (London: Politico's), 2004, 70.

it lightly. But his was a decision in which faith was a definitive factor, borne out by the fact that he conferred with the Pope on this very issue before taking the final step of committing to war. It would have been far easier to do what was expedient and safe.

Most British subjects did not agree with Blair at the time he decided to go to war in Iraq, and few would change their opinions on this issue in the ensuing years. Going to war was indeed costly in terms of lives lost, and the impact of the war on the British economy. Blair's decision could have split the Labour Party, and it did cost him the allegiance of several in parliament whom he had counted as close friends. Many of these same individuals would be willing to explain to Blair exactly why his decision was not the right one; but few would question his motives or doubt that Blair believed his cause was just. Blair is by nature a crusader and, in Iraq, he truly believed he had found a just cause.

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