**The Collapse of the Foreign Policy**

These notes are taken from and in light of the Article of William Wallace the collapse of the foreign policy.

The author of the article analyzes the history of the British foreign policy during the modern period. Wallace speaks about the ups and downs of the foreign policy of Britain with the United states of America and the European Union.

British foreign policy has tried to punch above its weight for the past half- century, while balancing between different sets of international allegiances. For Winston Churchill, Britain could compensate for its loss of empire by playing a role in 'three circles': the British Commonwealth and Empire, as it still was, the transatlantic Anglo-Saxon partnership, and the links with our continental European neighbours. Later, as the Commonwealth connection shifted from apparent asset to apparent burden in the course of the of 1970’s…the preferred image shifted from three circles to two stepping-off points, the United States and western Europe, with Britain acting as the 'bridge' between them.

The British have tried to play major roles within three different circles which are the US, the European Union, and the commonwealth countries. But this strategy proved to be a failure and the British were obliged to let go of their ex-colonies (the commonwealth countries) as they became more of burden because of their economic and political problems.

Then Britain decided to shift form the three circles image to the idea of being a bridge; a bridge that links the United states and Europe. And the new question was how can Britain keep balance between its transatlantic partner and its continental neighbors. And where they successful in creating and maintaining the balance?

 Tony Blair has done more: Peter Riddell calculates that in the eight weeks after i i September 2001 Blair covered more than 40,000 miles, on 31 flights, with 54 meetings with foreign leaders.' And in support of this continued world role British troops have been more actively deployed abroad than those of any other European power-including France since the with- drawal from Algeria in I962.

Tony Blair was one of the British prime ministers who was working really hard to promote the Special relationship between the US and the UK. **The famous special relationship claimed to be between the UK and the US from the British side.**

Harold Macmillan proclaimed that the 'wind of change' was blowing within the Commonwealth, and attempted to take Britain closer to what he called 'the Common Market'; but the Pentagon's cancellation of Skybolt tripped him up, and he fell out of the European circle as he reached to hold on to the American. Harold Wilson maintained his balance astonishingly well in his first term as prime minister, declining to commit British troops to the mistaken US war in Vietnam without upsetting Washington too much, and renewing Britain's application to join the EEC. But in his second term, like James Callaghan after him, he was pulled back from closer cooperation within the European Community that Britain had joined by the divisions within his own party.

Britain wanted to maintain the balance when it comes to relations with the US and Europe, which was a difficult task to do. Most prime ministers have failed in their attempt to keep a good relation with the US to guarantee its world role.

The current prime minister, like Margaret Thatcher, has succeeded in putting Britain in the hearts of the American public, with his powerful articulation of the goals of western policy to American audiences. But this has not brought him the influence over US foreign policy for which he hoped.

The current prime minister, the author is referring to Tony Blair. Tony Blair was able to make the Americans appreciate the Brits actions towards the Americans (here we talk about the participation of the British along the Americans in the war on terror) but as a government he has never been able to change, alter, or even influence the policy making of the US. It seems that the bridge that the United Kingdom was assuring the role of was getting more powerful from one side and getting weaker from the other side (the continental relations).

In I997 it looked as if both ends of the bridge had collapsed. John Major's government had little credibility with the Clinton administration in Washington; other European governments had delayed the end-game of the negotiations for the Treaty of Amsterdam until after the British election, in the confident hope that the Conservatives would lose.

Britain has failed completely in being the bridge it wanted to be. it has never been able to influence the policy of the U.S.A and it did nothing but weaken their position within their continental neighbours.

On winning the election, New Labour reasserted the 'guiding light' principles of British foreign policy, as Tony Blair described them to his audience at the Lord Mayor's Banquet on io November 1997. British foreign policy, he argued, should aim to be

strong in Europe and strong with the US. There is no choice between the two. Stronger with one means stronger with the other. Our aim should be to deepen our relationship with the US at all levels. We are the bridge between the US and Europe. Let us use it.

The previous quote by tony Blair summarizes the Labor government’ s (his government) towards the transatlantic relationship. Blair was in favor of a stronger relationship with the US at what ever cost, even if it means losing their neighboring partners.

My contention is that the bridge has again collapsed, and that it cannot now be rebuilt. It cannot be rebuilt because the assumptions underlying the claim that Britain could wield exceptional influence in Washington were already weak, and have now been shown to be without foundation. Long-term trends, in world politics since the end of the Cold War and within American domestic politics, have left British governments without either levers of influence over US administrations or appeals to shared values that resonate with the US electorate.

According to the author the bridge between the US and Britain has collapsed and can not be rebuilt. The claims behind the bridge and special relations by the Britain do no longer exist. The British keep reminding themselves of the common History and common language they share with the US. They also claim that the US entered the second world war just to rescue its favorite partner the UK. During the cold war the two countries joined forces again to fight one enemy which the USSR. BUT ALL THOSE CLAIMS are now history, nothing more.

After two years in office, in his speech to the Lord Mayor's Banquet on 22 November I999, the prime minister chose a different image to describe Britain's claim to occupy a special position in world politics.

Nearly 40 years ago Dean Acheson's barb-that Britain had lost an Empire but not yet found a role-struck home ... I believe that search can now end. We have a new role ... not as a superpower but as a pivotal power, as a power that is at the crux of the alliances and international politics which shape the world and its future.

Two years after supporting the image of the bridge, Blair decided to draw another image to the British American, British European relations. Blair admitted the truth that is Britain is not superpower but still it is a PIVOTAL POWER which serves to guide international relations.

Blair quote gives the reader a sensation of

an image of British ministers and diplomats explaining European international politics to American leaders, and interpreting American foreign policy to European governments: Britain leading in Europe because of its close relationship with Washington, and influential in western multilateral consultations because of its active foreign policy towards the rest of the world

Even if Britain is claiming a pivotal role when it comes to its relations with the United states and Europe, reality is still far from what they were claiming. Britain may be in the heart of the Americans but they surely cannot influence the policy making of the US. The US also, does not need the interference of Britain to deal with the European Countries. When it comes to the European Union Britain is not a key player; Germany and France are, and those two do not appreciate " a privileged British position in the European Union.

Britain invested al efforts to strengthen its relations with the US. This was welcomed at the beginning by the British but later on people felt subordinate rather than equal and regarded the relation between the two countries as humiliating (we are talking about the Blair primer ship). Meanwhile

Meanwhile, the domestic base for foreign policy has grown more difficult. The absence of any attempt by the Labour government to persuade its public that Britain's commitment to the European Union is in the national interest has allowed the Eurosceptic press to entrench a sullen resistance to closer European integration, which threatens to make it impossible to win a referendum on the constitutional treaty, let alone one on joining the single currency. Yet at the same time the Iraq war and its aftermath, and the aggressive and anti-European nationalism of the Bush administration, have made British voters more sceptical about further subordination of British foreign policy to US-led objectives.

The British government sure did not make any effort to explain to the British people the importance of Britain joining the European union, that resulted in Eurosceptic attitudes. Tony Blair's foreign policies and the fact that he engaged in wars that are not British to start with just to associate himself with American president George W Bush made the Britons angry of the situation. they felt like the 51st state of the US being subordinate to the US policies and foreign objectives. the policies of Tony Blair Cause the labour party to lose the elections to the conservatives.

British foreign policy still displays the familiar ambivalence, still hesitates to accept that influence in Washington depends on the ability to build effective coalitions within Europe. The images of bridge and pivot, like that of the three circles before them, have partly been about the avoidance of full commitment to European cooperation, picturing Britain as between Europe and the United States.

One would ask the question why has Britain been persistent in associating itself with the US and not engaging fully with Europe?

The United Kingdom had the largest empire that ever existed on earth and losing the empire made the country lose the privileged position of world decision maker. The Uk passed the mantle to the US and aimed to use the shared values and history and enemy and so to remain in the circle of the world decision makers. Favoring the UK US relations means being second in the world. The British refused full engagement with the European Union because of the long history of mistrust and the fact that the British were not the founders of the European union (unlike Germany and France). After all it is better to be second in the world rather than third or forth in a continental Union.

That is why we have witnessed a hesitation in the British foreign policy. William Wallace the author of the article says that; if Britain wants really to have a say and influence the American government it has to deepen its relations with the European Union.

The End of Atlanticism

The concept of an Atlantic community based on shared values, and on shared resistance to a common threat, grew out of the Second World War and the subsequent division of Europe. It was always something of an illusion that Britain was uniquely placed within this community, with the exception of the geographical reality that as an offshore island it represented a base from which US aircraft and troops could be dispatched to resecure western Europe. The German-American relationship was just as central during the Cold War, and the Italian-American relationship had deep, albeit sometimes hidden, roots.

Britain has to realize that the special relations between the US and the UK is just an illusion. The US has as good relations with the other European countries as with the UK.

Britain nevertheless established, and struggled to maintain, a privileged position within NATO, underpinned by the continued deployment of British ships and troops around the world, and by special nuclear and intelligence ties to the United States.

Fifteen years after the Cold War ended, neither NATO as an organization, nor Europe as a region, is central to US security. The Bush administration would like to use NATO as a source of reinforcement for US operations elsewhere, as in Afghanistan and Iraq; but the absence of consultation over foreign policy or strategy-the atrophy of NATO as a political alliance involving serious political consultation-can only make consent more difficult to win.

NATO is an organization that Britain wanted to keep an influential position in. With the US involvement in many wars such as in Afghanistan and Iraq, the US wanted to use the NATO as reinforcement. The US however, could not get the consent of the other members of the NATO.

Several of the most severe crises in NATO's history have been over differences in handling the Middle East: in I956, I967, 1973, 1979-81 and again in 2002-3. That makes it peculiarly difficult to maintain the alliance under an American leadership which sees the 'Greater Middle East' as its primary theatre of operations.

The Middle east is central to the US foreign policy today. The US has kept control over things in the region which is not the same thing for other members of the NATO. the situation led to several crisis between members of the NATO

At the most general level, of course, European governments agree with Washington that the new wave of Islamic terrorism presents a common threat. Yet understandings of that threat, and of the appropriate range of responses to it, now differ widely.

When it comes to Muslims and struggle against "Islamic terrorism» The US and America do not share the same view. The sides agree that the new wave of they call Islamic extremism is threatening but the response to it differs

The gap in understanding is widest on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, on which the Bush administration- and the bulk of the American public-have accepted the continuing expansion of Israeli settlements, and do not see a long-term threat to Israel (or to the character and quality of Israel as a democratic society) in the costs of occupation and military domination.

But differences on the underlying causes of terrorism, on how to promote reform within Arab regimes, on relations with Iran and Saudi Arabia, run deep. West European states, with 12-I4 million Muslims among their populations, for whom the Arab and Muslim world begins some 15 kilometres from Gibraltar, or a ferry-ride from Brindisi and Syracuse, have legitimate differences of interest-as well as of perception-from the United States. It is sad that the estimated 5-6 million Muslims within the United States (with their origins in south-east and southern Asia as well as the Middle East) have not yet exercised their weight in the American domestic debate.

Israel is a red line for the Americans, they have to keep things under control in the middle east to keep the safety of Israel. Bush’ s agenda to democratize the middle eastern countries even by using force is not a vision that is shared by the European countries. The European countries believe in protecting their countries from terrorism without engaging in other countries’ affairs. Also, the European Muslim community is strong and has political rights unlike the Muslim community in the US.

NO Fence to sit on

The struggle against terrorism from within the Muslim world, and the parallel struggle to promote modernization within Arab societies without provoking revolution, are likely to remain dominant themes in global politics for the foreseeable future. This dual struggle is not one in which America and Europe will find it easy to stand shoulder to shoulder. The religious intensity with which American politicians and media talk of'Islamo-fascism' and their identification of a single global terrorist threat are not shared in Europe. Divergences in attitudes to oil consumption and energy conservation, and to the relevance of these issues to policy towards the Middle East, pull Europeans and Americans further apart. The transatlantic gap in understanding and analysis within the expert policy communities, and in the reporting and interpretation of events in the media, has become very wide.

Again, the European and Americans do not see things eye to eye when it comes to their relations to the middle east and the threat Islam or they call Islamo- fascism represents.

This is not an issue on which British political leaders can sit in the middle, for their public, and their interests, are firmly on the European side. Our prime minister hoped that his public support for the Bush administration's approach to Iraq would gain an American commitment to push forward with the 'Road Map', the path to a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He also hoped that it would gain Britain influence over the reconstruction of post- conflict Iraq and the management of relations with that country's neighbours and would ensure that these processes were handled within the framework of the UN.

when Blair involved the British army with Bush's wars, he did it in exchange for a British and a UN involvement in the management of the relation with middle east countries, and a promise by Bush to be part of reconstructing Iraq. The promise was never fulfilled.

Blair has failed, too, to shift American policy towards multilateral cooperation in general, and towards working through the UN in particular. This is not surprising; the sheer weight of American military power, and the absence of any coherent diplomatic counterweight, make the costs and delays of multi- lateral cooperation much more evident to Washington policy-makers than the benefits.

British hopes of acting as a durable bridge between institutionalized Europe and the United States necessarily rest on continuing American acceptance that closer cooperation among European states is in America's interest. That was, indeed, the settled assumption of every US administration from Truman to Clinton. President Kennedy's 'grand design' of I96I-3 looked for the creation of an Atlantic partnership, for which 'the first order of business is for our European friends to go forward in forming the more perfect union which will someday make this partnership possible'.8 President George Bush Senior, and his Secretary of State James Baker, reaffirmed their commitment to an enlarged partnership with a 'Europe whole and free' as they negotiated the reunification of Germany and the redefinition of NATO's role in a post-Cold War world. That commitment no longer holds in Washington: American scepticism aboutmultilateral institutions has not spared the EU. American conservatives now see closer cooperation among European states in foreign policy and defence as a threat to the United States' strategic interests, and seek to persuade Britain to disengage from such a continental commitment

**the last two highlighted paragraphs are subject of discussion during the next session.**