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The Anglo-American Special Relationship:
Antiquity or Destiny?

A Thesis in Political Science and Philosophy

by

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Abstract

As one of the predominant forces that has shaped the modern geopolitical landscape and international world order, the Anglo-American Special Relationship continues to be a unique multilateral partnership between the United States and United Kingdom to this day. There has been a certain degree of debate in the academic sphere and more broadly regarding the nature of the special relationship, including assertions that it is not truly ‘special,’ that it has outlived its practicality post-Cold War and post-World War II, or even that it is ‘dead’ and no longer exists. This raises several questions—does the Anglo-American special relationship exist? If so, what is its root cause that distinguishes it as ‘special’ and sets it apart from other U.S./U.K. ally relations? This thesis argues first, that the special relationship does in fact exist, and second, that its existence and longevity are ontologically grounded in classical liberal philosophy. As a result of common political philosophy that has influenced both states political institutions, norms, and foreign policy, the U.S. and U.K. as nation states are natural allies to one another. There are numerous factors which contribute to the ‘specialness’ of the special relationship, but its grounding in philosophy is the unifying component whose presence is necessary for the special relationship’s continued existence. A historical survey of U.S.-U.K. relations, analysis of public opinion polling, examination of United Nations General Assembly voting, and international relations theory are used to prove the special relationship’s existence. Following this, key texts in classical liberalism are discussed and distilled into a set of criteria by which the U.S. and U.K.’s political institutions, norms, and foreign policy are evaluated, showing the influence of classical liberalism on the two states. At that point, it will be manifestly evident that the depth and breadth of liberal philosophy is the ontological grounding of the special relationship, whose existence continues to influence political actors and the broader public globally.

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“An investment in knowledge pays the best interest.”
Benjamin Franklin

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I: Introduction

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the United States grew from a middling former British colony into a superpower. In the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union following the Cold War, the United States was the world's preeminent and sole hegemon. This period was marked by unparalleled cooperation between the United States and the United Kingdom following World War II, inspiring Prime Minister Winston Churchill to coin the term "special relationship" to describe the close and amicable ties between the two states. For decades afterward, and to this day, the leaders of the two nations have continued to invoke and praise this Anglo-American "special relationship." In both the rhetoric describing this bond and concrete entwinement between the two nations, the U.S. and U.K. have continued to elevate each other above their other allies. Still, some scholars cast doubts on the substance of this relationship, either asserting it to be mere diplomatic semantics or too asymmetrical to be of any real importance. This raises the question—does this "special relationship" between the U.S. and U.K. truly exist? If so, what has caused it to persist for nearly 70 years?

This thesis will examine these questions, first by reviewing pertinent scholarship and international relations theory on what constitutes a "special relationship" and how they can be distinguished from other multilateral partnerships. This will lay a theoretical framework with which to orient the discussion of the United States and the United Kingdom's relationship. It will also be used as a definition to compare this relationship against. In order to get a clearer picture of the U.S.-U.K. relationship, it will be analyzed in brief snapshots and time periods throughout the mid to late twentieth century and leading into the twenty-first, which will help to provide context on the relationship's substance. Public opinion polling will also be analyzed to supplement historical perspective on the special relationship with public perceptions. After this

point, once it has been established that the relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom is indeed “special” and should be distinguished from other international partnerships, this thesis will examine possible causes for the relationship’s inception and longevity. I will assert that the special relationship is a confluence of factors, but the fact that the United States and the United Kingdom have continued to remain steadfast allies despite oft-competing interests and turbulent periods owes itself primarily to a common root of shared classical liberal philosophy more than other factors. An analysis of several classical liberal thinkers will be distilled into eight key liberal values, which will aid in an appraisal of the U.S. and U.K.’s political institutions, norms, and foreign policy in order to show how the Special Relationship’s existence is ontologically grounded in classical liberalism.

II: Defining Special Relationships

In order to study the “special” relationship between the United States and United Kingdom, there first needs to be a baseline for what counts as special in interstate relations, especially in light of scholars who dispute that the U.S.-U.K. relationship is special at all or assert that it is “special no more” (Dickie 1994). While this term, first coined by Winston Churchill to describe the U.S.-U.K. relationship, was quite malleable and multipurpose, Sebastian Harnisch and other scholars have both conceptualized it further and in doing so identified other interstate relations that could be “special” (Harnisch 2017). Harnisch defines special relationships as “durable and exclusive bilateral relations between autonomous polities that are based on mutual expectations of preferential treatment by its members and outsiders and through the entanglement of some their (external) governance functions” (Harnisch 2017). Not only is there a mutual expectation of preferred treatment by the members of the relationship and

outsiders, but linkages between countries in such relations are expected to be so close that there is an entanglement of certain functions of governance themselves.

Building on this definition, Harnisch also outlines three analytical specifications to distinguish from other forms of international relations. The first of these is that these relations are intended to foster further integration or support development, and are often based on pre-existing collective identities (Krotz and Schild 2015). Second, there is a rhetoric of inclusion and exclusion that is used, with the members creating expectations and outlining a difference between themselves and other states outside the relationship (Mattern 2001). Finally, these relationships are a moderate form of hierarchal governance, where one of the partners substitutes certain governance functions of the other, lying somewhere between protectorates and security communities (Hobson and Sharman 2005; Lake 2009). Examples of “governance functions” are the defense of the nation or foreign policy more broadly, some of the primary duties of a state; therefore, special relationships can be expected to showcase entwinement and/or coordination of defense/foreign policy. Taken together, a clearer picture of what constitutes such a relationship begins to form, with member states fostering development or integration through a certain level of hierarchal substitution of governance and expectation of exclusion/preferential treatment. While the U.S.-U.K. relationship certainly would qualify as special under this framework as will be discussed later, Harnisch also identifies other examples of special relationships, including Italy and the Holy See, Russia and Belarus, and France and Germany (Harnisch 2017).

Several theories of international relations have varying explanations for the outcropping of such relationships. Realists argue that this temporary cooperative behavior occurs between self-interested states when less powerful states have no internal means to balance the power of a stronger opponent. Empirical studies suggest that these alliances are given special character by

their exceptional historical, ideational, cultural, and/or economic factors. However, since realism is based on the belief that states are rational actors, acting in self-interest to survive the status quo of an anarchic world order, it leaves little room for other analyses of the special relationship outside of stating that the U.S. and U.K. are two great powers in an asymmetrical alliance relationship for self-benefit.

Liberals suggest that shared long-term policy goals or shared ideological interests explain how short-term interests could be disregarded in favor of long-term goals. Liberalism also draws attention to the economic, ideological, and societal aspirations of intra-state actors, suggesting that states can be motivated to act in certain ways seeking to further these aspirations. Harnisch quotes Cronin, who believes the shared policy paradigm of neoliberalism reinvigorated the special relationship, and also created a self-reinforcing effect wherein both the institutions of the two states were molded to fit this shared goal and also substantial policy steps were taken by their leaders to do so.

Constructivists argue that special relationships emanate from a continual process of self-identification, wherein one or both states create “specialness” of a relationship by continually distinguishing themselves from outsider states in relation to the other state (Harnisch 2017). In particular, the constructivist viewpoint is a direct rebuttal to some critics who assert that the relationship is vacuous or “dress[ed] up” to be more than simple self-interest into something it is not (Beloff 1966), for constructivists believe that referring to something gives it its own kind of substance and reality. Rather than looking at special relationships as interest based (i.e., serving monetary or diplomatic ends), constructivism places an emphasis on an identity-based analysis. Looking at the U.S.-U.K. special relationship, the United States’ identity as a former British colony lays the groundwork for analyzing the relationship. Harnisch notes that in “post-colonial

special relationships of Spain, Great Britain and France, the common historical bonds and a shared familial identity of a ‘special relationship’ explain why these countries grant trade and other concessions to their former colonies to the detriment of their material interests” (Harnisch 2017, 4–5). The United Kingdom in particular maintains numerous relationships with its former colonial holdings through The Commonwealth, even though trade with these nations and association with them can at times be turbulent and even problematic (e.g., the Thatcher government’s struggle to address apartheid South Africa). Constructivism and a focus on identity of nations also explains perceived and actual imbalances in the U.S.-U.K. special relationship. Whereas another theory like realism may take issue with the relationship persisting in peace time, believing its existence post-Cold War or War on Terror to be irrational, constructivism suggests that factoring the special relationship into decision making is rational, as states are acting in accordance with an aspect of their perception of their identity.

Liberalism and constructivism are perhaps the two best theories for conceptualizing why the special relationship exists in the form that it does. Not only do actors within both states espouse and make decisions based on a common political philosophy, but their characterization of the special relationship as historically and culturally rooted reinforces the relationship itself. By acting as if the relationship exists, it does, and especially by acting in accordance with liberal political philosophy, that is the character that the relationship takes on.

When Harnisch discusses special relationships fostering the linkage of governance functions and integration between the two nations, liberal political philosophy is the flavor and basis in which the U.S.-U.K. special relationship operates. Not only do the U.S. and U.K. share these values and shape their societies to meet them, but their actions on the world stage are in accordance with following and furthering these values also. As post-WWII leaders in the

reconstruction of Europe and the establishment of international organizations, the U.S. and U.K. furthered neoliberal goals and institutions like the United Nations. When rewriting the constitutions of post-war Germany and Japan, these values were explicitly laid out and codified. Not only do these two nations have historical and familiar partners in each other, but partners committed to the same vision of the world.

III: Historical Survey of the U.S.-U.K. Special Relationship

Historical examples of interactions between the United States and the United Kingdom can be seen to exemplify each of the international relations theories laid out in the preceding section. The “special relationship” between the United States and the United Kingdom as we know it was first articulated by Winston Churchill in a speech in Fulton, Missouri in 1946. He described it as a bond of shared leadership, shared history, shared values, and a shared commitment to a liberal world order (Wallace and Phillips 2009). Indeed, many academics and onlookers point to the commonality of a shared language and Anglo-Saxon heritage as a primary driver of the special relationship (Marsh and Baylis 2006). Prior to World War I and II, the United States was largely isolationist on the world stage, and therefore kept all of its international relationships and involvement on the world stage to a minimum. Churchill's notion of the special relationship built on shared history and values combined with continual overtures to then-U.S. President F.D. Roosevelt made the U.K. a natural ally when the U.S. began to look outside of itself as events dictated. Despite its ability and occasional preference to act unilaterally, the United States was and continues to be able to glean legitimacy from being staunchly supported by an international partner (Conley 2010).

Before looking at specific eras of U.S.-U.K. cooperation, it is useful to discuss the initial warming of U.S.-U.K. relations. Following the United States' War for Independence, the 19th

century saw tepid relations between the two nations at best. The United States was looking to expand its borders, and clashed with the British to the north in the Canadian Territories. The War of 1812 was the result of these tensions, and from then on, the United States mostly attempted to keep clear of military skirmishes with the British. The American Civil War ignited some further tensions. The newly-seceded Confederate States of America sent diplomats to Great Britain, and while it is unclear how close the U.K. came to officially recognizing them or providing support to their cause, merely accepting diplomats of the Confederacy caused tensions with the United States that lasted for a period of time. As the 19th century came to a close and tensions in Europe were high leading up to World War I, this period became known as “The Great Rapprochement.” During this time, the United States and United Kingdom’s relations warmed, both due to attitudes of politicians within both states and the warming mood of the public. Trade became more regular, as did a renewed sense of kinship between the two nations. While not the relationship we know today, this laid the groundwork for the ever-closer ties that began to be formed in World War II and following it.

A: World War II Era

Beginning in the era of World War II, the United States and the United Kingdom worked exceptionally closely to defeat Nazi Germany and the Axis Powers. Under realist theory, this closeness may have dissipated if not for the threat of the Soviet Union that emerged soon after. Churchill and the British elite saw the relative strength of the U.K. declining, and therefore chose to align themselves with the U.S. in order to hedge their bets and prepare for a world where they were no longer the primary hegemon. During this period and into the early Cold War, the U.S. and U.K. developed a “uniquely intimate” combination of defense and intelligence linkages (Dumbrell 2004). This unique sharing began in the 1947-48 U.K.-U.S. agreement where the two

countries began to trade intelligence. Later, the 1958 mutual defense agreement gave the U.K. privileged access to American nuclear technology and information, which laid the groundwork for the creation of Polaris (later Trident) nuclear submarines. Britain gained access to technologies and information, and in return the United States was given a reliable site for military bases in Europe. Economically, a devastated postwar Britain was able to gain special access to the U.S.'s lend-lease program and other loans in order to spur economic and industrial recovery.

B: Cold War Era

A key characteristic of the U.S.-U.K. special relationship is its longevity and seeming immunity to death knells of onlookers. Perhaps the most compelling argument for the importance of culture and philosophy to the relationship is its resilience to geopolitical events and crises. The rift between the U.S. and U.K. during the Suez crises, despite being one of the lowest points for relations between the two states, actually did very little to impact the special relationship; in fact, it may have brought the two states closer as it signaled to the U.K. its loss of primacy on the world stage. Rather than distance itself from the U.S., who many of the British elite perceived had betrayed them in Egypt, the Suez crises demonstrated that the U.K. needed to strengthen its hand through America (Dumani 2016). Aware of its position as a declining power, the U.K. believed that by aligning itself more closely with the U.S., it would be able to steer the hegemon's foreign policy to its own benefit. In 1957, U.K. Prime Minister Macmillan signed a "Declaration of Common Purpose" with U.S. President Eisenhower, evidence of a desire to strengthen ties between the two nations. Macmillan continued this commitment into the presidency of John F. Kennedy, with nuclear collaboration and the creation of Polaris submarines acting as this period's cornerstone of the relationship.

During the Vietnam War, the United States enjoyed the reluctant support of the U.K., who, due to their special relationship, refrained from publicly criticizing the U.S. and even sometimes gave their halfhearted support. As the Cold War dragged on, successive U.S. and U.K. leaders collaborated against the Soviet threat to a high degree. The zenith of this collaboration occurred under President Reagan and Prime Minister Thatcher, both of whom were strongly committed to a United States and United Kingdom working in tandem to defeat the scourge of communism to the East. This commitment to a neoliberal capitalist world order and values of freedom provided further building blocks and mortar for the special relationship. Intelligence services also continued to share information through the “Old Pals” network of senior intelligence officials (Marsh and Baylis 2006). President Reagan personally intervened on several occasions in U.S. foreign policy, lending vital assistance to the U.K. during the Falklands War in 1982 and in securing an Extradition Treaty in 1985 that Thatcher believed was necessary to bring IRA terrorists to justice in Britain.

C: Post-Cold War Era

Following the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Berlin Wall, many believed that the special relationship was finally dead. Without the threat of a singular enemy such as the Nazis or the Soviets, they believed the usefulness of the relationship had expired. John Dickie asserted that the relationship was “special no more” in the face of the absence of the Soviet threat combined with deepening European integration and growing asymmetry between the U.S. and the U.K. (Dickie 1994). History proved him wrong, however, and the U.S. and U.K. continued to maintain extra-ordinary coordination. During the first Gulf War in 1993, the two states continued intense military cooperation. Britain was one of the few European nations that militarily supported the U.S. and provided a fully equipped armored division for the U.S.'s coalition,

demonstrating that the U.S.-U.K. relationship was still set apart from other European nations (Wallace and Phillips 2009). Even in times of economic disagreements such as the 1999 trade conflict, the U.K. continued to support the U.S. militarily as it did in with bombings of Iraq, Kosovo, and other provinces of Serbia. Intelligence sharing also continued, and levels of direct mutual investment between the two nations continued to grow, strengthening their economic ties (Dumbrell 2004). President Clinton even played a direct role in helping to ease tensions in Northern Ireland, which although being resented by John Major, was later welcomed and encouraged by Tony Blair.

D: Post-September 11 and the War on Terror

On September 11, 2001, the United States was struck by Al-Qaeda suicide bombers, killing thousands in New York City. The United Kingdom under Tony Blair expressed sympathy and an intent to stand “shoulder to shoulder” with the United States in its crusade to rid the world of the “evil” of terrorism. Tony Blair, who had previously collaborated extremely well with former U.S. President Clinton, saw this event as an opportunity to guide the hand of the U.S. and assert influence in its foreign policy decisions. He helped to shape the American agenda through a five-page memo delivered the next day, tempering the anger of the U.S. and preventing them from lashing out prematurely. Blair and the U.K. went on to act as a “global ambassador” for the U.S., helping to create a more measured response and guide the U.S. through legal channels like the United Nations Security Council rather than allow unilateral military action (Dumbrell 2004).

Blair's position of solidarity with the U.S. sparked anger and concern from many of his European allies, many of whom saw his support for U.S. military action as ill-conceived. The United Kingdom's decision to support the U.S. invasion of Iraq truly distinguished it from its European allies, many of whom were staunchly opposed to such action. This combined with

greatly heightened intelligence cooperation and sharing helped to cast Blair as yet another American Trojan horse in the mind of many European allies (Dumbrell 2004, 2009). Still, Blair continued to support the United States' War on Terror even when it caused tension with his European neighbors (Dumbrell 2006b). In 2007, Blair signed a new U.S.-U.K. defense Cooperation Treaty, allowing for new technology sharing and defense coordination. This followed the Extradition Treaty he signed in 2003, giving U.S. citizens immunity from ICC prosecution in the U.K. Through both legislation and action, the two states continually favored each other and supported the other's interests.

It is notable that even during the highly unpopular War in Iraq that the majority of the British public opposed from the onset, citizens of the United Kingdom, when asked, were quick to clarify that their objection was to U.S. leadership and the War itself, not the United States. Even at a time when the public of Great Britain was at odds with U.S. leadership, there was an effort to differentiate between the U.S. government and its people, to whom the British public felt they still had close ties to.

E: Late 2000s to Present Day

While not every era sees such close cooperation as the Reagan-Thatcher years or the Clinton/Bush-Blair years, even times of personal disagreement between the U.S. President and U.K. Prime Minister, the special relationship continues to persist. Gordon Brown and Barack Obama were barely on speaking terms for large chunks of time, yet rhetoric of “unbreakable bonds” and a “partnership of purpose born out of shared value” continued to be used regularly. This notion of “shared value” again calls to mind the classical liberal/neoliberal tone of the special relationship. The special relationship was once again nearly declared dead, this time by the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, only for it to be given renewed strength on

the election of David Cameron. President Obama called him following his victory and confirmed the U.S.'s commitment to the special relationship, which he stated was “essential to the security and prosperity of our two countries, and the world” (Dumani 2016). The U.S. and U.K. continued to coordinate militarily in Libya and Afghanistan, standing together even in conflicts that Europe and the rest of the world deemed illegitimate or unwise. As the United Kingdom was preparing to (and has now left) the European Union, Prime Minister Theresa May and Boris Johnson both continue to make overtures to President Trump, affirming the importance of the U.S.-U.K. special relationship and a desire to use newfound ability in trade negotiations and defense to deepen and develop new ties and trade deals with its longtime ally.

As the United Kingdom approaches its full “Brexit” from the European Union and the United States elects a new President in Joseph Biden, it is unclear where this relationship is headed. Joe Biden has been known to be more hostile to the British than the American status quo, turning down a question from a reporter after election day saying “BBC? I’m Irish!” Whether this comment is joking or actually disapproving of British policy towards Northern Ireland post-Brexit, he is on the record being much more critical of Boris Johnson than his predecessor, Donald Trump. While Biden and Johnson may be at odds or personally dislike each other, Biden will most likely be more in line with general British support for international organizations like the United Nations to a much greater degree than Trump was. Perhaps Biden and Johnson will come to bolster these very institutions emblematic of liberalism that have been weakening in the past years. Even if the two have a rocky relationship, it is nearly unquestionable that the close intelligence and diplomatic ties of the special relationship will not falter, even if the outward rhetoric of the U.S. and U.K.’s leaders is more tepid.

IV: Differentiating the Special Relationship

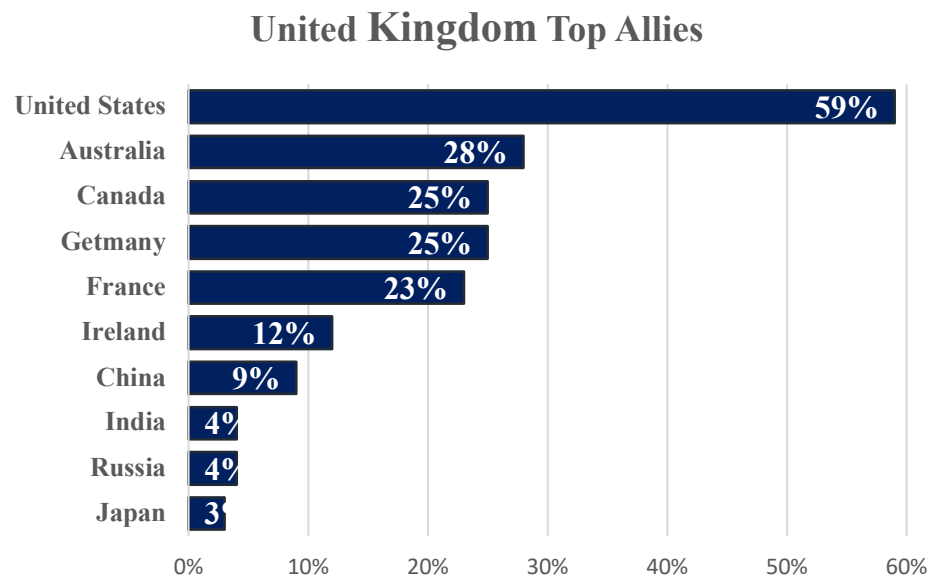
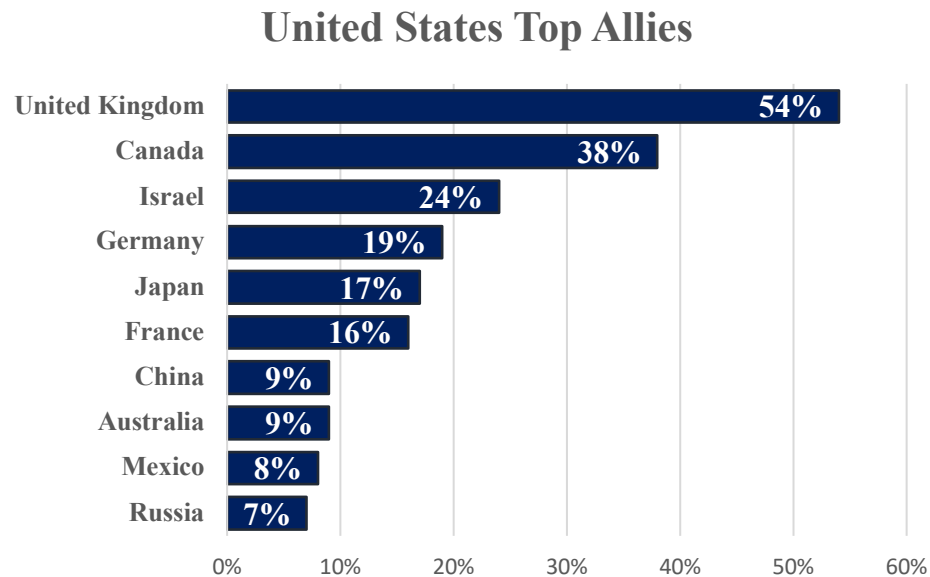
Having looked at the close ties between the U.S. and U.K. in historical context, it is clear that these two nations share a great deal, both economically, militarily, and philosophically. But what helps the relationship to maintain its special quality throughout periods of turbulence, and why have critics and disparagers of the relationship been continually proven wrong? Looking back now to Harnisch's definition of special relationships, it is clear that the U.S.-U.K. relationship, even in its more dire times, meets its criteria. To recap, Harnish defines them as "durable and exclusive bilateral relations between autonomous polities that are based on mutual expectations of preferential treatment by its members and outsiders and through the entanglement of some their (external) governance functions." Aesthetic rifts and personal feuds between the leaders of the two nations do little to change their deeply intertwined military and intelligence apparatuses. Critics such as Beloff, Dickie, and even the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee have continually been proven wrong about the "death" of the special relationship; it has tenaciously persisted despite the odds. Even when Obama looked to be pivoting towards Germany as the U.S.'s primary European partner, this ended up being short-lived and less substantial than rhetorical.

As far as there is an expectation of exclusivity and hierarchy, the U.K. is expected by the U.S. to follow its lead, while the U.K. expects its advice to be followed or at least taken into account. This expectation not only exists between the two states, but also extends to Europe and their other allies. At best, the U.S. and U.K. are viewed as partners working in tandem, while at worst, the U.K. is viewed as the U.S.'s poodle or Trojan horse (Dumbrell 2004; Held et al. 2007). However disparaging, even these descriptions convey an expectation that the U.K. and U.S. will favor each other. The final piece of Harnisch's definition, external governance functions, is also

both met and surpassed. One of the most basic functions of a state is to provide protection for its people against outside threats. Dating back to World War II, the United States and the United Kingdom have displayed remarkable coordination in the fields of military, intelligence, and nuclear cooperation. Their lead and cooperation helped to usher in the era of NATO and extend the United States' security umbrella over Europe through overseas bases, Polaris, and Trident. The relationship is not and never was a true partnership of equals, but Harnisch's definition of special relationships allows for hierarchal differences so long as both states maintain a commitment to each other and receive some benefit from it. Critics who call the Anglo-American relationship hollow or simple semantics fail to recognize the clear preferential treatment and entanglement between the two nations.

Still, some object to the classification of U.S.-U.K. relationship as special since it inherently sets the Anglo-American relationship above and apart from the U.S. and U.K.'s relationships with their other allies. Why not call the U.S.-French, U.S.-German, U.S.-Canadian, or U.S.-Israeli relations special? Harnisch's definition helps to explain this distinction. While these other nations are certainly allies of the United States, they have not enjoyed either the level of preference nor the longstanding cooperation that U.S.-U.K. relations have exemplified. Take Germany for example; its renewed status in Europe, and certainly philosophical alignment with the United States, are relatively recent phenomena. True, public opinion in the United States is supportive of Germany, but recent polling by YouGov indicates that only 19% of Americans choose Germany when asked "Who do you think the United States' most important allies are in the world (YouGov, Public First, and FP1 2018b)?"—fourth overall behind the U.K., Canada, and Israel. The results of this same poll show that Americans and Britons select the U.K. and U.S. respectively as their nation's most important ally by large 20-30% margins, as shown below

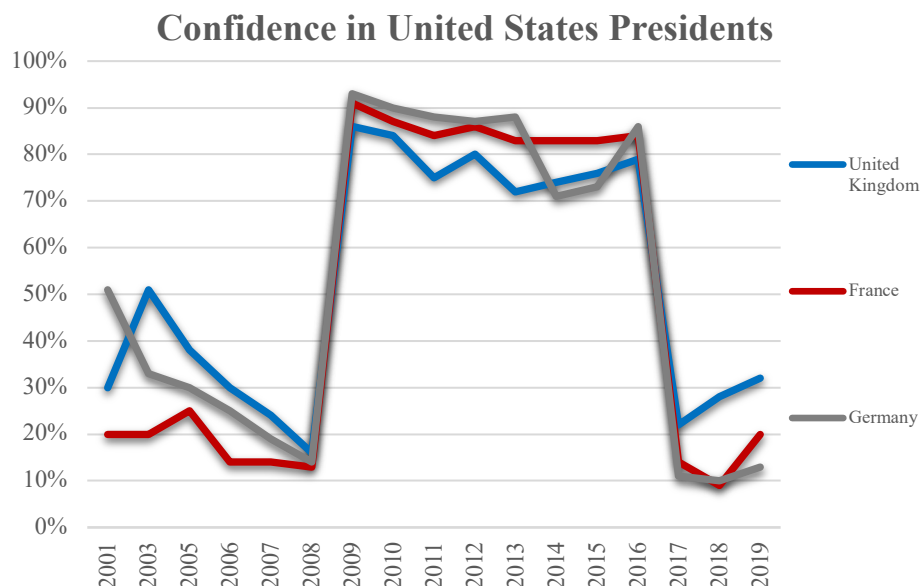
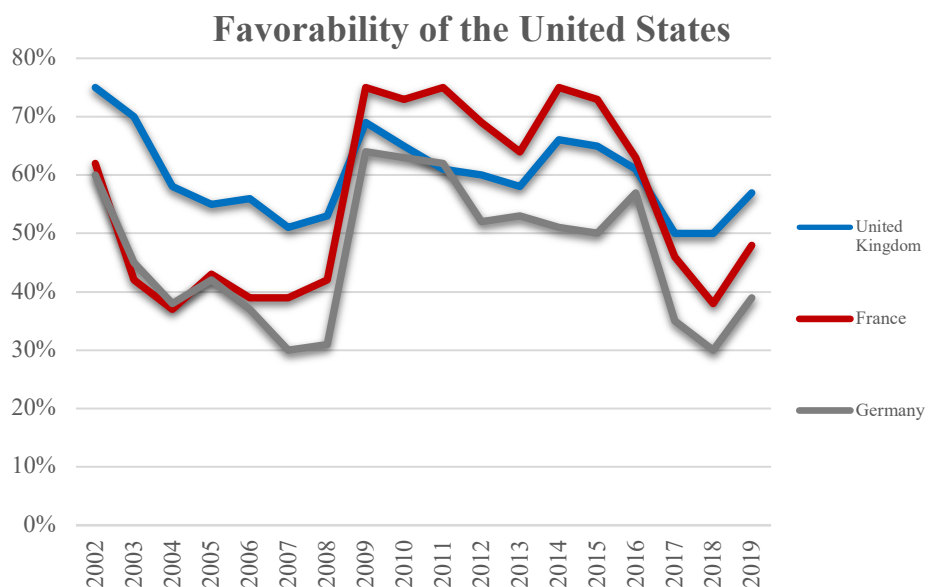
(YouGov, Public First, and FP1 2018b, 2018a). This shows that beyond the undeniable and unparalleled military and intelligence coordination that the U.S. and U.K. take part in, the citizenry of the two nations continue to recognize the kinship that they share, and set the other above their other allies.



Another unique observable phenomenon is the resilience of the U.K. public's support for the United States compared to its Western European neighbors. The graphs below compare

public opinion in the U.K., France, and Germany of both favorability towards the United States and confidence in the U.S. president for the first two decades of the twenty-first century.

Statistical analysis shows that the US averages 60% approval in the UK 56% in France, and 47% in Germany. Furthermore, the standard deviation of the UK's approval of the US is 7.2%, nearly half of France and Germany's much more variable 15.27% and 11.82% (Wike et al. 2020). Not only does French and German support of the United States vary at nearly double the rate of British support, but it seems much more linked to attitudes towards the U.S. president, while in



the U.K. public opinion of the U.S. is steady regardless of confidence in the U.S. president.

European support of President Obama was notably higher than his predecessor and successor in the United Kingdom, France, and Germany, yet French and German overall favorability spiked during the years where there was greater confidence in the U.S. President. In contrast, The U.K. public had a much more stable and positive favorability of the U.S. despite having comparable levels of confidence in U.S. presidents as the French and German public (Wike et al. 2020).

Protests against the U.S. and public opposition to the U.S. government in the U.K., which to some may appear to run counter to the notion of the special relationship, are better attributed to negative opinion of U.S. leaders rather than the country more broadly.

Not only does the U.K. consistently rank the U.S. above its other allies, but the reverse is also true. According to polling of Americans done by the British Council, “American respondents ... consistently place the UK ahead of other major countries across a broad series of cultural, educational, personal and societal characteristics” (Donaldson 2018). Americans ranked the U.K. as first in respecting the rule of law, valuing individual liberty, demonstrating religious respect and tolerance, having a free press and media, having good public services and strong non-governmental institutions, having a free and fair justice system, treating everyone who lives in the country fairly, being a strong example of a democratic society, the people being open and welcoming, and the state being a force for good in the world (Donaldson 2018). This study also found great mutual appreciation of Americans and British for each other’s cultural institutions, arts, sports, education, and general levels of trustworthiness (Donaldson 2018), signifying that the proclivity to favor one another extends beyond intelligence and governmental elites to the broader public.

It is abundantly clear—both from polling data and broader trends in foreign policy, intelligence, defense, and trade—that the U.S. and U.K. display a level of closeness not seen with their other allies. Other ally relationships—like U.S.-Germany—are budding and important, but have much lower levels of broader public support, are comparably relatively recent, and do not feature the same level of governance entwinement through intelligence and defense coordination. U.S.-Israeli relations also fall short of being truly special. The U.S. does provide large degrees of public support to Israel, but the American public has been growing increasingly divided on this issue. Instead, this highly lopsided relationship with Israel is better explained by the state's strategic importance to the U.S. in the region, both as a buffer against Syria and an ally in a region long fought over with then-USSR and now-Russian forces (Zunes 2002). Certainly the U.S.'s foreign policy is highly pro-Israel, but the Israeli and American public are neither as favorable towards each other nor are our intelligence and defense as highly coordinated.

So, if not the Germans or Israelis as a candidate for a “special relationship,” what about the French? After all, the United States' first ally in their revolution against the British monarchy was the French, and up until the turn of the twentieth century and WWI, the U.S. often found themselves aligning with the French in opposition to the British. Throughout the twentieth century the U.S. continued to work with France, and they continue to be allies to this day. The answer is that the U.S.'s postcolonial experience is vital to explain U.S.-U.K. relations. The same cultural heritage and bond that they share now comes from it, and their diplomatic relations have been shaped by it. Following the American Revolution there was an inherent suspicion of each other—the U.S. saw its formal imperial master, and the U.K. a potential threat. The War of 1812 did little to quell such suspicions, and the U.K.'s building of the CSS Alabama for the

Confederates—a move British hoped would cause some internal chaos—only solidified feelings of mistrust (Stead 1901). Furthermore, post-1860s large numbers of Irish immigrants began immigrating to the United States, and once they became politically active, pushed the Democratic party to take a more anti-Britain stance (Stead 1901).

However, even among these events and disputes, there was still cooperation between the two nations and their people. In 1823 the British supported the U.S.'s Monroe Doctrine, and later ran joint naval missions against the slave trade in Western Africa (Stead 1901). Even in times of discord the American public was less than frigid towards the British—shortly following the end of the War of 1812 the American public (especially in New England) were quick to forgive and let bygones be bygones. The U.K. was essential in resolving a border conflict between Canada and Alaska, and later rescinded its objections to an America's intentions to build a canal in Panama through the Hay–Pauncefote Treaty of 1901 (Stead 1901). Not only do these show early examples of coordination between the two nations, but lessening suspicion and hostility towards the U.K. as time passed following the Revolution allowed for these ties to deepen and solidify. This period leading up to World War I, as previously mentioned, is known to historians as “The Great Rapprochement,” wherein U.S. and U.K.'s consensus on diplomatic, political, military and economic matters became aligned to an astounding degree. In comparison, France's role through the years was mostly one of convenience and opportunity. The French did not support the Americans due to notions of philosophical harmony, but instead did so in order to oppose the British. First, they supported the American revolution to strain the British Empire's resources, then Napoleon supported the U.S. for money to fund his wars, selling them the Louisiana Purchase at a highly undervalued price simply because he was desperate for money. The U.S.

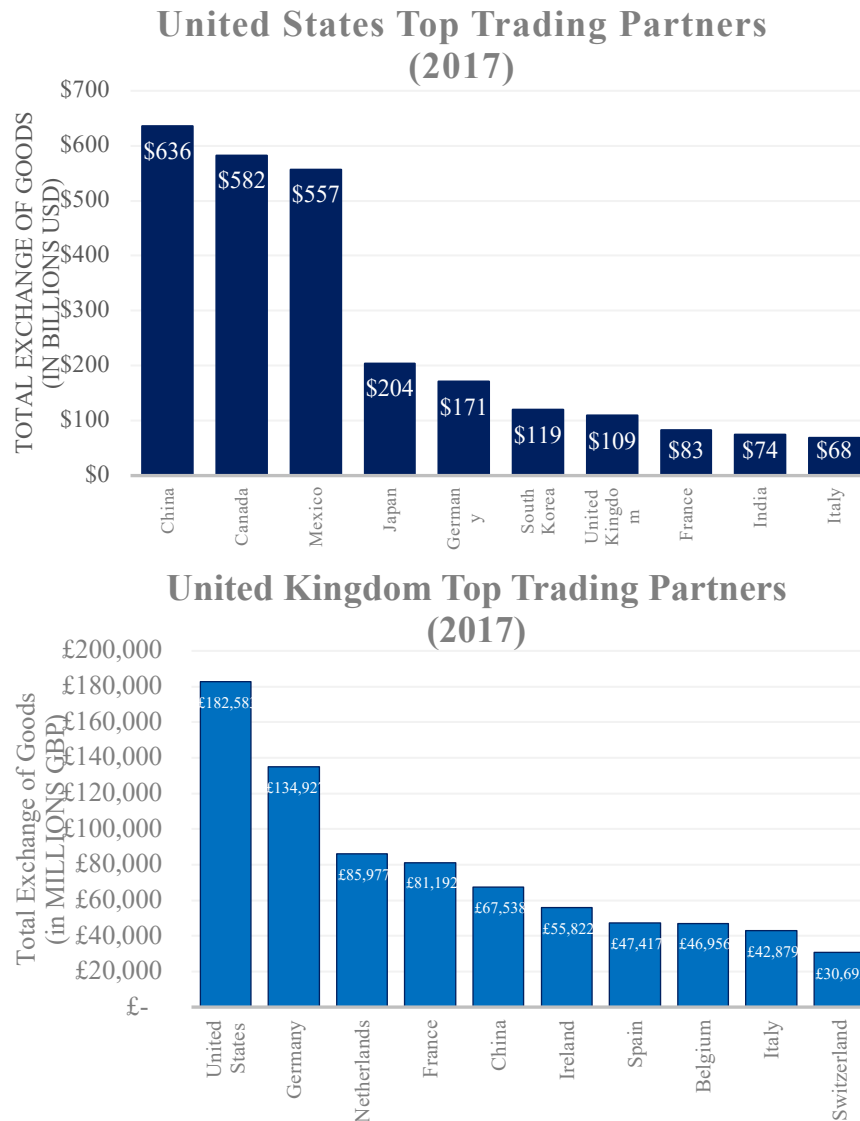
and France have remained allies, true, but the coordination between the U.S. and U.K. is both more longstanding and to a greater degree.

V: Explaining the Special Relationship's Longevity

Having established that the special relationship does indeed exist and can be distinguished from a normal ally relationship, what has caused its longevity? Military self-interest is well and good, but even in post-1990 eras where there was no looming hegemonic threat akin to Nazi Germany or the USSR, the U.S. and U.K. have retained their close bonds. Others point to economics. The United States and United Kingdom both are the largest direct investors in each other, and this has continued to grow (Dumbrell 2004). According to the UNCTAD's 2019 World Investment Report, the U.S and U.K continue to be the largest source of foreign direct investment in each other to this day (UN Conference on Trade and Development 2019). Britain is one of the largest suppliers of U.S. exports, as well as being the largest market for U.S. exports (Dumani 2016).

Post-Brexit, the United Kingdom will be even more likely to turn to the United States for deepened trade deals and entwinement as it can rely less on the European Single Market. The fact that the U.K. is willing to risk losing access to the EU's single market through Brexit, which collectively makes up six times the trade with the U.K. that the U.S. does (Office for National Statistics 2019), shows that economics alone do not forge a lasting relationship. Economics also fail to explain the special relationship from the U.S. perspective. As seen below, while the U.S. is the U.K.'s top trading partner, the U.K. falls far behind China, Canada, Mexico, and other nations in the U.S.'s total trade (US Census Bureau Foreign Division Trade 2020). Despite this imbalance in terms of economic interest in one another, the U.S. and U.K.'s political elite (and

broader public) continue to prioritize and coordinate with one another, meaning that while trade and economics may play a role, they do not fully explain the picture.



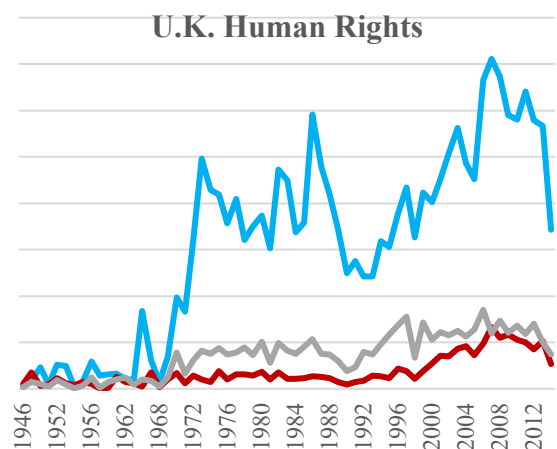
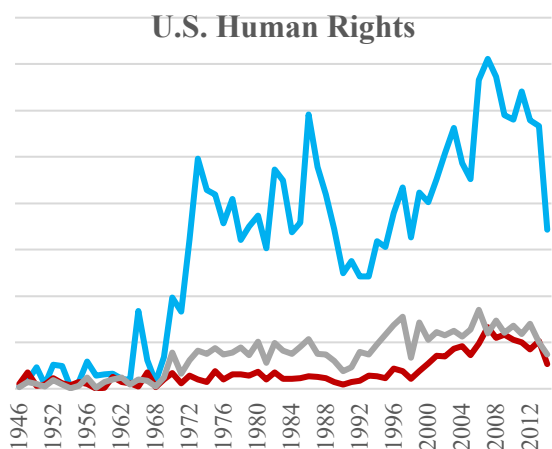
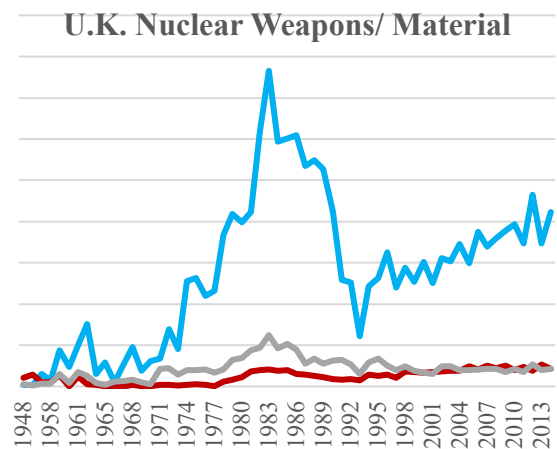
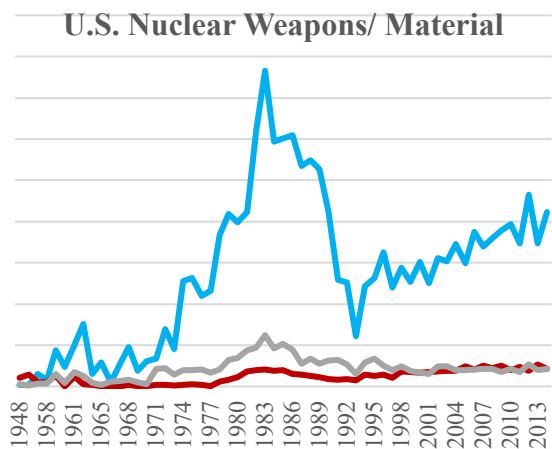
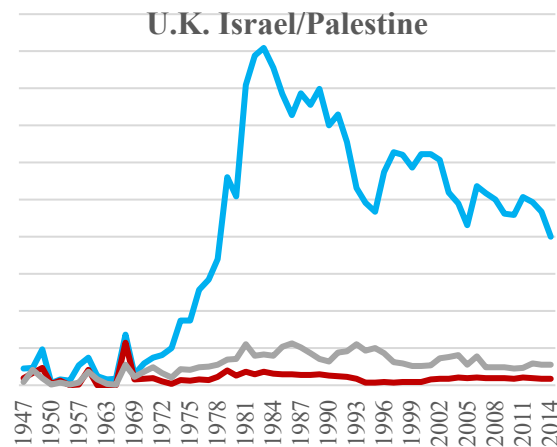
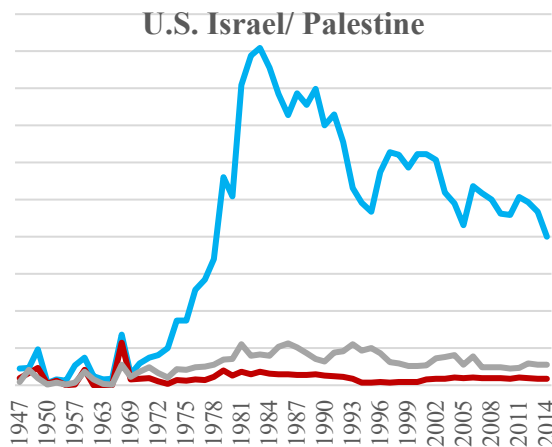
The same can be said about personal characteristics of the leaders of the two nations. As shown in the previous section, the British public's support of the U.S. is not tied to their approval of the U.S.'s president in the same way that other European nations are. It is true that the friendliness between President and Prime Minister can highlight or strengthen the special relationship (see Reagan-Thatcher and Clinton-Blair), but poor relations between the leaders (Obama-Brown, Obama-Cameron, Trump-May, etc.) do not dissuade the public or the political

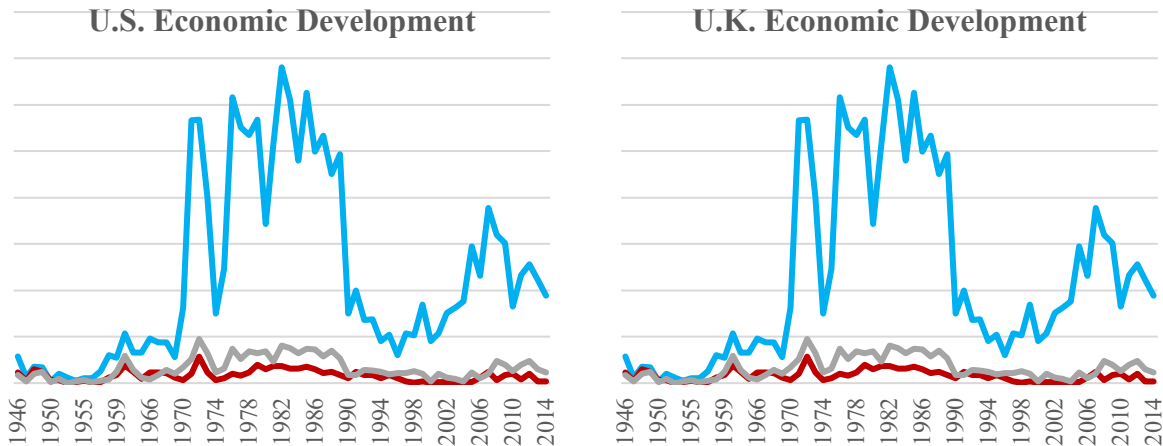
elite from continuing to favor each other and work together. Even in times of personal disagreement or when their states' interests did not align, the special relationship weathered the blows. The special relationship has withstood Reagan and Thatcher's disagreements over the Falkland War and invasion of Grenada, as well as Obama's personal distaste of Gordon Brown and David Cameron. Therefore, it can be said that the leaders of the two nations play a role, but do not wholly define the relationship.

Perhaps Churchill's initial conceit was correct. This partnership between the U.S. and U.K., however turbulent it may be at times, owes its continued existence to shared values, traditions, and Anglo-Saxon culture. United by classical liberalism, neoliberal capitalism, and a desire to promote a world order based on freedom, the U.S. and U.K. continue to rely on each other in order to promote their values and have an ally to lean on for support on the world stage. This relationship is not a partnership of complete equals, but no relationship is truly devoid of imbalances. Personal squabbles are always overcome, and so long as the U.S. and U.K. continue to base their societies on cultures that exemplify liberalism and place a greater emphasis on the protection of individual rights than the rest of Europe and the world, these two states will return to each other for defense, intelligence, technology, trade, and a philosophical partner.

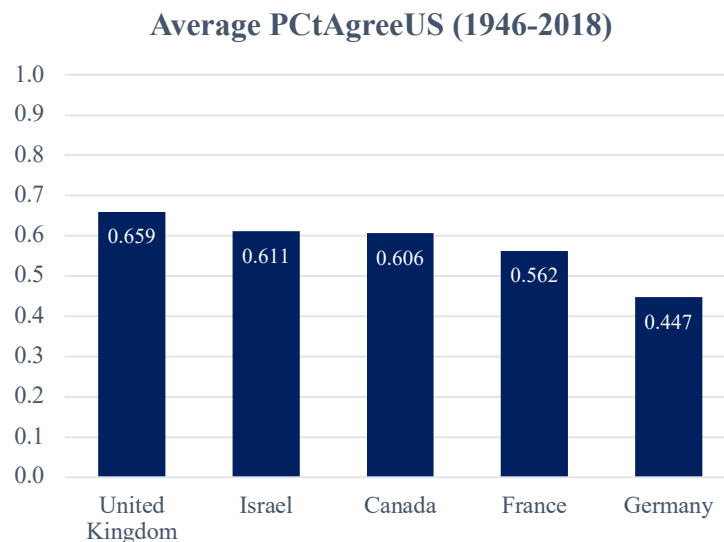
Not only is the argument of cultural and philosophical ties supported by public opinion polling (see the previous section's discussion of American and British admiration of each other's culture), but the alignment of philosophical worldview translates into concrete action on the world stage. Erik Voeten's UNGA Data, which includes all votes taken in the UN's General Assembly from 1946-2018, reveals striking correlation between the U.S. and U.K.'s votes cast in that body. This is illustrated below, where patterns of the U.S. and U.K.'s votes on four key issues—the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and Material, Human

Rights, and Economic Development—are graphed from 1946-2018. In all four issue areas, the U.S. and U.K. display strikingly similar patterns of voting, with the scatter plots for both countries appearing identical on yes votes (blue), no votes (red), and abstentions (grey) (Voeten, Strezhnev, and Bailey 2019).





Not only are these findings striking on their own, but further examination of the data reveals that the U.S. and U.K. are on average more likely to vote in conjunction with each other than their other allies. In his data, Voeten includes a data point called “PCtAgreeUS,” which factors in yes votes, no votes, and abstentions to annually score countries from 0-1, with 1 meaning the country always votes with the U.S. and 0 meaning they never do. The chart below shows some of the U.S.’s closest allies.



Averaging each of these nation’s scores from 1946-2018, the U.K. displayed the greatest degree of alignment with the U.S. In conjunction with the previous graphs, this data shows that the U.S. and U.K. both vote similarly on a broad range of issues, but also vote together to a

higher degree than their other allies. This further reinforces the notion that the U.S.-U.K. relationship is closer than the typical ally relationship, and furthermore is grounded in a shared worldview due to a common cultural heritage and political philosophy.

As mentioned previously, Harnisch's definition of a special relationship is "durable and exclusive bilateral relations between autonomous polities that are based on mutual expectations of preferential treatment by its members and outsiders and through the entanglement of some their (external) governance functions" (Harnisch 2017). Chapter III's historical analysis showed that, following the "Great Rapprochement," the United States and United Kingdom's post-colonial tensions began to abate in favor of greater trade, cooperation, and acknowledgement of their shared history.

Especially beginning with World War II, the two nations began to link external governance functions, namely common defense. Even after ideological tensions arose between the United States and the Soviet Union, a former World War II ally, there was an ideological kinship pre-built between the U.S. and the U.K. Not only did their partnership strategically make sense, but the two nations valued common ideals like individual liberties and capitalism as a result of their philosophical past. Liberalism can explain the desire of these two nations to create institutions that mirrored their philosophical outlook, but constructivism is key for understanding how the special relationship reinforced itself through these institutions. The two states acting as if this relationship existed, making decisions on intelligence and defense cooperation based on this understanding, helped to give the relationship an underlying and enduring character.

Opinion polling and voting within the United Nations also mirror this. Not only have the United State and United Kingdom voted and continue to vote in conjunction with each other on issues of importance within the United Nations to a greater degree than their other allies, but they

also veto resolutions or actions that the other find to be undesirable. Their shared values and philosophy were drivers in creating the institution, and they continue to use their influence within it to further a shared global vision. The public of the two nations also mirror the special relationship, given substance by rhetoric reinforced by action. The public of the United States and United Kingdom consistently rank each other as their top allies, and also note their appreciation for the values that the other nation espouses. These values, most notably ones that enshrine individual freedoms, are perceived by the public of the respective nations to be protected exceptionally well within the other. It is no coincidence that such values are the result of and basis for classical liberalism, which continually appears as a root and explainer for the special relationship.

It is all well and good to talk about classical liberalism and hold it up as the best explanation for the special relationship. To some this may be plausible. However, many others continue to even doubt its existence, calling it outdated, rhetorical, or even dead. However, the following sections will show specifically why this is not the case. A historical survey has already been laid out on how the United States and United Kingdom have acted with one another post-World War II to an exceptional degree. Opinion polling has shown that the public of both nations distinguish each other from their other allies. Categorical voting tabulation of the U.S. and U.K.'s record within the United Nations General Assembly has been laid out that shows they vote together to an extraordinary degree as well. Still, this does not fully show classical liberalism as the root of the relationship, as I am arguing.

For this reason, the following chapter will examine these shared classical liberal values, looking at Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* for the idea of equality in the state of nature, John Locke's *A Letter Concerning Toleration* and *Second Treatise of Government* for the idea that

individual rights/negative rights preexist government, Adam Smith's writings as the basis for *laissez-faire* capitalism, and John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty* for the notion that government should not interfere so long as individuals are not causing direct harm to one another. Following this, an ontological case for the existence of the special relationship based on these values will be presented. Only then will it be abundantly clear and irrefutable that the special relationship not only exists as a manifestation of this shared philosophy, but has shaped the institutions and actions of the two nations to create the world order we know today.

VI: Exploring Classical Liberalism

It can be widely agreed that the United States and United Kingdom are nation-states whose political ideology and institutions are based on classical liberal thinking. To understand the special relationship then, an understanding of classical liberalism is key. Liberalism as a school of thought developed in response to two phenomena that were characteristic of Middle Age European society—religious conformity, and ascribed status (Ball and Dagger 2014, 56). The Protestant-Catholic divide pitted societies and members within them against one another, and rulers of these societies would often compel their citizens to conform to a single religion while outlawing the practice of all others. Middle Ages Europe also had clear divisions of class, not based on solely wealth, but rather on inherited lands, titles, and statuses. Not only were members of the landed aristocracy wealthier, but also had additional rights afforded to them under the law. For example, the Magna Carta was signed on June 15, 1215, and established some early proto-liberal principles, stating that “everyone is subject to the law, even the king,” and also “guarantee[d] the rights of individuals, the right to justice and the right to a fair trial” (Eleftheriou-Smith 2015). However, these rights were only formally extended to members of the aristocracy, deepening already existent divides in society. Early liberals were conscious of these

divides, and chief among their aims was the creation of a more open and tolerant society. The following sections and chapters will detail the major developments of liberal thought to form a clearer picture of the philosophy and how it has impacted the U.S. and the U.K.'s societies, institutions, and relationship.

A: Thomas Hobbes - *Leviathan*

While he is not traditionally categorized as a classical liberal, Thomas Hobbes' most famous work, *Leviathan*, contains the most detailed example of early liberal assumptions about human nature. Hobbes famously begins with the "state of nature" heuristic device. In a world without sovereigns, without governments, without laws, courts, or police, Hobbes posits that men would exist in a state of perpetual anarchy, a "war of all against all" (Hobbes 1651b). The reason for this, he explains, is the natural equality of man. Hobbes explains,

"Nature has made men so equal, in the faculties of the body, and mind; as that though there be found one man sometimes manifestly stronger in body, or of quicker mind than another; yet when all is reckoned together, the difference between man, and man, is not so considerable" (Hobbes 1651b, 60).

Hobbes does not believe that all men are precisely equal, but rather that areas of difference and imbalance are compensated for by strengths in other areas, making the sum of all parts roughly equivalent from individual to individual. One man may be physically stronger than another, who may in turn be more intelligent. Rather than equality of ability meaning pure talent, Hobbes' equality means "equality of hope in the attaining of our ends" (Hobbes 1651b, 60).

Having established the equality of men in this anarchic state of war, Hobbes advocates for individual liberty, which he calls *jus naturale*, or the Right of Nature. This is the "liberty each man has, to use his own power, as he will himself, for the preservation of his own nature; that is

to say, of his own life” (Hobbes 1651a, 62). Hobbes defines ‘liberty’—which comes from the Latin *liber*, meaning free—as “the absence of external impediments,” which although they can “take away part of a man’s power to do what he would ... cannot hinder him from using the power left him” (Hobbes 1651a, 62). For Hobbes, the *jus naturale* of the preservation of one’s own life is sacrosanct, and therefore individuals are ethically entitled to exercise this right without impediment.

Given the equality of man and their inherent *jus naturale*, Hobbes goes on to contrast the ‘Right of Nature’ with ‘Laws of Nature’ (*lex naturalis*), or ‘General Rules of Reason’ that he asserted can be rationally derived from his state of nature thought experiment. The first of these is the general rule that “every man ought to endeavour peace, as far as he has hope of obtaining it” (Hobbes 1651a, 62). Since every individual is in a state of perpetual war with one another, Hobbes argues that all have a duty to seek peace rather than violate another’s *jus naturale*. Viewing morality through the Kantian lens of the categorical imperative—where you are ethically bound to act in a way that you would will others to in a similar situation—adherence to the first general rule to seek peace also creates a safer society where everyone is in less fear for their own lives due to societal norms of nonaggression.

Hobbes’ second general rule of reason lays the groundwork for contracts and covenants between free individuals, and is an extension of the first rule’s desire to maximize peace. He states, “a man be willing, when others are so too ... as for peace, and defence of himself he shall think it necessary, to lay down this right to all things; and be contented with so much liberty against other men, as he would allow other men against himself” (Hobbes 1651a, 63). This second *lex naturalis* is Hobbes’ framework justifying the morality of compacts between individuals. While all still have a duty to endeavor for peace when coming into conflict or

disagreement as per his first general rule, Hobbes believes that additional peace and security can be obtained in exchange for individuals agreeing to collectively limit their liberties. Especially in a society of equals where any and every individual has the right to ‘all things,’ Hobbes believed covenants limiting freedom are necessary to cool the state of perpetual war.

I mentioned previously that Hobbes is not traditionally categorized as a liberal, and that is due primarily to the conclusions that he arrives at from these premises. So great was Hobbes’ fear of the anarchic “state of nature” that he advocated all should give up essential liberties through a social contract and be ruled by an absolute monarch. While later liberal thinkers would strongly disagree with these prescriptions, his premises were decidedly and uniquely liberal for the time.

Of these premises, Hobbes’ key contributions to broader liberal thought are his assertion of the equality of man, as well as the right of the individual to pursue their own goals free from impediment. While Hobbes does not make the distinction as explicitly as later philosophers, his concept of the ‘Right of Nature’ and the distinction between rights (to do or to forbear) and law (to bind or constrain) laid the groundwork for individual rights preexisting government. Hobbes also articulated a form of social contract theory, where individuals have certain limited but important duties to one another as a result of their cohabitation in society.

B: John Locke – *A Letter Concerning Toleration, Second Treatise of Government*

With Thomas Hobbes’ work laying key groundwork for later liberal thinkers, John Locke is the earliest example of a philosopher who made decidedly liberal political prescriptions for how a society and government should be structured. For Locke, any society should be one of individuals “constituted only for procuring, preserving, and advancing their own civil interests,” with civil interests being defined as “life, liberty, health, and the indolency of body; and the

possession of outward things, such as money, lands, houses, furniture, and the like” (Locke 1689, 67). This view builds on Hobbes’ conception of a society of equals; however, where Hobbes believed the primary *jus naturale* to be preservation of one’s own life, Locke’s conception of civil interests paints a society with even more expansive individual rights. Not only did one have the right to seek life, liberty, and health, but also private property—a concept which was not widespread or universally applicable at the time. On private property he stated “every man has a property in his own person: this nobody has any right to but himself” (Locke 1690, 75). This private property included money and its free exchange (“some lasting thing that men might keep without spoiling, and that by mutual consent would take in exchange for the truly useful”), which Locke asserted would “continue and enlarge” industry and the possessions of individuals (Locke 1690, 79). In addition to an expansive view of private property rights, the inclusion of capital laid the groundwork for later philosophers like Adam Smith to include economic freedoms among liberalism’s other essential individual liberties.

Locke asserted that these rights were so vital that a commonwealth should be constituted *only* to protect their procurement, preservation, and advancement, elevating the rights of the individual above the power of the state. To protect these natural rights, Locke believed the “impartial execution of equal laws” was necessary, privileging none, and the violation of which would result in others’ civil interests being deprived or diminished (Locke 1689, 67). Therefore, it was the *duty* of the civil magistrate to enforce laws *protecting* the civil interests of the populous. This conception of the state as servant rather than master is a key tenet that has stayed with liberalism through successive centuries.

Locke is also notable for what he called the “duty of toleration” in society, as well as his assertion that faith should be separate from the civil magistrate (Locke 1689, 70). Compared to

the status quo at the time of Locke's writing—where church and state were inseparably linked and religious tolerance was controversial to nonexistent—these prescriptions were a drastically different view of the state and society. Locke did not believe in elevating one faith over another, stating that ecclesiastical liberty should be preserved “on all sides,” and that “no man ... can deprive another man, that is not of his church and faith, either of liberty, or any part of his worldly goods, upon the account of that difference which is between them in religion” (Locke 1689, 69–70). To Locke, no matter the difference in religion, civil interests of individuals were inherent and absolute, and therefore could not be capriciously or unequally deprived.

Having established these concepts of civil interests and the duty of toleration, Locke turned to the formation of a government. Similarly to Hobbes, Locke begins his *Second Treatise of Government* with an examination of the ‘State of Nature,’ which he describes as such:

“[The] state all men are naturally in ... [a] state of perfect freedom to order their actions and dispose of their possessions and persons, as they think fit, within the bounds of the laws of nature; without asking leave or depending on the will of any other man” (Locke 1690, 71).

Like Hobbes, Locke believed this state of nature was not only one of perfect freedom, but also of perfect equality, wherein all power and jurisdiction was reciprocal. Also like Hobbes, Locke believed there was a duty in the state of nature to follow the ‘Law of Nature’ that governed it—no one ought to harm another individual in their life, health, liberty, or possessions, and if they did so, should be justly punished. He says:

“Each transgression may be punished to that degree, and with so much severity, as will suffice to make it an ill bargain to the offender, give him cause to repent, and terrify others from doing the like” (Locke 1690, 73).

Since Locke also held that jurisdiction over another was equal between individuals, only the violation of another's civil interests warranted interference or punishment. This law of nature also required proportionality in addition to reciprocity, which was a clear philosophical departure from the absolute (and often mercurially wielded) power of monarchs and sovereigns to punish citizens as harshly as they saw fit.

Locke's conception of government was also one that necessitated the consent of the governed. He famously stated "no man will have a legislator imposed upon him but whom himself has chosen," and believed that all remained in a state of nature "till by their own consents" they choose to join a politic or society (Locke 1689, 69, 1690, 75). Why would one join a society? For Locke, the primary reason was the preservation of property and other civil interests. Therefore, the creation of a state or government was merely a means of ensuring that inherent civil interests were protected.

Resulting from this consent-dependent notion of the state as a guarantor of inherent liberties, Locke came to what was perhaps the most extreme and impactful piece of his philosophy—the right of self-determination. Since Locke believed a government was only legitimate if it was consensually designed to protect its subjects' civil interests, even attempting to encroach on those interests was a violation of the state's legislative authority. This, in turn, gave the people a broad right to rebel against their government and establish a new one better suited to their needs. Locke stated, "it can never be supposed to be the will of the society that the legislative should have a power to destroy that which every one designs to secure by entering into society" (Locke 1690, 79). If the state should ever "endeavour to take away and destroy the property of the people, or to reduce them to slavery under arbitrary power," Locke asserted that it "put [it]self into a state of war with the people, who are thereupon absolved from any further

obedience” (Locke 1690, 79). If the state were to ever put itself into such a “war with the people,” Locke makes his view very clear:

“[The people] have a right to resume their original liberty, and by the establishment of a new legislative, (such as they shall think fit), provide for their own safety and security, which is the end for which they are in society” (Locke 1690, 80).

In opposition to the view that the state was legitimate due to the divine right of monarchs to rule, the Lockean conception of the state is one which derives its legitimacy from the consent of the governed. The governed do not provide their consent to give up their rights or be servants of the state, but rather so that the state protects their civil interests of life, liberty, health, and property. To Locke, rebellion against a tyrannical government was not a treasonous act against God, but instead a restoration of the ‘original liberty’ of the state of nature. Locke’s articulation and defense of self-determination went on to inspire numerous liberal revolutions, most notably the American Revolution.

To summarize John Locke’s contribution to liberal thought, it is most apt to say that his philosophy built on the liberal premises of Hobbes and applied them to both the realm of society and government. Not only were men equal in the state of nature, but this entitled them to pursue their civil interests of life, liberty, health, and property. There was a duty of toleration to others (even between religious groups), as well as respecting their civil interests, but all were entitled to equal application of equal laws, whose jurisdiction was limited to reciprocal and proportional punishment in the case of violation of another individual’s civil interests. If a state were to violate the natural rights of its people, they were then ethically justified in ignoring its authority and forming a new state. Unlike Hobbes, who believed an absolute monarch and the contractual

curtailment of liberties were necessary, Locke's view of natural rights was so expansive that his image of the ideal state was a servant to the people—not limiting, but instead safeguarding said rights.

C: Adam Smith – *On the Principle Which Gives Occasion to the Division of Labor*

The previous section detailing John Locke noted his insistence that private property, including capital, was a natural right inherent to all individuals. Adam Smith's work *The Wealth of Nations* built on the right of private property, and has since become famous for its advocacy of economic freedom and capitalism. To Smith, economic freedom was just as inherent as Locke's other civil interests. He identified the societal practice of trading and bartering, which he called human nature's "'propensity to truck, barter, and exchange one thing for another'" (Smith 1776, 92). Declining to investigate whether this propensity was an "original principle" or a "necessary consequence of the faculties of reason and speech," Smith's focus was instead on the practical effect of this long-enduring propensity, which he argued necessarily leads to the division of labor (Smith 1776, 92). Smith articulated this view as follows:

"And thus the certainty of being able to exchange all that surplus part of the produce of his own labor, which is over and above his own consumption, for such parts of the produce of other men's labor as he may have occasion for, encourages every man to apply himself to a particular occupation, and to cultivate and bring to perfection whatever talent or genius he may possess for that particular species of business" (Smith 1776, 93).

Since human nature naturally created a propensity to barter and exchange, which in turn leads to a division of labor, people are then incentivized to specialize in particular tasks so that their skill allows the production of surplus which can be traded for others' surplus. Instead of all

individuals performing tasks necessary to sustain themselves (i.e., everyone needing to hunt, farm, make clothing, build housing), they are able to rely on barter and exchange networks to trade their surplus for the surplus of others. Smith noted that rather than appealing to “self-love” or trying to sway it in one’s favor, it is better to “show them that it is for their own advantage,” and to “talk [not] to them of our own necessities, but of their advantages” (Smith 1776, 92). Even if one were to hold the most dismal view of human kindness, Smith’s conception of economic freedom as a natural occurrence would still be sustained by the self-interest of individuals.

At this point, it is also important to note that Smith based his view of human nature in a liberal conception of the equality of man, much like Hobbes and Locke before him. He observed a “low difference in natural talents of men,” going on to say that the differences between “the most dissimilar characters ... seems to arise not so much from nature as from habit, custom, and education” (Smith 1776, 93). Smith’s belief in the natural ability of individuals to trade and barter was therefore an articulation of Hobbes’ and Locke’s belief in the natural right of man to enter into compacts and agreements with each other to protect or further their own liberties. In some ways, Smith’s argument that human nature naturally leads to trade and division of labor is the practical realization of Locke’s “state of perfect freedom to order ... actions and dispose of their possessions” (Locke 1690, 71). By protecting the natural right to trade freely, society not only encourages exceptional ability and innovation as individuals specialize and hone their talents, but sustains a network of goods and services where one can trade their surplus. This network in turn sustains the ability of individuals to pursue their talents and passions, since they are able to trade their surplus and save time that would otherwise have gone into providing for their basic necessities.

Smith's writing on the division of labor and the advantages of free trade became massively influential, leading to what we now know as *laissez-faire* capitalism. Liberal thinkers went on to include the protection of economic rights as having equal importance to other natural rights like life, liberty, health, and property. The ability of the individual to trade and exchange freely was not only derived from human nature, but vital to safeguarding an individual's ability to determine the course of their life unimpeded by the state or other malicious actors within society. Not only do the individuals taking part in a particular economic transaction benefit, but so too do all others within their network, as does society—greater surpluses and innovation resulting from the division of labor would create a 'rising tide that lifts all boats.'

D: John Stuart Mill – *On Liberty*

Following Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty* further expanded on the rights of the individual. As liberal and democratic ideals spread through Europe and the Americas, Mill reacted to what he saw as a growing pressure to conform to conventional opinions, and a fear of 'tyranny of the majority.' As a result, Mill's writing firmly places the individual as society's primary and most important actor. Not only did he articulate that individuals have broad liberties, but also that the state's interference in the affairs of any individual should be minimal and gated by a key principle.

This is the most important piece of Mill's philosophy, and what came to be known as the 'Harm Principle' or the 'Non-aggression Principle.' *On Liberty* begins with his introduction of one principle that Mill asserts should "govern absolutely" the way in which society deals with the use of "compulsion and control ... whether the means used be physical force in the form of legal penalties, or the moral coercion of public opinion" (Mill 1859, 98). That principle is self-

protection or the prevention of harm done to other members of society, which Mill articulates as follows:

“The only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others. His own good, either physical or moral, is not a sufficient warrant. He cannot rightfully be compelled to do or forebear because it will be better for him to do so, because it will make him happier, because, in the opinions of others, to do so would be wise, or even right” (Mill 1859, 98).

For Mill, both society and the state have no ethical right to interfere in the life of another or curtail their liberty unless they are using their liberty to harm another. Regardless of society or the state’s view on the actions or beliefs of an individual, they cannot interfere. No matter if society views an individual as weird, perverse, or even unethical, said individual must harm another for the state to intervene. Mill asserted that disagreements on belief or conduct between individuals were good reasons for “remonstrating,” “reasoning,” “persuading,” or “entreating,” but not for “compelling him, or visiting him with any evil in case he do otherwise” (Mill 1859, 98). In order to justify such compulsion or evil, an individual’s action(s) must be “calculated to product evil to some one else” (Mill 1859, 98). Furthermore, an individual only has a responsibility to society on matters involving their actions that concern others. Otherwise, “in the part which merely concerns himself, his independence is, of right, absolute ... over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign” (Mill 1859, 98). This distinction between public and private conduct would become vital to later liberal theorists.

Mill’s Harm Principle and the sovereignty of the individual further elevated natural rights above governmental incursion to an even greater degree than John Locke had. However, this is

not to say that there was no place for a state under Mill's framework. Violation of said Harm Principle constituted a "*prima facie* case for punish[ment] ... by law, or where legal penalties are not safely applicable, by general disapprobation" (Mill 1859, 98). Mill also believed that one could violate the Harm Principle and cause evil to others "not only by his actions but by his inaction, and in either case he is justly accountable to them for the injury," with a violation through inaction requiring a "much more cautious exercise of compulsion than the former" (Mill 1859, 99). Mill's only exception to this accountability for inaction is making an individual "answerable for not preventing evil," which would compel an individual to act with incredible foresight at all times, creating an unnecessary burden on their liberties. Despite Mill's sweeping belief in the sovereignty of the individual, the resulting society was not necessarily a lawless one. Individuals still had responsibilities to one another, and needed to calculate the effects of their actions so as to not violate the Harm Principle. At the same time, individuals would be free to conduct their lives as they saw fit, regardless of social conventions or norms.

After outlining his Harm Principle, Mill goes on to detail what he calls the "appropriate region of human liberty," outlining numerous freedoms that have become mainstream and adopted by liberal thinkers and governments since. These freedoms derive from Mill's Harm Principle, and are as follows. First, Mill discusses the "inward domain of consciousness," which he believed demands "liberty of conscience, in the most comprehensive sense; liberty of thought and feeling; absolute freedom of opinion and sentiment on all subjects, practical or speculative, scientific, moral, or theological" (Mill 1859, 99). The domain of consciousness also includes the "liberty of expressing and publishing opinions," which although it can be conduct that concerns others, rests on the same reasons as liberty of thought, and can therefore not be separated from it. Mill's second domain "requires liberty of tastes and pursuits; of framing the plan of our life to

suit our own character; of doing as we like, subject to such consequences as may follow” (Mill 1859, 99). So long as there is no harm to another individual, these freedoms are absolute and cannot be impeded regardless of whether they are perceived as “foolish, perverse, or wrong” (Mill 1859, 99). Thirdly, Mill argued that liberties of the individual combined to create a “freedom to unite, for any purpose not involving harm to others” (Mill 1859, 99).

These three domains of freedom—consciousness, tastes/pursuits, and assembly—are all key to constituting a free society. For Mill, any society where these liberties are absent is not truly free, regardless of its form of government; he stated, “none is completely free in which they do not exist absolute and unqualified (Mill 1859, 99). Individual liberties in accordance with the Harm Principle were therefore a necessary but not sufficient condition for a free society.

A final note of importance on Mill’s philosophy concerns how his view of the sovereign individual affects the role of the state. Since a legitimate state must follow the Harm Principle and ensure that the three regions of human liberty exist “absolute and unqualified,” this greatly shrinks the role and purview of any state. Contrary to the *parens patriae* conception of the state as a parent, responsible for guiding and protecting its citizens, Mill’s conception of liberty places much greater confidence in and agency with the individual. He describes it as such:

“The only freedom which deserves the name, is that of pursuing our own good in our own way, so long as we do not attempt to deprive others of theirs, or impede their efforts to obtain it. Each is the proper guardian of his own health, whether bodily, or mental and spiritual” (Mill 1859, 99).

Unlike some later liberal thinkers who split from classical liberalism and came to be known as ‘welfare’ or ‘reform’ liberals, Mill did not advocate for a positive role for government or the expansion of government programs. Rather, he believed individuals were free to act as

they saw fit, regardless of whether it was truly in their best bodily, mental, or spiritual interests. This suspicion of government, or at the very least the belief that individuals should decide for themselves rather than the state, is a key feature that characterizes classical liberalism. Mill articulated this fear of the state and the tyranny of the majority, calling for all individuals to raise a “strong barrier of moral conviction” against an “increasing inclination to stretch unduly the powers of society over the individual, both by force of opinion and even by that of legislation” (Mill 1859, 100).

Mill’s contribution to liberal thought is best characterized by his conception of the sovereign individual, his detailed description of the rights they are inherently entitled to, and the Harm Principle’s role in limiting societal and/or state use of compulsion. Individuals were best left to their own affairs so long as they were not harming anyone else, regardless of society’s views on their conduct. In what was becoming a more developed and interconnected world, Mill cautioned against conformity and an overreaching state.

VII: Classical Liberalism Distilled

Having examined several key authors’ works and their philosophical principles outlined therein, a clearer picture of what defines classical liberalism begins to take shape. This chapter will outline the key characteristics of classical liberalism in order to establish a set of philosophical criteria used to evaluate the U.S. and U.K.’s political institutions, norms, and foreign policy.

- 1) **Equality of individuals:** The first, and perhaps most important feature of classical liberalism, is its belief in the equality of individuals, and the individual as society’s central focus. Beginning with Hobbes and echoed by Locke, Smith, and Mill, liberalism holds that all people are equal in the state of nature. As a result, liberalism is opposed to hereditary

titles, caste systems, and other ways in which certain members of society can be elevated above the rest or afforded additional rights in direct contradiction to the natural equality of all. Despite differences between individuals, all have equal rights. Said differences are also believed to result more from culture, education, or circumstance—not inherent or genetic disparities.

- 2) **Natural rights:** All theorists that contributed to liberalism have consistently reaffirmed the existence of inherent natural rights of all individual. These rights, since they preexist government, are therefore off limits to government or societal impediment barring exceptional circumstances. For some like Hobbes, these natural rights were limited to the *jus naturale*, or self-preservation of one's own life. Locke expanded on Hobbes' natural rights with his concept of 'civil interests,' the protection of which he believed was the sole purpose of society. These civil interests not only included a right to life, but also liberty, health, and private property. Adam Smith went even further, adding economic liberties (free exchange/trade and bartering) as necessary natural rights. John Stuart Mill's list of natural rights was perhaps the most expansive of all, arguing for the sovereignty of the individual and such liberties as freedom of conscience, thought, feeling, opinion and sentiment, expressing and publishing said opinions, tastes and pursuits, framing one's life to suit their character, doing as one pleases, and freedom of assembly.
- 3) **Free markets:** Essentially an extension of Smith's conception of economic rights to trade and barter as integral to human nature, liberals have generally advocated for free markets, *laissez-faire* capitalism, and limited economic intervention from the state. Liberals see such freedoms as natural extensions of human nature's propensity to exchange goods, though also

as a necessary extension of freedom of association, and a key means of allowing the individual a means by which to order their lives and pursuits.

- 4) **Skepticism about power:** Wherever power happens to reside, classical liberals are skeptical about its influence over the individual. Locke's conception of society was one where the state and magistrate were servants of the people, whose primary purpose was the protection and advancement of its citizens. If the citizens felt encroached on or ill-served by their state, Locke advocated for their right to self-determination and the establishment of a new state. Mill was not only skeptical about power in the hands of the state, but also in the hands of society, who he cautioned individuals to guard against. Even Hobbes, who reached the decidedly illiberal conclusion of the necessity of an absolute monarch, only did so out of the belief that this could best preserve peace. Locke and Mill were also notably fearful of the 'tyranny of the majority,' and advocated for separation of powers or checks on coercive authority over individuals.
- 5) **Rule of law:** While liberal thinkers did indeed elevate the individual and their inherent rights above the state and society, they still felt certain laws and principles were necessary to safeguard said rights and preserve peace. Hobbes' *lex naturalis*, or general rules of reason, advised that individuals ought to endeavor peace so long as it was possible, and also provided for covenants with other individuals to preserve the peace. Locke called for the "impartial execution of equal laws" to protect civil interests, the violation of which would result in one's own civil interests being curbed or limited; this included the separation of the law from any church and its ecclesiastical authorities, which Locke believed were a private affair of an individual. Mill's sovereign individuals also needed to follow his 'Harm Principle,' under which coercive measures could be used as a punishment for actions or inactions that harmed

or caused ‘evil’ to another individual. In all of these cases, punishment was also bound by proportionality, meaning the punishment necessarily must fit or match the severity of the crime.

- 6) **Limited government:** While later ‘reform’ or ‘welfare’ liberals advocated for a larger role for the state in the lives of its citizens, classical liberals were much more inclined to advocate for a limited state, resulting from their skepticism about power. Locke firmly believed the sole responsibility of the state was the protection and preservation of its peoples’ civil interests. If they failed to do so, the state’s authority was invalidated and the people were ethically free to form a replacement. Mill also argued against state supremacy, believing it was better to allow the individual great leeway in their private conduct—which broadly encompassed his ‘appropriate regions of human liberty.’ Individuals were the best judge of their own needs, including health, and it was therefore no place of the state to regulate their conduct or be the ‘guardian’ of the people. Referring back to Smith’s principles of the free market, liberal thinkers have generally felt the state should stay out of the economy, that individuals know best what transactions to make, and that state interference in the economy is not just inefficient, but also deprives the rights of individuals. Rather than have the state provide for its citizens, liberals generally advocate for a strong civil society built on consensual compacts and associations of individuals, trusting people to decide on and provide for their own needs.
- 7) **Toleration:** Principles of toleration stem from those of natural individual rights. In order for a diverse society with millions of people to flourish, or even remain peaceful, there is an expectation of mutual forbearance. Locke coined the ‘duty of toleration,’ believing that all views, even religious belief, should be an individual matter. Mill articulated this also, stating

“mankind are greater gainers by suffering each other to live as seems good to themselves, than by compelling each to live as seems good to the rest...” (Mill 1859, 99). So long as the rights of other individuals and the rule of law were respected, toleration for the behavior of others remains a pivotal liberal idea.

- 8) Desire for Peace:** Also resulting from liberal notions of individual freedom, a desire for peace is key. In order to grant individuals maximum freedom, a state of peace is highly desirable. In times of war or crisis, liberties are eroded as governments demand more from their citizens, curtail their freedoms, or a state of chaos results in inability of individuals to defend their rights. Since the protection of one’s own life is chief among an individual’s natural rights, a state of peace is necessary to allow the best chances of safeguarding it.

Equality of individuals, natural rights, free markets, skepticism about power, the rule of law, limited government, toleration, and a desire for peace. These principles are those which consistently appear in classical liberal philosophy, and those which are most emblematic of the philosophy undergirding the U.S.-U.K. Special Relationship. The following chapter will show how the U.S. and the U.K. embody these liberal principles, in their institutional structure, political norms/conventions, and their worldview’s foreign policy goals. The final chapter will then explain why this liberal philosophy is so integral to the Special Relationship, and how it is the primary driver that causes the relationship to be so ‘special.’

VIII: Liberalism – Philosophy in Practice

Previous chapters have discussed the Anglo-American Special Relationship broadly, looking at the coordination between the United States and United Kingdom over the past hundred or so years. Oftentimes, the leaders of the two states made direct overtures to one another, citing shared values, history, and culture as the bedrock of their relationship. However,

in the confluence of factors that make up the special relationship, the thread that binds them all together is a shared legacy of liberal political philosophy and norms. Both in political institutions, norms, and foreign affairs, both the U.S. and U.K. embody the liberal political tradition. This kinship of ideology is vital in explaining the enduring nature of the relationship, as well as the unparalleled mutual levels of trust between the states—starting from near-perfectly congruent premises, each state can trust one another to come to similar conclusions. The following chapter will detail the influence of liberal philosophy on the political institutions and norms of the United States and United Kingdom, as well as how their domestic political philosophy has led them to champion a distinctly liberal foreign policy together.

A: Political Institutions and Norms

From a first glance, one would be excused for overlooking the similarities between the political institutions of the United States and United Kingdom. Developed over centuries, the United Kingdom has one of the world's few uncoded constitutions, meaning there is no one document that can be pointed to as its definitive founding principles. The U.K. is characterized by its principle of Parliamentary Sovereignty that places the power of the legislature as supreme over the executive and the judiciary, its first-past-the-post (plurality rule) electoral system that leads to two major parties as per Duverger's Law, and the majoritarian House of Commons' strong party discipline. This has led political science literature to note its executive dominance—referred to by some as an 'elective dictatorship'—since the largest elected party's Government and Ministers have broad discretion and wide-ranging powers to enact policy with few codified institutional roadblocks. By contrast, the United States' written Constitution was crafted deliberately as a consequence of its post-colonial experience and desire to avoid any semblance to an absolute monarchy, with strict separation of powers between the legislature, executive, and

judiciary meant to throw up numerous institutional roadblocks to policymaking. However, a deeper look will reveal the many similarities and shared liberal influences on both nations' systems.

1: U.K.'s Individual Liberties and Human Rights

As the British state evolved over the years to become the modern-day United Kingdom, its gradual changes developed one of the longest-standing traditions of human rights in the world. As feudal lords and aristocrats struggled with monarchs for power and concessions were made, the Crown conferred rights to the few, which over time became rights of the many. In *The Character of Democracy: How Institutions Shape Politics*, Clucas and Valdini describe it as such: “[Britain’s] political system was not created by a group of national leaders who sat down to write a new constitution; rather, it reflects gradual changes in the nation the developed over many centuries. It was not a single conscious choice, but an evolution of events and a series of choices that eventually led to Britain’s current democratic structure” (Clucas and Valdini 2014, 32).

This evolution saw the development of a decidedly liberal political system and tradition as individual rights set out over the years were built on and reaffirmed as English common law was developed. Beginning with the Magna Carta in 1215, King John and his advisors codified fundamental principles of the rule of law and religious toleration. The charter guaranteed rights such as habeas corpus, the right against arbitrary imprisonment, guarantees to a speedy trial, and protection of church rights, reading as follows in Clause 39:

“No free man shall be seized or imprisoned, or stripped of his rights or possessions, or outlawed or exiled, or deprived of his standing in any other way, nor will we proceed with force against him, or send others to do so, except by the

lawful judgement of his equals or by the law of the land” (John and Langton 1215).

In *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, a leading work detailing how English common law developed, William Blackstone writes on the right of habeas corpus “Of great importance to the public is the preservation of this personal liberty; for if once it were left in the power of any the highest magistrate to imprison arbitrarily whomever he or his officers thought proper ... there would soon be an end to all other rights and immunities” (Blackstone 1765). While at the time the Magna Carta was intended to only apply to feudal barons, Sir Edward Coke’s *Institutes of the Lawes of England* notes that the rights it contained were reaffirmed at least 32 and possibly as many as 45 times from 1200-1400, and that their application could be interpreted to apply much more broadly. This included the *Six Statutes* passed during the reign of Edward III between 1331 and 1369, which are notable for introducing the phrase “due process of law,” and “free man” becoming “no man, of whatever estate or condition he may be” (Coke 1628). This great emphasis on the rights of individuals and the equal application of the rule of law are central to the principles of English common law and have continued to influence the U.K.’s political institutions.

In 1627, King Charles I imposed ‘forced loans’ following disagreements with Parliament over the imposition of taxes, imprisoning those who refused to pay without trial, and declaring martial law. Both the House of Commons and House of Lords passed a series of acts declaring his actions illegal that would later become known as the Petition of Right in 1628. In addition to reaffirming the due process clause of the Magna Carta, the petition outlined a number of “rights and liberties” inherently enjoyed by Englishmen, including the following—one cannot be forced to provide a gift, loan, or tax without an Act of Parliament; no free individual should be detained

or imprisoned unless cause is shown; soldiers should not be quartered in private homes without the free consent of its owner; martial law except in times of war or direct rebellion were forbidden without an Act of Parliament (Parliament of England 1628). Not only did the Petition of Right expand the protections individuals were entitled to under English common law, but it also diminished the arbitrary/absolute power of the Crown, placing more in the hands of the people. During the reign of Charles II, the Habeas Corpus Act 1679 further defined and strengthened the provisions existing in the Magna Carta and prior, which was itself reaffirmed through subsequent acts in 1803, 1804, 1816, and 1862 (Parliament of England 1679).

Following the religious and political disputes during the Glorious Revolution that culminated in the overthrow of King James II by William III of England and Mary II, the English Bill of Rights 1689 elevated Parliamentary power over that of the Monarch, recognized an even greater number of individual rights, many of which reflected John Locke's classical liberal thought. Its most notable provisions are as follows—royal suspensions of laws without Parliamentary consent is illegal (the elevation of Parliament, England's democratic body, over the hereditary Monarch); the Commission for Ecclesiastical Causes is illegal (the Commission formerly punished religious offenses through the legal system, this clause created a degree of church-state separation); the right to petition Government; the right of Englishmen to "arms for their defence"; the free election of Members of Parliament; excessive bail, fines, and "cruel and unusual punishment" were declared illegal; jury trials established for crimes of high treason; grants, fines, or promises of forfeiture before conviction/judgement were declared illegal; established a right to free speech in Parliament (Parliament of England 1689).

2: U.S.'s Individual Liberties and Human Rights

Even hundreds of years before the founding of the United States in 1776, the Magna Carta, Petition of Right, Habeas Corpus Act 1679, Bill of Rights 1689, and other statutes created a clearly liberal system of English common law. Individual rights to habeas corpus, due process, a speedy trial, right to arms, jury trial, religious practice, and early free speech were all present in pre-Revolutionary English law, as well as protections against excessive or arbitrary bail/fines, 'cruel and unusual' punishment, and Monarchic disruptions of Parliamentary democracy. William Blackstone described English common law's basis in this decidedly liberal fashion, echoing Hobbes' conception of interpersonal covenants as tools to protect 'state of nature' rights and Locke's social contract obligation of governments to protect individual natural rights:

“[The principal aim of society is to protect individuals in the enjoyment of those absolute rights, which were vested in them by the immutable laws of nature, but which could not be preserved in peace without that mutual assistance and intercourse which is gained by the institution of friendly and social communities. Hence it follows, that the first and primary end of human laws is to maintain and regulate those absolute rights of individuals” (Blackstone 1765).

It is this basis of English common law that the United States was founded upon and the footsteps in which it followed. The earliest settlements of British in the Americas carried English common law with them. Sir Edward Coke, mentioned previously for his interpretation of the Magna Carta's right to habeas corpus, went on to be the leading drafter of the colonial Virginia Charter of 1606, which stated that all born in the colonies had the same rights and liberties as though born in England (James I 1606). Indeed, the Founding Fathers, when rebelling against the British crown, did so largely based on premises derived from the British tradition of the rule of

law, impartiality in its application, and its respect by politicians. They were not rebelling against the ideals of Great Britain, but rather what were in their view clear violations of their rights under English common law as Parliament imposed taxes and threatened their liberties and independent political structures following the 7 Years War (Brown 2012, 29). Much how Parliament laid out grievances to the King before passing the Petition of Right and Bill of Rights 1689, the Founding Fathers tried repeated diplomatic solutions before ultimately issuing their Declaration of Independence in 1776, displaying a desire for peaceful resolution.

Not only a proclamation of their independence, the Declaration of Independence was an outline of the principles on which the new nation was founded. Echoing Locke's civil interests, the Declaration states, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among those are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness" (Jefferson and Committee of Five 1776). In addition to Locke and other liberal philosophical influences, the Founders were influenced by the political ideas that had already been well-established in Britain and the political traditions that they had been raised under. Like Englishmen, they believed it was their right to take their constitutional rights with them and establish local institutions and customs to serve those rights (Clucas and Valdini 2014, 37).

Following the Revolutionary War, one of the first acts the new colonial legislature took was the adoption of 'reception statutes,' which enabled their courts to receive and develop English common law in accordance with the public policy and constitutions of these states (Lammi and Chang 2004, 1). While some British traditions and institutions were intentionally scrapped (most notably the Monarchy and aristocracy), many of them were kept and adopted in the new United States, including habeas corpus, jury trials, and numerous other civil liberties

discussed previously. As new territories and states were accepted into the U.S., they adopted similar reception statutes, and at present day all but one state's legal system is based on English common law, the exception being Louisiana, whose legal system is a mix of English common, French and Spanish law. In fact, significant elements of English common law prior to 1776 still remains in effect today in many U.S. jurisdictions, either because they have never been rejected American courts through the *stare decisis* principle or because legislatures have never overwritten them by statute (Lieberman 1976, 16).

The early colonial Federalist Party in particular viewed English common law as a birthright of Independence, particularly because the rights outlined in the Declaration of Independence (life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness) were protected by common law. As the new nation's legal system and political institutions developed, the English Bill of Rights 1689 and longstanding British traditions of human rights were chief among their influences. William Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England* in particular played a large role in the development of the early American legal system, and was often quoted as the definitive source of pre-Revolutionary common law by judges and even the United States Supreme Court.

In addition to his articulation of habeas corpus' fundamental role in protecting the rule of law and other individual liberties, Blackstone is particularly well-known for what came to called 'Blackstone's Ratio.' In *Commentaries*, he stated "It is better than ten guilty persons escape than that one innocent suffer" (Blackstone 1765), suggesting that it is better to err on the side of innocent verdicts in uncertainty or the absence of evidence. His Ratio was absorbed into the British and American legal systems through common law, and influenced the development of the modern-day 'beyond a reasonable doubt' burden of proof used at criminal trials. In both the U.S. and U.K., Blackstone's Ratio is another building block of the rule of law's principle to avoid

arbitrary or uneven application of the legal system, instead treating individuals as equals and applying the law evenly.

The United States' Constitution, and specifically its Bill of Rights, contains numerous codifications of common law rights, influenced by and even taken word for word from British documents including the Magna Charter and Bill of Rights 1689. The Bill of Rights' provisions are as follows, guaranteeing key individual liberties will be protected from state incursion due to their status as natural rights preexisting government.

The 1st Amendment includes freedom of religion (including the Free Exercise clause), speech, press, assembly, and the right to petition government for redress of grievances. Many of these mirror Mill's later writings on the 'appropriate regions of human liberty,' Locke's duty of toleration, and also rights from common law texts—precursors to freedom of religion date back to the Magna Carta, and rudimentary freedom of speech and right to petition can be found in the English Bill of Rights 1689. The 2nd Amendment sets out the right to “keep and bear arms,” similar to the Bill of Rights 1689's right to “arms for their defence.” The 3rd Amendment's prohibits the quartering/lodging of soldiers in private residences, and is drawn from the Petition of Right (1st United States Congress 1791).

The 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th Amendments are all justice-related rights, drawn from the Magna Carta, Petition of Right, and English Bill of Rights. The 4th Amendment prohibits unreasonable searches and seizures of self and property, codifying liberal traditions of property rights. The 5th Amendment states trials must be preceded with an indictment, and also prohibits double-jeopardy, compulsion of self-incrimination (testifying against one's interests), and state seizure of property without compensation. The 6th Amendment guarantees the right to a fair and speedy by a local and impartial jury, the right to a public trial (no secret proceedings), and the

right to legal counsel and witnesses in criminal courts. The 7th Amendment extends the right to jury trial to federal civil cases, and also prohibits the judiciary from overturning any jury's findings of fact. Finally, the 8th Amendment prohibits excessive bail and fines, as well as "cruel and unusual punishment (phrasing explicitly taken from the Bill of Rights 1689), which is defined as arbitrary, unnecessary, or overly severe punishment. Each of these Amendments is an affirmation of the rule of law, and draws on the English common law tradition that laws should be applied evenly and proportionately (1st United States Congress 1791).

While not as explicit, the 9th Amendment states that in addition to rights codified in preceding Amendments, that are other 'non-stated' 'fundamental rights' that are unenumerated, but still protected by the Constitution. Over time, U.S. courts have through precedent included rights to travel, vote, privacy, and the right to make bodily decisions, expanding individual rights in the liberal tradition. As stated by Blackstone, English common law (and by extension the U.S. legal system which is built on its foundation) sees the protection of natural individual rights as its primary aim, echoing the Lockean conception of the social contract and government requiring the consent of the governed.

3: U.S.'s Institutions and Conventions

The Founders of the United States not only set out numerous individual rights, but designed the U.S.'s institutions to avoid concentration of power and the 'tyranny of the majority,' influenced by liberal fears of government and desire for a limited state. While separation of powers as a prescriptive solution was taken from Montesquieu's *The Spirit of the Laws*, Montesquieu's writings were based on his observations of the British constitution's tripartite system, and both the colonists and the British were strongly influenced by Locke and other liberal philosophers as justification for the system's necessity. The new U.S. Republic

created three coequal branches of government, designed to check one another and prevent any one of them from concentrating power by usurping the powers of another. Under Article I, Congress was given power to pass legislation and tax, to confirm judicial and executive appointments, to declare war, and to ratify treaties. Article II charged the President with executing the laws, gave them a legislative veto, and identified them as the Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the military. Article III created the judiciary with the Supreme Court as its head, and charged it with maintaining the legal system (Philadelphia Convention 1788).

Through this structure, each of the branches had their own domain, but overlaps required them to work together. For example, Congressional ‘power of the purse’ (taxes and budgetary allocation) provided a monetary check on the Executive and Judiciary, as did Congressional approval of appointments. While the Executive was the Commander-In-Chief of the military, they could not declare war on their own, and any treaties they negotiated as Head of State required Congressional ratification, as did appointment of their Cabinet officials. While the Judiciary was originally the weakest of the three branches, early in the days of the new nation *Marbury v. Madison* held that the Judiciary constitutionally had the power to declare the legislation and actions of the Legislature and Executive to be unconstitutional, expanding the branch’s power to check the others (Marshall and Supreme Court of the United States 1803). However, the budget, size, and scope of the judiciary are able to be altered by the legislature, and all appointments to it require Congressional approval.

In addition to the separation of powers at the national level, the United States created a system of federalism, granting fairly expansive powers to individual states. The 10th Amendment to the Constitution states that there are powers explicitly ‘enumerated’ to the federal government—including the power to declare war, tax, and regulate interstate commerce—the

remaining powers are ‘reserved’ for the states. This federal-state split creates an even greater constraint on state power, and is a philosophically liberal acknowledgement that government closer to the people can understand their needs better, preventing the national government from growing too strong and denying the minority of their rights (Clucas and Valdini 2014, 193).

James Madison notes this in Federalist No. 52, stating that a “compound republic” further restricts concentration of power through not only the separation of powers, but the existence of two distinct governments. In his words, this institutional design provides a “double security ... to the rights of the people” and a means to protect against the tyranny of the majority” (Madison 1788). The states are given further power through their representation in the U.S. Senate, where they are guaranteed equal representation regardless of population with two Senators per state. The Senate’s sole power over Congressional confirmations and treaty ratification gives states national influence, and the bicameral nature of the legislature requires Congress’ chambers themselves work with one another to pass legislation or override the Presidential veto—another institutional design intended to prevent concentration of power.

4: U.K.’s Institutions and Conventions

While it is clear that the British legal system influenced the American system through English common law (which were both in turn inspired by the liberal philosophical tradition), the institutional design itself is what many point to as a sign of divergence and differing ideals. As mentioned, the principle of Parliamentary Sovereignty that evolved through British history gives Parliament wide-ranging powers, and strong party discipline in the two main parties has resulted in many of these powers concentrated in the executive and exercised by Government Ministers. While this alone characterizes the British Parliament as a very majoritarian body with few protections against the ‘tyranny of the majority,’ I would argue that there are a great number of

checks on the exercise of government power in the U.K. True, they are uncoded, but so too is the whole constitution, and this does not make either any less tangible in its effect. In fact, despite the separation of powers codified in the U.S. Constitution, political scientists Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt argue that institutions are “more than just formal rules; they encompass the shared understandings of appropriate behavior that overlay them” (Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018, 213). The institutions themselves are not sufficient; rather, the shared set of beliefs and practices established gradually and with difficulty help to make these institutions work.

As has been noted, Britain and the United States shared somewhat of a “constitutional DNA”—their shared body of political thought their legal and political systems, shaped by centuries of common political philosophy, jurisprudence, and practice. This common practice, common political norms of pragmatic gradualism, respect for the rule of law, and a commitment to individual liberty and human rights are those guiding both the U.S. and U.K. (Foerster and Raymond 2017, 5). The U.K.’s constitution may be uncoded, but through common law court precedent and shared political norms it is universally upheld and adhered to by the British political elite, especially structural traditions and values of individual liberties.

Britain’s uncoded constitution itself is what legal theorists have called a ‘mixed’ system. Resulting from its history as an accumulation of political norms and practices, Blackstone states that the system is not a democracy, aristocracy, or monarchy; rather, it is a mix combining the best of all three—the virtues of democratic participation in finding popularly supported policies, the wisdom and stability of an aristocracy to cool passions, and the power and effectiveness of a monarchy to enact policy. The British structures, despite their lack of constitutional formalism, have not resulted in tyranny, suggesting political and social

conventions are just as important if not more important in upholding political accountability and safeguarding civil liberties (Iyer 2018, 509).

Outside of mere elite attitudes and norms, political conventions (defined as important but unwritten norms with the force of custom that shape political action) in the U.K. dictate how large portions of how its day-to-day government is run and how its institutions interact (Elster 2014). For example, despite the Monarch constitutionally possessing wide-ranging powers, they now only act on advice of their Ministers and are bound to accept all advice. They cannot ignore advice, nor can they publicly voice any political opinions, but must remain impartial. While the Monarch has the constitutional right to be consulted, to encourage and to warn (Bagehot 1867), they must give Royal Assent to all legislation passed by Parliament. Additionally, Royal Prerogative—which is difficult to define due to the Monarch’s historically absolute authority but spans from regulating the civil service to granting mercy (pardons) and honor—is now largely exercised by Government Ministers or “on the advice of” the Prime Minister. The Monarchy as an institution remains, and by right must be consulted, though its role is more of a symbolic check that influences Ministers to self-regulate legislation and policy since they act in the name of the Monarch.

Historically, the House of Lords was the more powerful of the U.K.’s legislative chambers, where Lords sat as hereditary peers and even served in judicial roles/functions as Law Lords. However, just as the aristocracy was ceded power from the Monarch gradually, over time the House of Commons became the dominant of the two chambers. Both chambers can still introduce legislation, though the House of Lords’ former power to veto legislation (through permanent delay) was removed in 1909 after they rejected the Liberal Government’s budget. Following this development, their powers to delay legislation were pruned back from two years,

to one year, to a month, to the current two weeks. Other conventions also constrain the Lords, including that money bills must originate in the House of Commons and cannot be opposed by the Lords, and the Salisbury Convention which states that they will not oppose any legislation that was in the Government's election manifesto. Before the Law Lords were removed and their judicial powers were vested in a new Supreme Court and Ministry of Justice, they had already previously followed a self-imposed restriction restricting themselves from participating in Parliamentary debate (Britpolitics n.d.; Elster 2014).

Even the role of the Prime Minister and their selection is a constitutional convention. The Monarchy is technically able to select anyone as their First Minister to form a Government in their name, but over time it came to be a Member of Parliament, since the 20th century a Member of the House of Commons, and now the leader of the party with an absolute majority in the Commons. The Prime Minister is able to select their Cabinet Minister colleagues, who serve as a check on the Prime Minister due to their status as high-profile members of the Parliamentary Party—after all they are only *pares inter pares*, first among equals. Cabinet Ministers are conventionally bound by 'collective Cabinet responsibility,' and must either support the Government's policies or resign. Ministers and the Cabinet are both individually and collectively responsible to Parliament, providing a legislative check and scrutiny on the executive, a way of monitoring performance and assigning blame. As a part of this Ministerial responsibility to Parliament, both the Prime Minister and their Cabinet colleagues must answer questions on a weekly and as-needed basis in front of Parliament and its select committees. The new Supreme Court of the U.K., established in 2009, acts as a further check on Parliament and Ministers, and also holds certain Acts of Parliament (notably individual liberty/human rights-related ones previously discussed including the Magna Carta, Petition of Right, and Bill of Rights 1689) as

more constitutionally important/protected, and therefore less able to be changed on a whim. The Supreme Court has also constrained the power of Ministers to unilaterally exercise Royal Prerogative without Parliamentary consent, such as when it recently ruled that the Government needed statutory authorization to invoke Article 50 of the European Communities Act due to its momentous and far-reaching impact (Iyer 2018, 523). Finally, while not constitutionally bound to, by convention a Prime Minister resigns after losing a general election, both from the office of PM and usually as head of their Party (Britpolitics n.d.; Elster 2014).

In addition to the complex web of political norms and conventions that constrain Parliament, its Ministers, and the Monarchy, recent decades have seen a pseudo-federalist arrangement take shape between Westminster and the member-states of the United Kingdom. While the U.K. is still undoubtedly a unitary state as devolution can be repealed by Westminster at any time, political conventions make this unlikely if not impossible. What was originally a norm of regional involvement in policymaking and implementation in Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales has led to the creation of U.K. Ministerial departments and regional Parliaments, otherwise known as devolution (Clucas and Valdini 2014, 190). The Welsh Office was created to give Wales Cabinet representation and control over housing, transportation, education, local government, and economic planning, as well as publicly funding administrative functions through quasi-governmental independent agencies known as quangos. The Scottish Office managed longstanding separate education and legal systems in Scotland as well as other domestic matters.

Following the Troubles in Northern Ireland and Scottish/Welsh calls for regional control, each of the member-states of the U.K. aside from England were granted regional Parliaments—Holyrood in Scotland, Stormont in Northern Ireland, and Senedd Cymru in Wales. These

regional parliaments were given legislative power over a wide range of policy areas, including health, social services, education, housing, local government, agriculture, transportation, tourism, justice, policy, and sports, while others were reserved for Westminster based on “national importance” including foreign affairs and national security (as well as abortion, genetics, drug misuse, and society security in Scotland, and elections, firearms, consumer safety, and nuclear energy in Northern Ireland) (Clucas and Valdini 2014, 191). By what has come to be known as the Sewel Convention, the Westminster Parliament is expected to legislate only on reserved matters, and leave those officially devolved or on local matters to the regional Parliaments. This system of devolution, while not officially federalism, mirrors the U.S. national government’s federal-state constraints, and acts as a conventional check against government tyranny. This, in combination with other political conventions, means that Westminster and the U.K.’s political leaders are much more bound by the rule of law than they may appear at first glance, limiting the power of the state and preventing an absolute tyranny of the majority.

5: U.S. and U.K.’s Social Spending and Economic Freedom

In addition to their shared liberal values of individual liberties and constraints on the absolute unilateral power of the state, both the United States and United Kingdom follow a more classically liberal conception of the realms of state involvement in private affairs. John Stuart Mill’s belief that the individual is the ‘proper guardian of one’s own health’ and Adam Smith’s defense of free markets are reflected in the free-market capitalist economic approach and comparatively-modest social safety nets that the U.S. and U.K. have compared to their advanced industrial democratic peers. Known as the Anglo-Saxon model or Anglo-Saxon capitalism, the state in the U.S. and U.K. is characterized by its comparatively low level of taxes, regulation, and degree of public sector services (Oxford Reference n.d.).

When looking at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) data on Social Protection/Social Spending, this approach is evident. The OECD defines social expenditure as cash benefits, direct in-kind provisions of goods and services, and tax breaks with social purposes. In order to be considered a 'social' program, it has to either involve redistribution of resources across households or compulsory participation. The United States spends 18.7% of its GDP on social spending, below the OECD average of 20% of GDP. While the U.K. is slightly higher than the U.S. and OECD average at 20.6% of its GDP (likely due to its National Healthcare System), both the U.S. and U.K. spend far less on social protection than other European allies, with Spain at 24.7% of GDP, Germany at 25.9% of GDP, and especially France at 31% of GDP (OECD 2019). Even though the U.S. and the U.K. do spend considerably on certain public programs—Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security in the U.S., NHS and universal credit in the U.K.—their approach is comparatively limited and restrained.

The United States and United Kingdom also rank highly in the freedom of their markets. The Economic Freedom Index (EFI) ranks nations' economies based on their rule of law, government size, regulatory efficiency, and open markets, assigning them a score from 0-100, with 100 being the freest/most desirable. In 2021, the EFI ranked the U.S. as the 20th freest in the world scoring 74.8, and the U.K. the 7th freest scoring 78.4. While the U.S.'s score was harmed by a sharp decline in fiscal health (subcategory scoring of 34.9) which accounts for its comparatively lower ranking, subcategory scores for the rule of law (76.3), property rights (79.7), and open markets (81.8) show that the nation still has a commitment to aforementioned liberal principles. The U.K.'s score was harmed by its judicial effectiveness, but also performed particularly well in the rule of law (83.6), property rights (87.6), and open markets (81.3). In addition to their subcategory scores pertaining to explicit liberal values, economic freedom in the

U.S. and the U.K. stands out when compared to peer European nations. Germany was ranked 29th with a score of 72.5, Spain was 39th with a score of 69.9, and France was ranked 64th with a score of 65.7 (Heritage Foundation 2021). Combined with OECD social spending data, the Economic Freedom Index makes it clear that the United States and United Kingdom are closely aligned not only on their longstanding norms of individual liberties, but also in their expectations of the state and commitment to free market capitalism.

B: Foreign Policy Approach and Worldview

While the United States was founded in rebellion against its former colonial master the United Kingdom, it certainly was not in rebellion against the U.K.'s liberal values. The previous section detailed how English common law's emphasis on individual liberties and the rule of law are a sort of 'constitutional DNA' carried by both nations, which has led them to form norms and institutional structures designed to uphold and defend these values. In many ways, their worldviews and approach to foreign affairs are a natural offshoot of their domestically-held liberal values, a tool primarily to protect their domestic regimes and promote their values abroad (Brown 2012, 28). In this respect, the two are natural partners to one another. The consistent accountability that political leaders in both states have to their common constitutional values ensures that neither nation will deviate too radically from their foundational principles, and provides them with confidence in their dealings with one another that the special relationship can be relied on for stability of purpose and opportunities for further cooperation (Brown 2012, 12).

1: Historical Survey of U.S. and U.K. Foreign Policy

As far back as 1812, the U.S. and the U.K. had plans for an allyship against the Holy Alliance (Austria, Prussia, and Russia) in Europe to combat threats to their common constitutional political tradition. While they were eventually scrapped, the plans displayed a

shared desire to protect against aggressive, absolutist threats to their liberal democratic way of life. Similarly, the British supported the Monroe Doctrine in 1823, sending British ships to help the U.S. police the Atlantic and prevent further European imperial settlements (Brown 2012, 4). This showed that even in times of relative discord between the nations, there was a willingness to band together for common philosophically-rooted interests.

Leading up to World War II, both the leaders of the United States and United Kingdom continually espoused a desire to work with one another against the rise of fascism based on common philosophical values. Roosevelt's *Four Freedoms* speech sent out a message to democracies of the world, stating that Americans were "vitally concerned in your defense of freedom," and that the "energies, resources, and organizing powers" of the U.S. were there to "give you the strength to regain and maintain a free world" (Brown 2012, 9). Churchill voiced a similar message, a desire to protect the liberties enjoyed under the British constitution, the "permanent prevention" of war, and the establishment of "the conditions of freedom and democracy as rapidly as possible in all countries" (Brown 2012, 9). At the time, with tensions mounted preceding World War II, there was a growing Anglo-American attitude that the free nations of the world were inherently at war with despotic ones. In order to present a unified front and alternative to fascism, U.S. and U.K. leaders found a natural ally in one another to defend "the great principles of freedom and the rights of man which are the joint inheritance of the English-speaking world and which through Magna Carta, the [English] Bill of Rights, the Habeas Corpus, trial by jury, and the English common law find their most famous expression in the American Declaration of Independence," as stated by Churchill in his 1946 *Sinews of Peace* speech (Brown 2012, 12).

Following the defeat of the Nazis and the end of World War II, this worldview rooted in liberal traditions became the alternative offered to Soviet hegemony. Instead of communism and totalitarian governance, the U.S. and the U.K. pushed a world order based on adherence to liberal political institutions, principles of common law, and stable economic policy with the goal of promoting freedom and constitutional democracy (Brown 2012, 17). Both nations began forming alliances with like-minded nations and creating liberal intergovernmental organizations, intending to uphold the delicate balance of power between the West and the U.S.S.R. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was founded as a part of this broader strategy, as was the Marshall Plan, the Bretton Woods agreements, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and World Trade Organization (WTO), and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (Ikenberry 2005). Not only did the U.S. and U.K. spearhead organizations as a military counterbalance to the Soviet bloc, but also pushed to open the world economy and remove trade barriers. Instead of using their post-war standing for conquest or domination, the two nations attempted to translate their power into the spread of freedom and act as a stabilizing feature in the international balance of power.

Preferring to avoid military action whenever possible, in 1945 the U.S. and U.K. were founding members of the United Nations, whose Charter laid out its three main goals: collectively managing threats to peace and acts of aggression, securing the principles of equal rights and national self-determination, and to act as a forum for solving economic, social, and humanitarian questions (United Nations 1945). The UN Charter sought to universalize liberal values that had been core to the American and British constitutional order for centuries, namely equal rights, self-determination, and peaceful conflict resolution. One of the most important UN documents came shortly after its founding in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

(UDHR), which further universalized key classical liberal values, recognizing all humans as “born free and equal in dignity and rights” regardless of “nationality, place of residence, gender, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, language, or any other status” (United Nations General Assembly 1948). Numerous individual freedoms were codified in the UDHR, including dignity, liberty, equality, the right to life, the prohibition of slavery and torture, freedom of movement, property rights, freedom of thought, opinion, expression, religion and conscience, word, and peaceful association (United Nations General Assembly 1948). Not only were the United States and United Kingdom deepening their own special relationship, but they were also simultaneously adopting a stance of liberal internationalism—the United Nations and other IGOs became a method of spreading their domestic order and furthering liberal values worldwide. The traditional ‘us’ versus ‘them’ mentality of anarchic state relations had broadened the ‘us’ to include the wider community of liberal democracies against authoritarian states (Brown 2012, 24).

While the United Nations and liberal international world order the U.S. and U.K. were building broadened the liberal democratic community, there was still a real and perceived gap between the Special Relationship and other U.S./U.K. ally relations. While there was a broadening conception that regimes ought to be ‘free,’ strong disagreements between the British/Americans and other European nations on how ‘free’ regimes should function prevented the development of other special relationships. In fact, IGOs and other international alliances revealed just how close the degree of political similarity needed to be for an especially close alliance to function properly (Brown 2012, 27). To give one example, the 1961 British decision to seek entry into the European Economic Community (EEC) was backed by the U.S., who wanted their close ally to join and influence how the EEC took shape; however, the French

opposed their entry, delaying it for around 10 years as a protest against British acceptance of Polaris submarines and the exclusivity of the U.S.-U.K. nuclear relationship. Even the British public were torn; at the time a poll asking if they would prefer to deepen ties with the U.S. or Europe favored the U.S., 55% to 22% (Brown 2012, 26).

Their shared historical conceptions of freedom shaped by liberal philosophy allowed the U.S. and U.K. to enjoy a deeper bond with one another compared to their other ally relationships, and so it was fitting that the U.S. immediately turned to the British as the natural power to shore up defenses against the growing Soviet threat as Cold War tensions escalated. After all, it requires quite a strong trust in another nation, a common moral purpose, to grant them technology of the most destructive weapon ever created—trust stemming from the basic understanding that the similar nature of political life in both countries would be stable enough to ward off hasty or whimsical use. The presidency of Ronald Reagan and the premiership of Margaret Thatcher represented this commonality, a desire to preserve liberal democracy and its conception of freedom. Thatcher articulated it as such, attributing the uniqueness of the special relationship to their common law inheritance, “our contribution to the development of representative democracy, of economic liberty, and of the rule of law” (Brown 2012, 41).

Reagan and Thatcher not only furthered commitment to liberal ideals, but also more classically liberal ones like the reduction of the state and commitment to *laissez-faire* free-market capitalism. They articulated shared liberal norms against the ‘soft despotism’ of the temptation for governments to extend the scope of their activities and responsibilities (Brown 2012, 41), embracing the Anglo-Saxon model of capitalism discussed in the previous section. Reduced income taxes, disciplined monetary policy, and governmental deregulation became foreign policy goals too as a natural outworking of domestic concerns, with the U.S. and U.K.

pushing the promotion of free trade and decreased governmental regulation of the private sector abroad. In *The Political Economy of the Special Relationship*, Jeremy Green writes that interactive Anglo-American development shaped the financial globalization we know today, creating a distinctive sphere of Anglo-American capitalism centered on financial integration through institutional interdependencies between private finance in London and New York City and linkages between Anglo-American treasures and central banks. Internationally, “Anglo-American financial integration spurred the wider liberalization of global finance” (Green 2020, 2). Reagan and Thatcher’s commitment to liberal principles, especially governmental deregulation and free markets, became key components of U.S. and U.K. liberal internationalism.

The Cold War also saw a distinct moralization of language when discussing liberal internationalism, speaking of a moral responsibility to ensure free societies and the promotion of political and economic freedoms (Brown 2012, 42). Reagan and Thatcher saw the U.S. and U.K.’s careful practice of self-governance as the basis for a strong partnership, and desirable exports to the world. Escalating tensions saw the outbreak of certain conflicts and proxy wars, but even during these conflicts both nations maintained a commitment to peace and proportionalism. For example, Thatcher wrote during the Falklands War of her desire to win international support and hesitance to veto any critical UNSC resolutions that could have arose, believing that a lack of a like-minded coalition could weaken their position (Brown 2012, 45). Even amassing nuclear weapons and increasing defense spending were done more as posturing and the belief in Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD), not a break from liberal norms of peace or the rule of law. The state of détente that emerged with the U.S.S.R. and other authoritarian regimes was not a concession of liberal ideals, but instead an upholding of international peace.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the U.S. and the U.K. continued their commitment to the liberal world order that they had built. A recent report from the Congressional Research Service characterized the U.S.'s role in the world post-WWII to present day as consisting of four main elements: 1) global leadership; 2) defense and promotion of the liberal international order; 3) defense and promotion of freedom, democracy, and human rights; and 4) the prevention of the emergence of regional hegemons in Eurasia (Congressional Research Service 2021, 1). Global leadership was defined as an internationalist foreign policy, deep and global engagement with other nations and IGOs, liberal order building (i.e., liberal democracy promotion), and liberal internationalism/hegemony. Defense and promotion of this liberal international order has been done with support of the U.S.'s allies—most notably the U.K.—encompassing respect for territorial integrity of nations; preference for the peaceful resolution of disputes consistent with international law; respect for international law, global rules and norms, and universal values; strong international institutions to implement and support universal values and norms; and the use of liberal (rules-based) international trading and investment systems to advance open economic engagement, development, and growth (Congressional Research Service 2021, 2).

Built by the U.S. and U.K. to avoid the problems of the first half of the 20th century (WWI, Great Depression, the rise of Communism and Fascism, Ukraine Famine, Holocaust, and WWII), the international order's purpose is to defend and promote freedom, democracy, and human rights as universal values, while criticizing and resisting authoritarian/illiberal forms of government (Congressional Research Service 2021, 3). This purpose stemmed from several sources, including inherent Anglo-American commitment to liberal ideals, Democratic Peace Theory, and the use of 'soft power' to encourage like-minded governments who would be more

willing to work and trade with them. This purpose also explains the fourth and final goal of the U.S. to prevent regional hegemons in Eurasia. First with the U.S.S.R. and now China, the emergence of an illiberal authoritarian state represents a threat to Anglo-American interests, both due to the incongruity between underlying philosophical values and their threat to the larger liberal international world order (Congressional Research Service 2021, 4).

While some have downplayed the importance of the U.K.'s role in assisting U.S. priorities, others argue that under John Major and Tony Blair's New Labour British foreign policy was reinforced and reinvented as a global power fit for an age of globalization and humanitarian intervention. This was done in the liberal tradition, with an "unflinching devotion to cosmopolitan ethics [(belief in an international community of equals)], economic freedom, strong international law and the institutions to enforce it, and the extension of liberal democratic forms of government" (Bevir, Daddow, and Hall 2013, 5–6). As noted in a Chapter II's historical survey of the Special Relationship, post-9/11 the U.S. and U.K. further deepened already-unprecedented military, intelligence, and diplomatic ties, widening their collective sphere of influence and interests. This is a reflection of a continued commitment to liberal values in both rhetoric and action.

Indeed, the Boris Johnson Government and Joe Biden Administration both recently released foreign policy statements reflecting this commitment. Johnson's Government published a comprehensive review of British foreign policy with its commitments for the future. It noted that increased attention would be paid to the Indo-Pacific region, specifically the rise of China which is described as "by far the most geopolitical factor in the world today" that poses a "systemic challenge to our security, prosperity and values," while warning that Britain must "remain open to Chinese trade and investment." In committing to liberal values and free trade,

the report expressed U.K. desire to seek to become a pact member of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and an Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) “dialogue partner.” Increased military presence and more active/unpredictable use around the world represents a British desire to exert its influence in support of its values worldwide. Finally, the U.K.’s aspiration to become a “science and technology superpower” fits in with its other intentions as part of a push to combat the accelerating in the decline of “democracy and pluralism, accelerated by Covid-19” through free trade and “regulatory diplomacy” in order to influence global norms (HM Government 2021; The Economist 2021).

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken echoed similar concerns in a recent speech, recommitting to liberal internationalism that the Trump administration had been wary of. He spoke of a number of global challenges that U.S. leadership would be crucial in combatting, but stressed the need for allies to work with. Among these challenges included renewed threats to democracy, growing authoritarianism, and governments becoming less transparent. On the importance of democracies, he stated that they are “more stable, more open, better partners to us, more committed to human rights, less prone to conflict, and more dependable markets for our goods and services.” This clear emphasis on liberal values was supported by another; a desire for peace, stating the U.S. would not promote democracy through “costly military intervention or by attempting to overthrow authoritarian regimes by force.” Blinken also supported the “stable and open international system” against China’s growing threat to it. The system, he stated, allows for the creation of new markets for our products, new allies to deter aggression, and new partners to meet global challenges—comprised of “all the rules, values, and relationships that make the world work the way we want it to, because it ultimately serves the interest and reflects the values

of the American people.” With those priorities laid out, Blinken reiterated that the U.S. would “lead with our values [and] stand firm behind commitments to human rights, democracy, and the rule of law” (Blinken 2021).

2: U.S. and U.K. UNGA Speeches (2000-2019) - Manual Analysis Methodology

In addition to the U.S. and U.K.’s recent rhetorical support of liberal philosophy and their closely aligned UNGA voting records since the body’s founding (see Chapter V on the Special Relationship’s longevity), an analysis of U.S. and U.K. UNGA opening speeches since 2000 yields similar results. These opening speeches set out their foreign policy goals for the year to their fellow UN member-states, and serve as a useful barometer of their priorities based on what they mention or omit. With this in mind, I manually analyzed each of the speeches, documenting language reflecting support for each of the eight liberal values outlined in the previous chapter and scoring each speech to calculate the U.S. and U.K.’s stated commitment to liberal values since 2000, with each value being weighted equally. Scores per speech and averages were out of 100, with each absent value deducting 12.5/100 points. Oftentimes there was bleed-over between language concerning certain values—notably equality of individuals with natural rights and skepticism about power/limited government. The following were the criteria I used to determine language supportive of each value (where support of said value was not explicitly stated word-for-word).

a: Equality of individuals: Aside from any explicit mentions of equality or individual rights, mentions of the international community’s shared commitment to its people, common humanity, or the UN Charter’s mission (which includes principles of equal rights and national self-determination) all counted as support of this value.

b: Natural rights: This value was generally supported explicitly, but mentions of rights, the mission of the UN Charter (which includes principles of equal rights and national self-determination), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, or human rights all counted as support of natural rights.

c: Free markets: Where not explicitly mentioned, support of free markets included language about free or open trade/investment, economic freedoms, and the removal of trade/capital barriers.

d: Skepticism about power: This value was rarely explicitly stated, but instead inferred from worries about governmental power/overreach, or concerns directed towards terrorist and other non-governmental threats to peace or human rights.

e: Rule of law: Another value that was usually mentioned explicitly, support for the rule of law was also counted if a speech mentioned the importance of the rules-based international community, respect for treaty obligations, or international law.

f: Limited government: Similar to skepticism about power, the value of limited government was supported by language critical of government overreach or use of force against its civilians/neighbors.

g: Toleration: Sometimes mentioned explicitly, language supporting toleration also extended to protection of minority rights or desire for peaceful coexistence between varying ethnic, religious, or political groups.

h: Desire for peace: This value was explicitly stated in nearly every speech, either as a goal of the international community or member-states' obligations under the UN Charter.

3: U.S. and U.K. UNGA Speeches (2000-2019) - Manual Analysis Results

The analysis of speeches yielded results in line with what was expected based on the previous section's institutional and foreign policy analysis. Both the U.S. and the U.K. supported nearly every liberal value in all of their speeches to the UNGA given since 2000, neither state ever having more than one value absent per speech. The results can be seen recorded below, with a green cell indicating language supportive of its column's value in the speech given during the row's year, and a red cell indicating its absence.

| United States | | | | | | | | |
|---------------|---------------------|----------------|--------------|------------------|-------------|--------------------|------------|-------|
| Year | Equality/Individual | Natural Rights | Free Markets | Skepticism/Power | Rule of Law | Limited Government | Toleration | Peace |
| 2000 | | | | | | | | |
| 2001 | | | | | | | | |
| 2002 | | | | | | | | |
| 2003 | | | | | | | | |
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| Year | Equality/Individual | Natural Rights | Free Markets | Skepticism/Power | Rule of Law | Limited Government | Toleration | Peace |
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Totaling the scores for both the United States and United Kingdom, the U.S. received a 98.125 and the U.K. a 97.5, neither giving a speech that scored lower than 87.5 over the course of the past 19 years (United Nations and Strauss 2021). Another interesting finding was that the only liberal value ever omitted in any speech since 2000 was free markets, and aside from speeches given by Donald Trump (which were more protectionist in tone rather than supportive of free trade), other omissions of language supportive of free markets seemed more a result of more pressing priorities or unintentional oversight. For example, both the U.S. and U.K. did not mention free markets in the early 2000s, when the post-9/11 wars in Afghanistan and Iraq were the primary subject of their speeches. Both the U.S. and the U.K. were usually explicit about their support of most liberal values, particularly peace, the rule of law, individual rights, and equality.

Language supportive other values was more covert, but still apparent. Toleration, for example, often was supported by language displaying concern for religious or minority rights under threat. Skepticism about power and limited government often took the form of criticizing human rights violations, overreach, or acts of aggression by member states or nongovernmental/terrorist groups, like when the U.S. and U.K. condemned the invasion of Crimea, the Asaad regime's use of chemical weapons against domestic civilians, and the threat that ISIS/ISIL posed to peace, stability, and civilians in the Middle East (United Nations and Strauss 2021). Regardless of how strict or lenient requirements for qualifying language were, my analysis of U.S. and U.K. speeches affirmed that their rhetoric surrounding foreign policy is deeply rooted in the domestic liberal values they both hold.

human rights]” for the U.S. and “the building blocks of democracy, fair economies, and open societies” and “human rights and human dignity” for the U.K (United Nations and Strauss 2021).

Overall, an analysis of the political institutions, norms, foreign policy, and speeches of the United States and United Kingdom affirm the importance of classical liberal philosophy in determining their domestic and international outlooks. At home, principles of equality, natural rights, and constraints on government power/size are upheld through the rule of law. Abroad, the U.S. and the U.K. have since WWII built an international liberal world order reflecting their philosophical priorities, emblematic of a blurring of domestic and foreign policy (Bevir, Daddow, and Hall 2013, 2). The special relationship then represents a natural partnership of two like-minded nations, whose leaders and populace’s worldview are shaped by historical traditions of classically liberal philosophy. The capacity for trust between the two states stems from this philosophical tradition, each able to rely on one another due to the political culture and worldview that have resulted from their similar starting premises. Their philosophical commonality not only explains the closeness of the U.S. and U.K., but also why such a ‘special relationship’ is unlikely to manifest in their other ally relationships—both the longstanding philosophical history they share and the degree of closeness simply cannot be found in other potential partnerships.

IX: The Special Relationship as an Ontological Phenomenon –

Concluding Thoughts

At this point, several key questions have been examined and answered. The special relationship between the U.S. and U.K. does indeed exist, both as a matter of public and elite perception and under Harnisch’s definition of what constitutes a special relationship. Not only do the U.S. and U.K. give each other preferential treatment compared to their other allies, but other

countries expect them to do so. They both have unprecedented defense and intelligence ties, and more often than not, consult with one another on foreign policy. The classical liberal philosophical tradition that their states were molded on is one that continues to inform their worldviews and approach to both domestic and foreign policy.

While proving that the special relationship did and does indeed exist, constructivist theory provided an ontological basis for its existence. While not tangible or quantifiable, the special relationship is an observable phenomenon that influences real-world thoughts and actions. As opposed to realists or liberal theorists—where objective facts like military power, trade relations, institutions, and domestic preferences are key predictors of state behavior—constructivists believe these objective realities are better viewed through the meaning states have constructed around them as a result of their history, ideas, norms, and beliefs (Slaughter 2011, 4).

In practice, this constructivist view explains the difference in how the U.S. views the U.K.'s military and nuclear capacity compared to say China's or North Korea's. Instead of simply acting based on 'rational interests,' constructivists believe rationality is mediated by the social norms that states exist in. This theory explains how the U.S. and U.K., two states with greatly differing levels of power and influence, remain so close and act in concert with one another despite what simple rational or material interests might predict. By believing that the Anglo-American special relationship exists, this reinforces institutional structures like intelligence and military cooperation, as well as expectations of other states, in essence making it 'more real'—an effect which is self-reinforcing over time. As such, the special relationship can be said to be an ontological phenomenon—it exists in a tangible enough sense to influence the minds and actions of political actors both within the U.S. and U.K. and more broadly across the

globe. Its existence is ontologically grounded in classical liberal philosophy, meaning that its existence is predicated on classical liberalism.

Beyond simply providing the basis by which we can say the special relationship ‘exists,’ constructivism helps to get at my central argument that classical liberal philosophy is what makes the relationship special. As mentioned in earlier chapters, the scholarship on the special relationship has posited numerous theories in explaining its existence and longevity from the temperament of its leaders, to shared interests (economic and/or military), to shared language and culture. I do not seek to discredit these theories, nor do I seek to downplay the important roles that they have played in the development and sustainment of the special relationship. However, they are all only portions of a larger picture.

Why, you may ask? Because every one of these pieces is downstream from philosophy. Philosophy is not merely some jumble of abstract principles in the ether, nor is it a smokescreen to distract from the material world. Philosophy shapes the thoughts and actions of every individual, whether they know it consciously or not. On a micro level, a bully may take advantage of a smaller student out of an internalized belief in the Social Darwinist principles of Sumner, of the strong being destined to champion over the weak. On a macro level, societies and states go to war over philosophy; Europe was the frequent battleground of Catholics and Protestants whose faith drove them to go to war with one another, topple their rulers, and forcibly convert the masses to their ‘correct’ beliefs. Philosophies are not just opinions or beliefs—they shape the very worldview and actions of their believers. These actions and beliefs in turn shape the cultures of societies; Dumbrell notes that values, ideology, and beliefs are all components of culture (Dumbrell 2006a, 15). Without a philosophical basis, cultures could not

exist—without philosophy, how would a culture decide what was of importance to prioritize, what the ideal form of government was, or what was ethical?

In his book *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion*, social psychologist Jonathan Haidt examines why there is such a great inability for political leaders and the general public to agree with one another politically, to the point where political differences inspire gridlock at best at animosity at worst. While answering this question, Haidt discovered that not only do those of differing political ideologies disagree, but they have intrinsically different moral intuitions (initial perceptions of people and events that are internalized as self-evident truths). These different moral intuitions cause a certainty in one's own truth, and opposition to contrary beliefs (Haidt 2012).

Haidt's work is a practical illustration of the effect of ideology and philosophy, and an affirmation of constructivism's insistence on the tangible role that ideas and norms play in the decision-making of states. Certainly, short-term interests can outweigh or overshadow the effect of philosophical differences. The U.S. and U.K. both partnered with the Soviet Union (U.S.S.R.) against Nazi Germany during World War II. The U.S. and U.K. both continue to trade with China and Saudi Arabia. In all of these cases, there was a short-term military or economic gain to be had from said partnerships. However, these relationships were not destined to be 'special.' The U.S. and U.K. severed ties with the U.S.S.R. shortly following World War II, and went on to wage a 'cold' war against them—a war characterized primarily by the ideological struggle between the individual-focused liberal democratic states against a collectivist communist authoritarian one. And while the U.S. and U.K.'s ties to China and Saudi Arabia are still present, economic and regional interests threaten to be overshadowed by ideological chasms as both

nations continue to flout liberal ideals of individualism, limited government, toleration, and respect for natural rights.

When discussing the U.S.-U.K. special relationship, longtime U.S. statesman Henry Kissinger described it as such:

“[The Special Relationship involved] a pattern of consultation so matter-of-factly intimate that it became psychologically impossible to ignore British views. It [was] not a favor the United States granted to the British; rather it was earned, first by conduct during the war and later by the enormous contribution in helping shape the Marshall Plan, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and the Cold War pattern of International Relations” (Dumbrell 2006a, 14).

The most instructive piece of Kissinger’s quote is his recollection that it was *psychologically impossible* to ignore the views of the U.K. Former U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson echoed a similar view, stating that the two nations had a “common fate” (Dumbrell 2006a, 14). This makes perfect sense, especially when taking into account constructivist theory and the work of Haidt. The liberal traditions on which U.S. and U.K. institutions and worldviews are based are so deeply intertwined that the countries are natural allies. Their closeness is not a historical quirk or a temporary alignment of interests, but rather the manifestation of their common ideology.

Other important factors of the special relationship, including temperament of leaders and geopolitical interests, are either the result of common liberal philosophy, or when disagreements arise, are offset by said philosophy. Geopolitical interests largely depend on worldviews, which the previous chapter detailed are aligned on the part of the U.S. and U.K. based on classical liberal values. Dumbrell notes the importance of “shared elite culture” in times of personal

disagreement between the leaders of the two states as a “practical bolster to cooperation” (Dumbrell 2006a, 6). Political scientists Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt affirm the importance of shared elite culture more broadly, citing shared values as responsible for preventing democratic collapse in numerous states, and even rescuing Chilean democracy by fostering partnerships and communication (Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018, 222). However, despite all of the other factors that play into the special relationship, its existence remains ontologically grounded in classical liberal philosophy; that is to say, if classical liberalism was removed from the equation, the special relationship would cease to be, or at least the manifestation of it that has evolved into what it is today.

A final note on the ‘specialness’ of the Anglo-American special relationship, especially in response to possible objections that my argument for the importance of liberal philosophy could just as easily be applied to the U.S. or U.K.’s relationship with France, Germany, or other liberal democracies. If philosophy is so important, then why are the U.S. and U.K.’s relationships with these other states, especially other Anglosphere nations who share the U.S. and U.K.’s philosophical traditions, not considered special? There are three primary reasons for this.

First, liberal philosophy is not in itself the crux of the argument; rather, it is that classical liberalism is so ingrained in the institutional structure and worldview of the U.S. and U.K. that their very existence as nation-states (and therefore the existence of the special relationship) is necessarily and intrinsically linked to it. Therefore, their institutions, worldviews and bond with one another are so too, causing them to be natural partners molded to act in concert with one another. This leads into the second explainer (particularly in distinguishing the special relationship from other U.S./U.K. Anglosphere relations), which is the temporal dimension of the special relationship. While other states may follow classical liberal principles or espouse such a

worldview, the sheer length of time over which liberal ideas (originating in Britain) shaped these two states makes their bond with this common philosophy, and therefore with each other, that much stronger. Finally, and perhaps most simply, we can refer back to constructivist theory used in my argument on the special relationship—it exists because its two participants and external actors believe and act as if it does. The U.S. and U.K. treat the relationship as real in rhetoric and action, and therefore other states treat it as ‘real’ too. Much akin to the metaphysical views of George Berkeley on the existence of the material world, the special relationship exists because it is perceived and rooted in classical liberal thought, *esse est percipi*—if it was no longer in the minds of political actors involved and the broader public, it would cease to be.

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