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Anglo-American relations and soft power: transitioning the special relationship

Churchill's description of ties between the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States of America (US) as the special relationship continues to be debated as a concept by political scientists¹ and as a condition of Anglo-American relations by historians.² Whilst this nomenclature remains in use today, what it describes has changed substantially since Churchill's invocation of it in his 1946 'Iron Curtain' speech.³ Numerous accounts have sought to track the evolution of a now highly asymmetric relationship, foregrounding variously changes in functional cooperation⁴ or particular contingent moments believed to have changed attitudes towards management and expectation of Anglo-American relations – notably the Suez crisis, British withdrawal from East of Suez and the end of the Cold War.⁵ However, surprisingly little attention has been given to explaining either when the special relationship most markedly transitioned from that of its zenith during WW2 to the asymmetric one of the modern era, or why at that point in time Britain's relative decline did not result in the relationship's oft predicted demise.⁶

This article locates the key years of transition from the wartime to the modern special relationship in the so-called long 1970s – a period incidentally cited across many scholarly fields as marking the beginning of the present era.⁷ In particular, the late 1960s through to mid-1970s witnessed a series of overt demonstrations of Britain's relative decline and consequent American questioning of the continuing utility of 'special' functional cooperation with the British. Britain's traditional Atlanticist orientation also appeared to be in doubt, particularly under the leadership of Edward Heath as he steered the UK into the European Community (EC). Furthermore, other centres of power developed, notably Japan, West Germany and the EC. In October 1974 US Secretary of State Kissinger opined that the US had to 'operate on the assumption that Britain is through'; if ever there were a time for an agonising reappraisal of the Anglo-American relationship, this was a fitting one.⁸

The focus of analysis here is not the health of the Anglo-American relationship *per se*. Neither is it the intent to minimise the importance therein of Britain's residual military assets, intelligence assets, nuclear deterrent and so forth. Rather, the article seeks to account for the survival and changing character of the special relationship at this point in time by examining a hitherto under-recognised factor: soft power.⁹ After justifying a focus on the years 1968-76, the article sets out how British soft power helped during this period to sustain the special relationship and change its character from that of WW2 to one more reflective of its modern incarnation. First, it is argued that conditions in the US and the international system changed such that the relative utility of hard power declined and American need of allies possessing soft power capabilities increased. Second, it is argued that bilateral Anglo-American relations drew resilience, purposefully and non-purposefully, from what might be termed an exclusive mutual soft power reserve generated by the intermingling of British and American soft power over an extended period of time. Third, the article contends that policymakers increasingly appreciated that high levels of UK-US policy congruence flowed from a 'common cast of mind', which in turn drew upon the foundations of Anglo-American soft power. This did not mean Washington and London would not seek to privilege their own interests within their bilateral relations.¹⁰ Nevertheless, though British and American desired ends and permissible means in foreign policy were independently defined, they were unusually aligned on account of shared language, culture and historical experience, the interpenetration of political ideas and the vesting of legitimacy in the rule of law and democratic government.

Years of transition

Exactly where chronologically to distinguish transition in the special relationship from that of the post-WW2 era to its modern incarnation is an open question. Dobson, for instance, emphasises the period 1961-67.¹¹ His rationale is threefold. Personal leadership relations forged during WW2 vacated the political arena. Britain's relative decline reduced its utility markedly to the US and the weakness of sterling imperilled the Bretton Woods system.¹² And once congruent strategic priorities diverged. On the one hand the US became preoccupied with Asia and increasingly frustrated by British refusal to assist militarily in Vietnam.¹³ On the other, Britain grappled with decolonisation and its initially self – later French – imposed exile from the European Community.

Within government circles, though, re-evaluations of the special relationship became more prevalent in the later 1960s, especially following Britain's announcement of withdrawal from East of Suez. On 13 February 1969, for instance, Foreign Secretary Michael Stewart wrote to departing UK Ambassador to Washington, Sir Patrick Dean, that 'You have served in the United States during a period of adjustment in Anglo-American relations. It is to a great extent due to the hard work put in by our Embassy in Washington, under your able leadership, that these relations have remained in good shape.'¹⁴ Good relations, however, were no substitute for diminished British capabilities. In February 1968 Thomas L. Hughes of the State Department's Intelligence and Research Bureau penned a thought-provoking analysis entitled 'What Now for Great Britain?'¹⁵ Some senior US officials pondered this question in a vein less of transition of the special relationship than of its potential denouement. US Ambassador to the Court of Saint James, David Bruce, concluded in 1967 that 'The so-called Anglo-American special relationship is now little more than sentimental terminology, although the underground waters of it will flow with a deep current.'¹⁶

When Nixon assumed the US presidency he was still prepared to support the idea of the special relationship. In December 1970 the British noted that he continued to use the nomenclature special relationship¹⁷ and in January 1974 Nixon declared himself to be 'the most pro-British President in a long time.'¹⁸ However, the President's avowed commitment to Anglo-American relations ran up against a British political re-orientation under Prime Minister Heath and further damaging evidence of Britain's seemingly uncontrolled spiral into second order power status. Whilst the Nixon administration acknowledged British need in their quest for EC membership to downplay their Atlantic connection such that France especially should not view the UK as a likely Trojan Horse for US interests, Heath's rebranding of Anglo-American relations as the 'natural relationship' seemed to signify more than rhetorical nuance to appease European sensibilities.¹⁹

On 10 September 1974 US Secretary of State Kissinger advised President Ford that 'Heath is a doctrinaire person, Gaullist in his outlook, and the only anti-American UK Prime Minister in many years.'²⁰ This was an overstatement but Heath certainly emphasised Britain's European interests more strongly than had his predecessors and was critical of the lack of policy consultation, surprise diplomatic initiatives and disruption of established lines of communication that characterised the Nixon White House's policymaking style.²¹ In

November 1971 he wrote ‘the present method of conducting foreign relations, political, military and economic, has completely undermined confidence in the United States and is threatening in all three spheres to damage the whole western world.’²²

American concern about British fidelity intensified during the transatlantic troubles of 1973. Announced unilaterally and presented within Kissinger’s public distinction between Europe having regional interests whilst the US had global responsibilities, the Nixon administration’s clumsy handling of its ‘Year of Europe’ initiative sparked bitterness and recrimination.²³ Anglo-American relations were also strained by differences over the Yom Kippur war. The US disrupted Anglo-American intelligence cooperation²⁴ in protest at British policies and in October 1973 the State Department prepared for Kissinger a list of ‘actions which might be taken against the United Kingdom to demonstrate our dissatisfaction with their performance as an ally’.²⁵ Furthermore, British entry into the EC inclined American policymakers to treat Britain periodically within a wider frame of problematic European relations. For instance, Lord Cromer, British Ambassador to Washington, felt obliged in October 1973 to advise Kissinger that ‘It is, I think, of high importance that we get our procedural arrangements worked out to our mutual satisfaction. The European Community is beginning to grow up and perhaps to grow up more rapidly than was anticipated. Adolescence is perhaps the most difficult period in life, probably both for the adolescent and those who have to deal with him!’²⁶

The advent of the Wilson government in February 1974 brought the Americans reassurance about continued British interest in UK-US cooperation but limited optimism about the value of that cooperation.²⁷ Britain’s GNP, second in 1950, was only the sixth largest in 1973, its share of world trade dwindled from 11 per cent in 1950 to under 6 per cent in 1973, and its military manpower had slipped from fourth position in 1950 to fifteenth in 1973.²⁸ Successive British governments trimmed repeatedly overseas obligations and defence expenditure as they sought to balance overseas and pressing domestic commitments.²⁹ By 1973, excepting southern Rhodesia, British overseas dependent territories contracted to c. 700,000 square miles and some 5 million people; in 1945 it had been 6.4 million square miles and 500 million people – excluding Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.³⁰ The Wilson government was no different as the British economy laboured amid OPEC’s hike in oil prices, the collapse of managed exchange rates and sharply rising public expenditure and

fiscal deficits following the Heath government's expansionary monetary policy.³¹ The Wilson government struggled to manage Trade Union demands at the same time as wrestling an economy headed for stagflation. Sharp cuts to defence expenditure anticipated in the Mason Defence Review were badly received in Washington and British economic management was the target of significant high-level American criticism. In April 1975 President Ford twice publicly cited Britain as an example of how not to manage public spending.³²

In sum, were the Americans, or the British, ever to choose between abandoning or transitioning the post-war special relationship, then the period 1968-76 was an exceptionally fitting time to do so. Applying a realist mutual utility calculation to the special relationship, from an American perspective Britain's apparent worth as an ally in the Cold War was visibly in rapid decline. The period began with the announcement of British withdrawal from responsibilities East of Suez. It closed with British humiliation in having to negotiate the largest ever bailout from the International Monetary Fund of some \$3.9 billion.³³ Britain's relegation to second order power status and the apparent hopelessness of its economic predicament were famously captured by the *Wall Street Journal* in its 'Goodbye Great Britain' headline of 29 April 1975.³⁴ Conversely, and though it might seem odd at first sight given British economic woes, Britain's relative dependence upon the US was declining. Belated entry to the EC promised a re-orientation of British markets and priorities, and Britain's long-standing 'imperial overstretch' diminished as successive governments offloaded overseas responsibilities. In addition, Britain's shrinking world role combined with US problems in Asia and a dominant American Cold War interpretation of international events to weaken Anglo-American strategic cohesion. In 1973 a British planning paper noted western Europeans were 'suspicious about the implications of the development of bilateral diplomacy between the USA and the USSR' and that 'neither the Soviet threat nor the trans-Atlantic relationship now exercise as much influence on the thinking of West European Governments as they once did.'³⁵ The following year JE Cable of the British policy planning staff warned that Kissinger's preoccupation with superpower balance and sometimes 'brutal disregard for what he sees as the more parochial views of the Europeans and others immediately concerned...is going to give us a continuing problem'.³⁶ With the EC growing in power and ambition, and with British membership of it constituting what Foreign Secretary Douglas-Home called 'the final break with our imperial past',³⁷ potential alternatives to the special relationship beckoned both the British and the Americans.³⁸ Already in the late 1960s US Secretary of State Dean Rusk had mused that 'The concept of Atlantic cooperation could

replace the special relationship.’³⁹ In December 1973, Kissinger echoed this thought in conversation with Douglas-Home: ‘What we need is a special relationship with Europe.’⁴⁰

The Long 1970s: creating space for soft power

Power in international relations comprises many elements; soft power is a collection of some of these, being defined by Nye as comprising culture, political values and foreign policies perceived to possess legitimacy and moral authority.⁴¹ The relative distribution of power is in constant flux. The relative utility of particular facets of power is context dependent, as are both the relative need of a state for alliance and its ranking therein. Furthermore, calculations of mutual utility necessarily consider what relative advantages cooperation with a third party might bring in achieving particular goals under particular conditions. For the special relationship to survive the atrophy of Britain’s hard power capabilities, evidently conditions needed to be different to those when Ambassador Bruce deemed the special relationship to be over.

Cast in this light the British were fortuitous in their desire, as the weaker party, to preserve the special relationship that the US experienced a series of challenges that were politically shocking to the American establishment and wider public. The heavily televised Tet offensive in January 1968 inflamed American public opinion and helped convince the Johnson administration that the Vietnam War could not be won within an acceptable period of time and at an acceptable political, economic and military cost. Then, four days after Johnson announced on 31 March 1968 that he would neither expand the Vietnam War nor seek re-election, civil rights tensions exploded when Martin Luther King was assassinated. Furthermore, mounting pressures within American civil society coincided with the end of an age of plenty. Johnson’s Great Society reforms, which had helped lift over 8% of the population out of poverty between 1960 and the early 1970s, also exacerbated American overstretch. In 1968 inflation ran at 4% and the Federal Reserve increased US interest rates to 5.5% - their highest level since 1929 and the onset of the Great Depression. In 1971 the US ran a trade deficit for the first time in the twentieth century. By 1973 it was ‘no longer in charge of its own economic destiny’.⁴²

Economic pressure, civil unrest, Vietnam and a thawing of the Cold War combined to break the post-WW2 bipartisan political consensus and to puncture confidence in American power. On 15 August 1971 the Nixon administration introduced a raft of economic measures to help

protect the American economy, including the imposition of a 10% import surcharge, devaluation of the dollar and, most significantly, unilateral cancellation of the direct international convertibility of the dollar into gold. On 23 January 1973, following the Paris Peace Accord, President Nixon dressed-up American withdrawal from Vietnam as constituting 'peace with honor'.⁴³ Still, though, from November 1973 to March 1975 the American economy remained stubbornly in recession. Wage-Price controls encouraged stagflation with 5 successive quarters of negative GDP growth; in May 1975 unemployment peaked at 9%. Meantime the Watergate saga weakened American ability to lead abroad and drained public confidence in government at home. According to one poll 38% of Americans felt in 1972 that their leaders over the past 10 years had 'consistently lied' to them. In 1975 that figure stood at 69%.⁴⁴

American overstretch and loss of political confidence did not in and of itself make the case for the foregrounding of soft power at this time in international relations. This came primarily from a concatenation of other sources. Perhaps the most important of these was the changing nature of the Cold War and its management. In the 1950s and 1960s the calculus of war, peace and national survival rested foremost upon military strength and the variables of technological innovation, supported by tools of economic coercion that ranged from strategic embargo through to tied foreign aid.⁴⁵ However, the Cuban Missile Crisis and advent of Mutually Assured Destruction moved the geographic focus of the Cold War towards the periphery and the emphasis within East-West relations towards arms control – something reflected in the 1968 Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, the 1972 Anti Ballistic Missile Treaty and the development of détente.⁴⁶ Hard power remained important but in relative terms its utility diminished beyond maintaining an East-West balance, as did the political likelihood of another major American military action overseas in the aftermath of Vietnam.

Concomitantly there developed significant changes in the distribution of power and the international system. In 1975 even Henry Kissinger, famed for his classical balance of power convictions, conceded that a new era was beginning as old international patterns crumbled and the world became more interdependent.⁴⁷ New and influential international actors were emerging, such as MNCs, TNCs and the supranational EC. Economic power had become increasingly dispersed as a result especially of the recovery of Japan, the West German 'economic miracle' and growth of the EC. OPEC demonstrated during the Yom Kippur war new vulnerabilities in advanced industrial societies flowing from commodity dependence.

Decolonisation and developing world nationalism were making international organisations more awkward for the US to manage. The United Nations (UN) General Assembly, for instance, became the focal point in 1974 of demands for a New International Economic Order (NIEO).⁴⁸ Furthermore, it became much more difficult for the US to set the agenda in transatlantic relations. Greater economic stability and reduced fears of the USSR inclined European partners to protest US-USSR bilateralism whilst also pursuing more independent policies – including West Germany's *ostpolitik*, the EC's Euro-Arab dialogue and support for the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE).⁴⁹

Cumulatively these changes encouraged a relative decline in the utility of hard power, especially military power. They also promoted a much more complex international system and an urgent American need to restore confidence in US leadership at home and abroad. This meant the US needed to re-engage allies, move the balance of its policy style more towards multilateralism and work to shape a growing number of international organisations, institutions and regimes. Even in their much weakened condition, the British sensed opportunity. As British Ambassador to the US, Peter Ramsbotham, advised in May 1975, 'A chastened and self-doubting America may be more ready to listen.'⁵⁰

British soft power ambition

American reaction to instances of evident contraction in British hard power and their surrender of important international responsibilities was predictable and consistent. For example, as Britain prepared to retreat from East of Suez, President Johnson warned Prime Minister Wilson of grave consequences were the US left to 'man the ramparts all alone'.⁵¹ Secretary of State Rusk also berated Foreign Secretary George Brown for adopting a 'Little England' posture and urged that Britain 'be Britain'.⁵² Similar warnings accompanied British initiation of the Mason Defence Review. US Defence Secretary Schlesinger, for instance, advised in July 1975 that were HMG 'to make further defence cuts the US Government would have to reconsider certain of their bilateral arrangements.'⁵³

The British were in any case determined to maintain their pursuit of hard power in the interests of their own continuing international objectives as well as of privileged functional Anglo-American defence collaboration. Cooperation in the nuclear field intensified once in February 1974 the Wilson government ratified the Chevaline project, which itself built upon a classified US programme called Antelope that had been made available to the UK in

1967.⁵⁴ Similarly, British-invented Chobham armour was first applied on the pre-series of the American M1 tank, the US order in 1970-71 for Britain's VTOL Harrier aircraft was the first time since WW1 that America had bought an operational military aircraft from abroad, and in September 1975 an Anglo-American Memorandum of Understanding determined to develop greater weapons standardization and interoperability through cooperation in research, development, production and procurement. In addition, the British government ensured that the Mason Defence Review ultimately spared as best possible assets of prime importance to the US, including the Polaris upgrade, Diego Garcia commitments and sovereign bases on Cyprus, which were important for US signals and imagery intelligence gathering in the Mediterranean.⁵⁵

However, the British clearly saw these hard power commitments as working increasingly in tandem with hitherto undervalued soft power assets. Just days before Nixon's inauguration in 1969 the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Planning Staff and the British Embassy in Washington co-authored a report on the 'Underlying Elements in Anglo-U.S. Relations'. Poignantly the report attached significant importance to soft power considerations. According to the FCO, 'the fact [is] that Britain is a source of much of America's cultural ancestry to which a comparatively rootless people attach a great deal of importance. This, together with the facility of communication, renders the American mind particularly sensitive to movements in British public opinion as expressed in Parliament and the press to a degree which does not apply to any other English speaking, or indeed any other country.' The report went on to conclude that Britain's cultural influence would continue and that 'Our value as a "fidus Achates" is likely to survive our relative decline in power'.⁵⁶

British influence, evidently, would be greatest under conditions where the US felt a need to consult and to collaborate. In this respect the British were cautiously optimistic. First, they recognised that the bipolar configuration of power that had dominated international relations since the onset of the Cold War was weakening. In November 1971 the FCO concluded that 'We have entered a period of increased fluidity in the international scene in which relations between the major power centres are changing markedly.'⁵⁷ This would give new opportunity to demonstrate to the US the value of British diplomatic prowess in helping manage consequent tensions. Second, the British identified a relative shift in international relations away from 'sharp' and 'sticky' power toward soft power and a multilateralism that was considerably wider in scope and memberships than hitherto.⁵⁸ Prime Minister Wilson set out

some of this thinking in his Lord Mayor's speech in November 1974: 'the general character of international relations and the particular objectives of British foreign policy have undergone some modification in recent years. From 1945-70 the problems of international relations were primarily ideological, political and military...the dominant features of today are economic: Access to resources, the maintenance of economic activity and growth, preserving the world trading and monetary system, trying to help the poorest countries ward off the imminent threat of starvation.'⁵⁹ These were all issues that required the building of international cooperation and the reform of institutions, and whilst the US might lead that process it would need the assistance of like-minded allies.

Finally, whilst the retreat from empire and begrudging acceptance of a primarily European vocation had been painful and the source of much US criticism, consummation of this process bequeathed Britain considerable structural power and liberated it of being an imperial target of developing world antipathy. To its privileged positions within the institutions created in the aftermath of WW2, Britain had added membership of the EC, transformed empire into Commonwealth and established itself in the exclusive club of official nuclear powers. In 1984 Brian Urquhart, UN under-secretary general for special political affairs, summed up this process in particularly positive terms. The British had, he felt, transformed with 'extraordinary skill' the diplomacy of an imperial power into 'something that is arguably both more difficult and more interesting and possibly more useful, which is the diplomacy of a serious world power and a sort of honest broker.'⁶⁰

Bilateral Anglo-American relations: the historical repository of soft power entwined

One further interesting British assumption was that, though not couched in these terms, the intermingling of Anglo-American soft power in the past would, with the US feeling 'bruised and friendless',⁶¹ advantage them in securing American receptivity to, and appreciation of, their soft power resources under the new pertaining conditions. The attractiveness of American culture and political values - and their consequent ability to draw international actors into the US orbit - was contingent upon factors including the relative power of the third party, its consanguinity or otherwise with American values and culture, and the longevity of its having a relationship of significance with the US. During the Cold War countries such as the USSR, China and Cuba were highly resistant to US ideals, Anglo-sphere countries were generally open and embracing⁶² and other countries positioned themselves differently along the continuum between these pole points. For instance, West

Germany's Social Market Economy was based on principles different to American laissez faire capitalism and France long adopted measured resistance to American culture and ideals, including subsidising French arts, imposing quotas for European films and, during the Uruguay Round of GATT, introducing a political concept of cultural exception.⁶³

Herein Britain stood aside from America's allies, let alone adversaries, in its being arguably closest to the US in terms of values and political traditions. Still more importantly, Britain and the US had over an extended period of time exerted a mutual power of attraction vis-a-vis each other.⁶⁴ German Chancellor Otto Von Bismarck famously noted that the most important factor in international relations for the nineteenth century was that the British and the Americans spoke the same language. Yet the transference and interpenetration of ideas and values between the US and UK predated this to the origins of the Republic. The American constitution itself was in part a reaction to the perceived departure of King George III and the British government from the controlling power of the traditional rights of Englishmen. By the time of the Great Rapprochement what bound the Atlantic cousins had evidently become stronger than what divided them. Kupchan, for instance, sees this period as marking a transformation in the manner and conduct of relations between 'these two large English-speaking nations' that resulted in an enduring strategic partnership.⁶⁵

Two often cited contingent moments in explaining this transition are 1895 and 1898. The former witnessed a decisive aversion to an Anglo-American fratricidal war over a boundary dispute between Venezuela and British Guiana. The latter saw British public and elite support for the US in its war with Spain, which was subsequently reciprocated during the Boer War, at least by the US government if not the American people.⁶⁶ In addition to these contingent moments were highly influential processes of Anglo-American political and cultural exchange. These have traditionally been seen as being manifest in the allure of Anglo-Saxonism and its racialist overtones.⁶⁷ More recently, Haglund has suggested the emergence of a strategic culture whereby English Americans underwent a radical change in identity perception as they embraced common Anglo-American inheritances in the face of assertive Irish and German Americanisms.⁶⁸

This long history is important in understanding the resilience of Anglo-American affiliative sentiment, as is the fact that much of the early cultural exchange between the US and UK took place independently of governments, with alternate drivers being as diverse as

transatlantic marriages, media, commercial enterprises and influential individuals. A survey conducted in 1938 of 132 British Members of Parliament showed that more than 1 in 10 had family connections with the US and that 1 in 5 had large economic interests there.⁶⁹ Subsequent close Anglo-American cooperation during WW2 and, especially, the stationing of large numbers of American servicemen in the UK, served to entwine publics as well as elites in a sense of mutual affinity and appreciation – some 70,000 British war brides and children emigrated to be with their husbands in the US. Thereafter rapid improvements in mobility and communications further facilitated political and cultural exchange at elite and popular level. Radio, television, cinema and eventually digital platforms closed distance, bred familiarity and stirred debate about shared challenges and political ideas.⁷⁰ This particular and ongoing openness to cultural exchange was, for example, reflected in the significant British presence in Hollywood and the high receptiveness of British publics to American films.⁷¹

British officials saw this political, economic and cultural entwining as one part of the special relationship, a reciprocal power of attraction operating at a mass level. While they did not expect American sentimental attachment to Britain to often affect the collective attitudes of the Administration or Congress, they did feel it might occasionally tip the balance in their favour where US interests were not at stake.⁷² Perhaps more significantly, they saw it as having a political contouring effect on public opinion both sides of the Atlantic that was removed from vagaries of politics and world events. This was particularly important as it meant that this contouring effect continued despite Britain's particular weakness in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Writing of what he termed a 'diffuse cultural relationship between the two peoples in the broadest "human" sense of the term', British Ambassador to the US, Sir Patrick Dean, argued that 'It is difficult to envisage anything short of a state of war between our two countries that would have any real effect on its continuance. The Americans do, and we in the main can, take this for granted, except insofar as we need to spread knowledge of a Britain which is not just thatched cottages and Beefeaters or mini-skirts and Beatles, but technologically and sociologically up with the times.'⁷³ Poll data from the early 1970s supports this perception. In a 1972 survey, 72 percent of Britons believed that the US was the nation most likely to assist Britain if its security were threatened and 89 percent considered the basic interests of the UK and the US to be in accord. The following year a Gallup Poll asked Americans to rate their opinion of various nations on a scale between +5 (for 'a country you like very much') and -5 (for 'a country you dislike very much'). Of their

major European allies, Americans held the strongest positive feelings for the UK; nearly 40 percent rated Britain above 3 while only some 25 percent reported similar feelings for West Germany.⁷⁴

In addition, British officials recognised that US and UK governments had previously translated Anglo-American political and cultural interpenetration into collaborative co-optive power through the projection of their shared ideals and values in the fashioning of the post-WW2 international order. As Nye notes, 'A country may achieve the outcomes it prefers in world politics because other countries want to follow it or have agreed to a system that produces such effects. In this sense, it is just as important to set the agenda and structure the situations in world politics as it is to get others to change in particular situations.'⁷⁵ An initial expression of this Anglo-American agenda setting for the post-war world came in the 1941 Atlantic Declaration, which committed the UK and US to supporting eight common principles in the postwar world and which has been seen as a key step toward the creation of the UN.⁷⁶ These principles included a right to self-determination, territorial adjustments only in accord with the wishes of the peoples concerned, liberalisation of international trade, freedom of the seas and an advancement of social welfare. Subsequently Britain and America fashioned and underpinned the structures of a liberal international order based upon democratic government, free trade and international law. This did not mean full Anglo-American agreement in terms either of design or timing, as reflected in the disaster of sterling convertibility in 1947, Congressional rejection of the International Trade Organisation and American anti-colonialism. It did mean, however, that Anglo-American soft power flowed through the design of the UN, the reconstruction of West Germany, and the Bretton Woods system. Moreover, as the Cold War developed it was British Foreign Secretary Bevin who initially did much to establish in NATO an alliance cohered by shared values as well as by adversarial relations with the USSR.⁷⁷

This historical institutionalisation of British soft power had two important implications for British ambitions within Anglo-American relations in the long 1970s. First, it accorded Britain international influence that its relative decline meant it no longer objectively warranted - and British policymakers were well aware that this asset played an important role in preserving the special relationship. JT Masefield of the British Policy Planning staff noted in August 1975, 'we still enjoy a privileged position in the United States which our economic and military weight does not really merit.'⁷⁸ Second, because American as well as British

principles and power flowed through the international institutions and organisations created after WW2, it was in US interests to see these preserved and reformed through the challenges of the long 1970s. This meant, in turn, that the US would largely *de facto* underwrite privileged British soft power resources and find in Britain a particularly close ally in institutional management and reform. Indeed, British officials noted explicitly in April 1974 that ‘The President and his key advisers are committed to policies which identify US self interest with positions on major issues which are favourable to British interests e.g. the pursuit of liberal trade policies, the revitalisation of transatlantic relations and a continuing commitment to the defence of Europe.’⁷⁹

Bilateral Anglo-American relations: leveraging the historical repository of soft power entwined

The Wilson government assumed office determined to re-energise Anglo-American relations following the strains of the last months especially of the Heath government. In the wake of Watergate, the Ford administration was also keen to rebuild relations with key allies, including Britain. An interesting development in this respect is how British and American officials sought to use the reciprocal power of attraction exerted through shared Anglo-American histories, values and experiences to improve the tone of UK-US relations.

One example of how this set aside UK-US relations is President Ford’s post-inauguration letters to the leaders of France, West Germany and the UK. To French President Giscard d’Estaing and West German Chancellor Schmidt, Ford appealed for continuing close and frequent communication; in his letter to Wilson he spoke to continuing ‘the intimate contact that is normally maintained between our governments’. While in his letter to d’Estaing Ford noted ‘Our bonds with France run deeply throughout our history as a nation’, the President lauded to Wilson the special conditions of the Anglo-American alliance. Britain, he wrote, was ‘a nation to which we are tied by unique historic bonds of friendship and alliance’. Furthermore, ‘Our two countries have many special ties and we have maintained the closest communication on all the important issues of our day.’⁸⁰

Neither was Ford’s appeal to this cohesive pull of shared Anglo-American experience an exception to US diplomatic practice. It is a resource that US presidents have routinely called upon to encourage close Anglo-American cooperation and to signal Britain’s preferred status. For instance, President Nixon’s letter to Prime Minister Wilson shortly after the former’s

inauguration was steeped in the language of traditional cultural affinity and of uniquely intimate bilateral diplomacy: 'For many decades one of the great sources of strength in the cause of freedom has been the close relationship between Prime Ministers of the United Kingdom and Presidents of the United States. This is as it should be, for it but reflects the depth of feeling and kinship existing between our two nations. I intend, in the years ahead, to see that this tradition is upheld and nourished. I ask, therefore, that you feel free at all times to let me know of your concerns, and to give me your wise advice and council. I hope, for my part, that I am [to] have equal freedom to tell you what is on my mind.'⁸¹

All of this suggests that the special relationship had become in part a mutually held – and exclusive – soft power resource *within* Anglo-American relations, the culmination of centuries of reciprocal transfer of political ideas, culture, commitment to the rule of law and investment of legitimacy in the structures of democratic governance. In fact, in July 1976 US Ambassador to the UK Anne Armstrong gave voice to this reservoir of affinity and how its effect in international relations was so exceptional: 'I speak of the affection between us. It is an emotion not normally given to the pragmatic affairs of nations. Alexander Hamilton certainly would have warned against it as a basis, or even a consideration, for national policy. And yet, as we examine the unprecedented and enduring relationship between Britain and the United States, it is clear that affection is the cement which binds us.'⁸²

This affiliative binding was not simply the product of a latent reservoir of mutual goodwill. Rather it was something that UK and US governments sought to replenish constantly and to instrumentalise within their bilateral relations. For example, elite manipulation of distinctive features of Anglo-American affinity was evident at Ford's summit meeting with Wilson in January 1975. By the 1960s such summits were an expected part of Anglo-American diplomacy to a degree where they had become more than transactional affairs; they had become part of a distinctive political tradition.⁸³ British and American government elites carefully negotiated, planned and choreographed these events such that the public face of summits effectively became a multimodal co-authored experience. Aural, linguistic, spatial, textual, and visual resources were combined to package an ideal of the special relationship for consumption by multiple media, public and elite audiences, both co-present and what is sometimes termed 'over-hearing'.⁸⁴ Adversaries of the US and UK were confronted with demonstrations of Anglo-American commitment to a shared way of life and solidarity in its defence against all-comers. British and American peoples were reminded of their familial

relationship and of their long-entwined histories, culture and common language. Core Anglo-American values were reaffirmed and those of domestic and international challengers to them 'othered' in ways that reinforced the distinctiveness of the intellectual and ideological underpinnings of the special relationship.⁸⁵

Ford's meeting with Wilson in January 1975 was particularly poignant, being the first such summit since Nixon's resignation and marking a public celebration of Anglo-American relations renewed, which in private had been warming for some months.⁸⁶ In his welcome speech Ford reminded domestic and international audiences that Britain's importance to the US did not lie only in its being 'one of America's truest allies and oldest friends'. Rather Britain was imbued in the fabric of American life: 'Any student of American history and American culture knows how significant is our common heritage. We have actually continued to share a wonderful common history. Americans can never forget how the very roots of our democratic political system and of our concepts of liberty and government are to be found in Britain.'⁸⁷

This use of soft power in reinvigorating post-Nixon Anglo-American relations was subsequently repeated during the cultural events of the American Bicentennial. The British were pleased that US Vice President Nelson Rockefeller opened an American-sponsored exhibit on Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson in London and declared it the 'centerpiece of our Bicentennial celebration overseas'.⁸⁸ However, in January 1976 a meeting of British officials made clear that of their Bicentennial activities 'We wanted the main publicity impact to be in the US'.⁸⁹ Herein a loan to Congress of an original copy of the thirteenth century Magna Carta, which was displayed in the Rotunda of the US Capitol building, symbolised forcefully the uniquely shared Anglo-American values, political traditions and histories. British political objectives were also evident in the activities of the Washington Embassy and location of planned events. In June 1975 the Embassy requested additional resources to reach small communities across the country to help 'create a great reservoir of goodwill for us at the "grass roots" level.'⁹⁰ Meantime the distribution of British events reflected geographic shifts in political power in the US. As one American official noted, the British Bicentennial contribution is a 'broad ranging program with emphasis on the particular relationship we have historically enjoyed. The slant, of a part of it, is away from the eastern seaboard and into middle America.'⁹¹

Nor was it just the British who sought to use the Bicentennial to reaffirm Anglo-American relations. In October 1975 a US policy paper titled 'Policy Objectives for the UK' recommended specifically that the US 'promote respect for and appreciation of American intellectual and cultural achievements [and] Using the Bicentennial as a vehicle, increase and intensify ties created by our common cultural and intellectual heritage.'⁹² This mutual commitment to leveraging the Bicentennial in the interests of Anglo-American relations was well demonstrated in the Royal visit to the US in July 1976. The Ford administration discerned quickly the importance that the British government attributed to Royal participation in the Bicentennial celebrations: 'It is very apparent tremendous emphasis is being placed on this visit by the British with no doubt considerable interest on the part of the Queen. It is her first official visit here in 18 years and the British want it to be as effective as possible.'⁹³ The White House reciprocated fulsomely. Not only were the Royal couple invited to Washington during the peak of the Bicentennial festivities, July 1976, but US officials also noted the high priority accorded by President Ford to the Queen's visit: 'scheduling has, in fact, pretty much blocked out the July 7-11 time frame in order that the President might make himself generally available for any events that might occur in connection with the Queen's visit.'⁹⁴

The official state dinner at the White House on 7 July duly provided a superb opportunity for elite rehearsal of the narrative of Anglo-American special relations, and with PBS making this the first state dinner broadcast live on American television, as well to the UK via satellite, the transatlantic 'consumer base' ready to ingest and interpret the symbols and discourse of Anglo-American 'specialness' was huge. Welcoming the Queen on the South lawn of the White House, Ford hailed her visit as symbolising 'our deep and continuing commitment to the common values of an Anglo-American civilization' and drew attention to the entwined history of Britain and America, assuring that 'the wounds of our parting in 1776 healed long ago' and that Americans now 'admire the United Kingdom as one of our truest allies and best friends.'⁹⁵ Subsequently at the state dinner Ford waxed lyrical in his toast about America never forgetting 200 years of British heritage and that theirs – Britain and the US - was a 'very remarkable relationship between two sovereign nations'.⁹⁶ The Queen replicated Ford's style of connecting Anglo-American relations past with those present, and future. She advised that 'history is not a fairy tale. Despite the good intentions, hostility soon broke out between us--and even burst into this house. [Laughter] But these early quarrels are long buried. What is more important is that our shared language, traditions, and history have given us a common vision of what is right and just.' She spoke, too, of 'interdependence', the

strength and permanence of Anglo-American friendship and of their shared global responsibility: 'May it long continue to flourish for the sake of both our countries and for the greater good of mankind.'⁹⁷

Anglo-American relations and the utility of soft power

Improving the tone of Anglo-American relations was politically beneficial for British and US governments struggling mutually to restore confidence in their leadership at home and abroad. However, for Britain's soft power to help compensate in American eyes for its weakened hard power capabilities, British officials needed to demonstrate its worth. Three interrelated ways in which this might be evidenced are access, communication and cooperation.

For the British to influence American thinking they first needed information from and access to US officials. In this they had an obvious advantage: 'All the European countries have ties of kinship and culture [with the US], but we alone share a common language, and with that common thought processes.'⁹⁸ Since WW2 the compelling combination of common language and common interests had encouraged Anglo-American epistemic communities, habits of cooperation and bureaucratic intermeshing across a large number of domains. Under normal circumstances the flow of information between British and American officials was extensive and at many different levels of the 'coral reef'.⁹⁹ On the 18 December 1973, for instance, Hugh Overton at the North American Department emphasised the existence on the American side of 'the large fund of goodwill' at the working level and the need to preserve this.¹⁰⁰

Access and information became more difficult once Nixon and Kissinger centralised power in the White House and their secretive policy style kept many of the usual organs of American foreign policy in the dark about key initiatives. However, the British still achieved a position where they often felt better informed about US policy than did the State Department.¹⁰¹ Key herein was the British Embassy in Washington and the success of British officials at the highest level in developing good personal relations with President Ford and, especially, Kissinger.¹⁰² Britain's Ambassador to the US, Sir Peter Ramsbotham, established a strong working relationship with Kissinger that was much prized by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.¹⁰³ So, too, did Anthony Crosland. Kissinger considered him to be 'outstanding, intelligent – very solid', and later recalled both his 'remarkable aptitude' for foreign policy and his 'bizarre sense of humor', epitomised by their sharing a game of Crosland's invention

whereby each accrued points for their conducting some absurdity.¹⁰⁴ Perhaps most significant of all, though, was Callaghan, who in his roles as Foreign Secretary and then Prime Minister established very close relations with Ford and Kissinger. Ford once privately advised Ann Armstrong, incoming US Ambassador to Britain in 1976, that ‘you will be crazy about Callaghan.’¹⁰⁵

British success in gathering information and maintaining access to US officials during Kissinger’s time as National Security Assistant and Secretary of State owed much to a common language and long-established patterns of behaviour. As Kissinger told Ambassador Ramsbotham prior to the visit of Wilson and Callaghan to see Ford in Washington in January 1975, ‘This is almost a family visit. We don’t need to worry about an agenda. We will talk about anything.’¹⁰⁶ However, what one FCO official noted as ‘our unique capability of talking to the Americans’ owed to more than the English language.¹⁰⁷ It owed also to a ‘common cast of mind’ that was itself increasingly acknowledged to stem from the historical soft power underpinnings of the special relationship. Writing in February 1968, Thomas L. Hughes of the State Department’s Intelligence and Research Bureau argued that ‘The special relationship is a relationship of unique intimacy between the governments of two peoples of common language, common tradition, frequently parallel institutions, linked histories, and broadly common interests and outlooks....It is all too easy to take these familiar considerations for granted and to deprecate their value, but few would deny that they make US and UK officials feel more comfortable and cooperative with each other, more respectful and more trusting of each other. They make business – in diplomatic and defense matters – easier to conduct.’¹⁰⁸

Neither were Hughes’ musings confined to the lower echelons of Anglo-American officials. Consider in this respect how the 1975 summit meeting between Ford and Wilson emphasised the uniqueness of Anglo-American diplomatic interchange and of how it might be a role model for wider international relations.¹⁰⁹ Wilson cited implicitly the benefits of a long tradition of intimate exchange when characterising his talks with President Ford at the White House as being ‘very, very relaxed’ and ‘free flowing’. Even more distinctively, the Prime Minister invoked the value of a common way of thinking: ‘We don’t have, you know, to spend about fifty minutes in every hour arguing about first principles, arguing about trying to convince one another. They are thoroughly practical and that’s why you get six times as much results out of an hour of discussions such of the kind we’ve had.’¹¹⁰ Ford delivered a

very similar message in his toast at the White House dinner on 30 January and tied it explicitly to his message of US renewal within changing international relations: 'The problems underlying our interdependence of nations and the need for communication are vastly important, and our two nations, I think, can set an example for the problems that we face in this regard.'¹¹¹

Furthermore, the British were convinced that the 'common cast of mind' was fundamental to the special relationship and a vehicle for communicating with the Americans in a fashion different to other allies. In August 1975 a member of the British Policy Planning Staff wrote: 'The special relationship needed no institution, although it found many concrete and ad hoc forms of co-operation. It was simply based on the assumption that the UK and USA had common interests and would usually adopt common means of furthering them.'¹¹² Continuing this assumption, and its uniqueness, were of utmost importance. One way of doing so was to emphasise a common outlook and sense of responsibility in world affairs. For instance, in January 1975 Ambassador Ramsbotham noted that although it had incurred him resentment, when Kissinger in his speech launching the Year of Europe had contrasted the global outlook of the United States with the regionalism of Europe, 'his remarks was, to a large extent, a truism.'¹¹³ Shortly afterwards Lord N Gordon Lennox, Head of the North America Department, recommended that if 'we want to influence Dr Kissinger's thinking, or that of his closest entourage, it is important that we should wherever possible present and justify our arguments in global terms, and match our thought processes with his.'¹¹⁴ Some time later Callaghan publicly set out how this worked out in practice. Treading a cautious path between celebrating Anglo-American relations and irritating EC partners, he told *The Times* in May 1976 that 'I am not claiming a relationship with the U.S. that France and Germany do not have. But to me, the special relationship is that I sit down with an American and can discuss matters from a common viewpoint. I think that is one of the reasons Henry (Kissinger) and I got on so well. He used to say to me that when he came to London he got a sort of world outlook as he did in Washington. That is bound to create a special relationship between us.'¹¹⁵

When it came to demonstrating the utility of British soft power, weakened American leadership and the multilateralization of international relations in the long 1970s were a significant boon. Whether it was dealing with the energy crisis, addressing demands from within the UN for a NIEO, seeking to re-energise NATO, negotiating the development of the

CSCE, or controlling nuclear proliferation, Washington found Britain to be a key member of most of the relevant institutions and agreements. For instance, Britain shared American concern about 'the increasing tendency for the non-aligned majority in the UN to steam-roller resolutions through regardless of the views of the minority.'¹¹⁶ British officials consequently sought to cooperate with their American counterparts to 'try to guide the demands of the developing countries into a programme of reasonable and orderly change.'¹¹⁷ Similarly, Kissinger advised Ford in May 1975 that 'a new work role for Britain in bringing the developed and developing together may be emerging. The useful work which they have begun, and their desire to take a leading part, can also serve our interests as well as those of the developing/producer countries.'¹¹⁸

Britain's importance at this time to Washington as an agenda setter was exemplified in American attitudes towards the EC, where they would be able to 'use our inside track with the British' to obtain advanced warning of 'EC Commission actions and EC-9 positions which could impinge on our interests.'¹¹⁹ Kissinger later noted that 'It was naïve for Americans to take for granted that a federal Europe would be more like us, that a united Europe would automatically help carry our burdens, and that it would continue to follow American global prescriptions as it had in the early postwar years of European recovery – and dependency.'¹²⁰ During the Long 1970s he was sometimes less measured, confronted on the one hand by a Congress looking to cut American commitments to Europe, epitomised by the Mansfield resolutions, and on the other by a series of European actions that he interpreted as building Europe through anti-Americanism.¹²¹

The British recognised quickly this growing US ambivalence about European integration and the opportunities this potentially offered them. In November 1971 the FCO noted that American support for European integration 'is qualified to an increasing degree' by EC policies such as the Common Agricultural Policy and preferential association agreements, perceived inadequate European contributions to defence and US domestic pressures.¹²² The British were also aware of Kissinger's view of the French as 'the evil genius of the Community'¹²³ and his fear that they were 'pushing the Community in the direction of European/American confrontation.'¹²⁴ Provided that the Americans neither over-estimated Britain's influence in the EC nor caused them to be seen as a US Trojan Horse, the British were more than happy to encourage an outward-looking Community and to reprise their role as an 'Atlantic intermediary' / 'transatlantic bridge'. Indeed, just how important Britain's

agenda-setting function within the European Community was felt to be at this time was demonstrated in American reaction to Prime Minister Wilson putting revised British terms of EC membership to a referendum in 1975.¹²⁵ According to the US Embassy in London, 'A healthy and realistic relationship is only possible if Britain remains in Europe. If the British people do not see their future in that direction, but opt for a Little England solution...the United States would have to reflect very carefully whether we would wish to carry on any kind of close (let alone "special") relationship which would become increasingly lop-sided and probably an unacceptable burden.'¹²⁶

Finally, it is worth returning to the impact of the contemporary political contouring effect exerted by long-established interwoven Anglo-American experience at both elite and mass level. It is important not to understate the effect on American politics and US foreign policy of domestic pressures, Vietnam and Watergate. On 26 May 1976 the Chairman of Citibank told Prime Minister Callaghan that the resignations of Nixon and Vice President Agnew 'had had a shattering effect on national confidence'.¹²⁷ Also, Congress had sought to reign-in Executive power and spending, and Ramsbotham warned that 'With weak leadership in both Houses, and power no longer concentrated in the committee chairmanships, the administration will have a difficult task to get their views accepted.'¹²⁸ Furthermore, US policymakers suspected that other countries were emboldened to act contrary to US interests by the American domestic political malaise. For instance, Kissinger was advised in April 1976 that 'One of the greatest handicaps we labor under is the widespread perception that Congress and the people are unlikely to support a firm line towards the Soviets and the Cubans in the Southern African context.'¹²⁹

In this situation it was particularly important that the US administration demonstrate the legitimacy of its foreign policy and reassure the American people that they were not alone. Herein Britain, as a trusted ally and home to a population more highly regarded by the American people than any other, was useful. The Americans recognised that both of these assets rested upon the historical mutual attraction and interpenetration of UK and US societies. Speaking before the Pilgrims Society in March 1975 US Ambassador to the UK, Elliot Richardson, argued that 'these special relationships of ours of language, of culture, of cast of mind become vital, because however power shifts, whatever the complexities of balance between nations and forces, the value of an old and easy partnership away from the conference-table, sharing the same assumptions and aspirations, is inestimable.'¹³⁰ He also

had perceptive ideas about popular Anglo-American cohesion. In a draft speech for an exchange of notes establishing Bicentennial Fellowships in the Fine Arts, Richardson pondered that ‘the more significant characteristic of Anglo-American relations is the development and proliferation of a wide and unique community of interests...binding the two countries and their people in a close and special way. The reasons for this are not, narrowly speaking, political. They include the common language and literature, the great body of shared concepts and assumptions about the individual in society and in relation to government; the importance of education and of the free flow of knowledge and ideas; and an inbred sense of duty to leave the world better than we found it. If I am right in this line of thinking, these are elements of a single cultural fabric, the more meaningful and more lasting because it was and continues to be made by individuals, not governments.’¹³¹

The importance to the US at this time of British elite and public opinion was made clear when in October 1975 the State Department recommended that efforts be made to ‘increase Briton’s confidence in our ability to deal positively with crisis and change.’¹³² It was evident, too, in how the political dimensions of British contributions secured higher value. Maintaining the British Army on the Rhine was important for (Anglo-)American management of NATO allies. In November 1974 the State Department advised that ‘Without identifying hypothetical situations, it seems prudent to assume that at some time in the next 5-10 years we may want to have a British flag alongside our own for both political and military reasons.’¹³³ Furthermore, it was felt in the context of the ongoing UK Defence Review that ‘We should focus on: --where the UK contribution will be most important over the next decade; --where the UK contribution will be unique; -- *where the UK contribution may be politically desirable to complement US capabilities over the next decade* (author’s italics).’¹³⁴

Conclusion

This article has not sought specifically to examine the health or otherwise of the special relationship across the period 1968-76. Nor has it advanced a case for soft power ‘saving’ the special relationship. The Americans acknowledged that ‘Despite the “long retreat of British power”...the UK remains a world power’, and it was still considered in US interests to continue ‘special’ intelligence and nuclear weapons information sharing programmes and to preserve the US-UK security relationship and British defence efforts.¹³⁵ Rather, what this article argues is that the long 1970s most marked the transition of the special relationship from the unprecedented cooperation between two world powers during WW2 to its modern

asymmetric incarnation, and that within this process soft power played a newly significant role.

Under the new conditions of the long 1970s quantitative British capabilities became relatively less important to the US than did qualitative contributions. To some extent Hughes foresaw this when in 1968 he argued that despite the atrophy of British power Britain would 'still have unparalleled experience, expertise, and entrée and will therefore be able to carry out undertakings of benefit to the US in diplomacy, intelligence, and technology.'¹³⁶ However, that Kissinger was able to tell Ford in January 1975 that 'the UK still maintains an influence in international affairs disproportionate to its size and military and economic strength'¹³⁷ owed also to particular contingent conditions that privileged soft power, especially the thawing of the Cold War and the multilateralization of international relations. Furthermore, the particular utility of British soft power to the US was accentuated by its increased need of allies and domestic political constraints.

It is important to appreciate that the role of soft power in helping transition the special relationship to its modern form functioned in three different dimensions. The most obvious one was the utility of Britain's soft power, as the weaker partner, to American objectives. Britain could work alongside the US to help set an agenda of institutional renewal such that a revised American-led international system might re-strengthen its power of attraction and reduce the costs to the US of maintaining it. Also, Anglo-American affiliative sentiment at a popular level meant that cooperation with Britain above all others was most impactful in terms of conveying policy legitimacy and reassurance to the US electorate.

The second dimension in which soft power worked to help transition the special relationship was as a bilateral cohering force. Effectively, Anglo-American soft power had interpenetrated to such an extent that by the long 1970s it had become a uniquely shared resource. This resource could be harnessed to political ends, as the Ford and Wilson governments did to help improve the tone of Anglo-American relations. Perhaps even more importantly, though, the long-term interpenetration of shared culture, language, political ideas and experiences had non-purposive effects that provided stability and contoured political choices. As Sir Patrick Dean put it: 'The fact of the matter is, as I see it, that our "connexion" with the United States is something that neither we nor the Americans have created artificially but something organic arising from the facts of "life itself" as the Russians would say. It follows from this

that it is something that cannot be abolished overnight by some act of policy, even if we wished to do so.’¹³⁸

Finally, it might be argued that it was the melding over time of Anglo-American soft power that was the principal reason that a qualitatively special relationship could survive the transition from a relationship of relative equals to one of profound asymmetry. Taking soft power as comprising culture, political values and foreign policies perceived to possess legitimacy and moral authority,¹³⁹ it is not unreasonable to suggest that Anglo-American sharing of culture and political values would help produce similar perspectives as to what might constitute legitimate and moral foreign policies. Herein, therefore, lies the root of the ‘common cast of mind’. And it is this that enabled unusually high levels of US-UK international policy congruence, a consequent ability to exercise collaboratively soft and hard power, and a capacity for the special relationship to survive irrespective of whether the two countries faced an extant mutual enemy. As the State Department put it succinctly in 1975, ‘The closest possible bilateral relationship...is not an end in itself, but a means of nurturing the common outlook we share and encouraging HMG support for our interests and policies around the world.’¹⁴⁰

¹ For a useful overview of these debates see Alan P Dobson and Steve Marsh, *Anglo-American Relations: Contemporary Perspectives*, (London: Routledge, 2013), Introduction.

² H.C. Allen, *Great Britain and the United States*, (Watford: Odhams Press, 1954); Henry B Ryan, *The Vision of Anglo-America*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1987); E. Ingram, ‘The Wonderland of the Political Scientist’, *International Security* 22 (1997), 53-63; Max Beloff, ‘The Special Relationship: An Anglo-American Myth’, in Martin Gilbert, *A Century of Conflict*, (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1966), 151-171.

³ For a recent analysis of Churchill and the origins of the special relationship see Alan P Dobson and Steve Marsh (eds), *Churchill and the Anglo-American Special Relationship*, (London: Routledge, 2017).

⁴ For functional accounts see, amongst many, Alan P Dobson, *The Politics of the Anglo-American Economic Special Relationship*, (New York: Wheatsheaf and St. Martin's, 1988); John Baylis, *Anglo-American Defence Relations 1939-84*, (London: Macmillan 1984); Jeffrey T. Richelson and Desmond Ball, *The Ties that Bind: Intelligence Cooperation Between the UKUSA Countries*, (London: Allen and Unwin, 1985). Accounts of relative British decline include David Reynolds, *Britannia Overruled: British Policy and World Power in the Twentieth Century*, (London: Longman, 2000); John Darwin, *Britain and Decolonisation: The Retreat from Empire in the Post-War World*, (London: Palgrave, 1988); Andrew Gamble, *Britain in Decline*, (London: Macmillan, 1994). Antony Best (ed), *Britain's Retreat from Empire in East Asia, 1905-1980*, (London: Routledge, 2017).

⁵ See, for example, G.C. Peden, 'Suez and Britain's Decline as a World Power,' *The Historical Journal* 55 (2012), 1080; S.C. Smith, 'Britain's Decision to Withdraw from the Persian Gulf: A Pattern Not a Puzzle,' *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 44 (2016), 328-351; Keith Kyle, *Suez: Britain's End of Empire in the Middle East* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011); John Dickie, *Special No More: Anglo-American Relations: Rhetoric and Reality*, (London: Weidenfield & Nicolson, 1994).

⁶ For some considerations of why the special relationship has persisted in general see: John Baylis, 'The Anglo-American Relationship and Alliance Theory', *International Relations*, 8:4 (1985), 368-379; Steve Marsh and John Baylis, 'The Anglo-American "Special Relationship": The Lazarus of International Relations', *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 17:1 (2006), 173-211; JB Élie, 'Many times doomed but still alive: an attempt to understand the continuity of the special relationship', *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, 3:S1 (2005), 63-83; AP Dobson and S Marsh, 'Anglo-American Relations: End of a Special Relationship?', *International History Review*, 36:4 (2014), 673-697. For predictions of its demise see W. Wallace, 'The Collapse of British Foreign Policy', *International Affairs*, 81:1 (2005), 53-68; A. Danchev, "Anglo-Saxon Susceptibilities: The Special Relationship and the World," *Intelligence and National Security*, 25: vi, 2010, pp. 843-855.

⁷ Bruce J. Schulman, *The Seventies: The Great Shift in American culture, Society, and Politics*, (New York: The Free Press, 2001); Jefferson Cowie, *Stayin' Alive: The 1970s and the Last Days of the Working Class*, (New York: New Press, 2010); Judith Stein, *Pivotal Decade: How the United States Traded Factories for Finance in the Seventies*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010); Daniel T. Rodgers, *Age of Fracture*, (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2011); Thomas Borstelmann, *The 1970s: A New Global History from Civil Rights to Economic Inequality*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012); Rick Perlstein, *The Invisible Bridge: The Fall of Nixon and the Rise of Reagan*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2014); Poul Villaume, Rasmus Mariager, Helle Porsdam eds, *The 'Long 1970s': Human Rights, East-West Détente and Transnational Relations*, (London: Routledge, 2016).

⁸ Gerald R Ford Library (GFL), Memcon between Ford, Kissinger, and Scowcroft, 18 Oct. 1974, box 6, National Security Adviser's Memoranda of Conversation Collection, <http://www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov/library/document/0314/1552829.pdf>

⁹ Discussion of what soft power is and its critics lies beyond the scope of this article. However, good starting points for these debates include Joseph S. Nye, 'Soft Power,' *Foreign Policy*, 80 (1990): 153-71; Adrian Hyde-Price (2006) 'Normative' power Europe: a realist critique', *Journal of European Public Policy*, 13:2, 217-234; Wilson, E. J. (2008). Hard Power, Soft Power, Smart Power. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 616(1), 110-124; Joseph S. Nye and Jack Landman Goldsmith, 'The Future of Power', *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, 64:3 (2011): 45-52; Peter Baumann, 'Power, Soft or Deep? An Attempt at Constructive Criticism', *International Journal of Political Philosophy*, Vol 6, No 10 (2017): 177-214; ERIC X. LI. 'The Rise and Fall of Soft Power, *Foreign Policy*', AUGUST 20, 2018, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/08/20/the-rise-and-fall-of-soft-power/>

¹⁰ For an account that explains Anglo-American relations during this period less through cooperation than conflict and coercion, see Thomas Robb, *A Strained Partnership?: US-UK relations in the era of détente, 1969-77*, (Manchester: MUP, 2013).

¹¹ A.P. Dobson, 'The Years of Transition: Anglo-American Relations 1961-1967', *Review of International Studies*, 16 (1990), 239-258.

¹² M.D. Bordo, R. MacDonald and M.J. Oliver, 'Sterling in crisis, 1964-1967', *European Review Economic History*, 13:3 (2009), 437-459; Alan P. Dobson, *The Politics of the Anglo-American Economic Special Relationship*; Francis J Gavin, *Gold Dollar and Power: The*

Politics of International Relations 1958-1971, (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), chapter 7; Catherine R. Schenk, *The Decline of Sterling: Managing the Retreat of an International Currency, 1945-92*, (Cambridge: CUP, 2010); M.J. Oliver and A. Hamilton, 'Downhill from devaluation: The battle for sterling, 1968–72', *The Economic History Review*, 60:3 (2007), 486–512.

¹³ See, for instance, J. Young, 'Britain and "LBJ's War", 1964-68', *Cold War History*, 3:2 (2002), 63-92; Sylvia Ellis, *Britain, America, and the Vietnam War*, (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004); N. Wolf, "'This Secret Town": British Intelligence, the Special Relationship, and the Vietnam War', *The International History Review*, 39:2 (2017), 338-367.

¹⁴ United Kingdom National Archives (UKNA), FCO 63/348, Michael Stewart to Patrick Dean, 13 February 1969. See also J. Colman, 'Dealing with disillusioned men': The Washington Ambassadorship of Sir Patrick Dean, 1965-69', *Contemporary British History*, 21:2 (2007), 247-270.

¹⁵ J. Colman, 'Communication: "What Now for Britain?" The State Department's Intelligence Assessment of the "Special Relationship," 7 February 1968', *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 19:2 (2008), 351.

¹⁶ Lyndon Baines Johnson Library (LBJ), NSF Country File, box 210-12, folder: UK memos. Vol. xi, 4/67 – 6/67, Bruce to Rusk.

¹⁷ UKNA, FCO 82/58, 'Summary: The visit of the Prime Minister and Secretary of State to Washington 16-18 December 1970

¹⁸ GFL, National Security Advisor, Kissinger – Scowcroft West Wing Files 1969-76, Box 26, United Kingdom (13) 1/2/74 – 1/28/74, Memo of conversation Nixon, Cromer and Scowcroft, 17 January 1974.

¹⁹ For different interpretations of Heath's posture toward the special relationship see A. Spelling, 'Edward Heath and Anglo–American Relations 1970–1974: A Reappraisal,' *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 20:4 (2009), 638-58; Andrew Scott, *Allies Apart: Heath, Nixon and the Anglo-American Relationship*, (Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke and New York,

2011); Niklas Rossbach, *Heath, Nixon and the Rebirth of the Special Relationship: Britain, the US and the EC, 1969-74*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

²⁰ Underlining in the original text. GFL, National Security Adviser, Presidential Country Files for Europe and Canada, Country File: United Kingdom (1), Box 15, United Kingdom (1), Kissinger to Ford 'Meeting with Edward Heath on 10 September 1974', undated.

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