Abstract

The ‘special relationship’ between the United States and the United Kingdom has existed since the beginning of the 1940s. During the Second World War, a strong alliance emerged that was based on a defense policy against a common enemy and a shared value principle. Throughout the Cold War, the special relationship evolved from a weakening of mutual relations in 1960s and 1970s to a renewed rapprochement in 1980s, mainly because of the shared opinions of the U.S. President Ronald Reagan and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. After the geopolitical changes in 1989 a debate developed over the future of their special relationship. The question was whether (or in what form) the transatlantic alliance will continue to remain. The 9/11 terrorist attacks upon the United States gave the answer to this question and provided the impetus for renewed mutual British-American relations. Immediately after the attacks, the United Kingdom expressed its full support for the US-led fight against terrorism and followed the United States first into Afghanistan and later into Iraq. However, both President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair were strongly criticized that their war engagement, particularly in relation to the war in Iraq, had been unlawful and was based on false evidence supporting the necessity of military intervention.