

# **The Democratic Peace Hypothesis and the War in Iraq: A Comparative Analysis of France and Britain**

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## **ABSTRACT**

For almost half a century, liberal scholars of International Relations have maintained that public opinion highly influences foreign policy within democracies, and although less concerned with public opinion, some realists argue that political elites and politicians influence public opinion to support foreign policy ventures. To determine the empirical validity of these claims, this thesis re-examines appropriate literature and public opinion polls representing public opinion towards the US and the war in Iraq throughout the past decade. The results suggest that, in the case of France the liberal democratic peace hypothesis can be applied when Jacques Chirac seems to have supported public opinion and rejects supporting the war in Iraq; however, this hypothesis fails to account for the case of Britain when Prime Minister Tony Blair ignores the public opinion of the British people and chooses to support the US and their war in Iraq. These results not only question the democratic peace hypothesis but the importance of public opinion in democracies today as well.

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## INTRODUCTION

Immediately following the September 11th attacks, the Bush administration decided the best foreign policy option was a multilateral strike on Afghanistan, the suspected terrorist source, in order to deal with the terrorists in the most comprehensive way possible. After the President invoked the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) policy during the Afghanistan war of 2001, that an attack on one nation is an attack on the whole, NATO flew eight warning planes over Afghanistan in support of the United States. Soon after, the United Nations (UN) condemned the terrorist attacks and authorized all necessary actions the US could take in response to more attacks.<sup>1</sup> The US, at this time, saw more support from the international community than it had seen in many decades. As an example, "on the day after attacks, the French newspaper, *Le Monde*, carried the banner headline, 'Nous Sommes Tous Américains (We Are All Americans)'" demonstrating that even the most critical of states supported the US at this time.<sup>2</sup>

However, soon after, the Bush administration moved closer to initiating a second war, with Iraq. The US moved farther away from its previous multilateral approach and moved into an 'Either you are with us or you are against us' mentality when President Bush stated publicly that the US did not need any help from the international community. A new policy of preemptive and preventative war was announced splitting not only the international scene, but the domestic community as well and led to massive global opposition demonstrations.<sup>3</sup> The generally unsupported unilateral invasion of Iraq on March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2003 demonstrated the almost unanimous global disapproval of the US by initially only holding support from the

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<sup>1</sup> Dan Caldwell, "Iraq: 'The Wong War at the Wrong Time with the Wrong Strategy,'" Columbia International Affairs Online, (2007) <http://www.ciaonet.org/casestudy/ciao10029/> (Accessed 18 February 2010): 23.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Wike. Global Attitudes Project. Pew Research Center. "Global Public Opinion in the Bush years (2001 – 2008)," (December 2008) <http://pewglobal.org/2008/12/18/global-public-opinion-in-the-bush-years-2001-2008/> (accessed April 20, 2010): 5.

United Kingdom, Australia, and a few Eastern European and post Soviet countries who had just gained their independence.<sup>4</sup>

Before the invasion, international public opinion was largely in opposition to the unilateral decision; nonetheless, the United States (US) invaded Iraq without support from the international community or the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). When the announcement that the UNSC had refused to support the US in Iraq without any additional military personnel for seemingly irrational and confusing reasons was released to the public, the majority of the international public turned against the US as well. Public opinion polls about support for the US fell drastically, news papers and forums during this time were also filled with criticisms of the US and their rash reasons for going to war, and accusation of ulterior motives fueled protests and demonstrations against the war. International sentiments towards the US had taken a radical turn for the worse.

After the invasion, the negative feelings of the international community grew even stronger. In many countries, protests and other public displays of dissatisfaction with US actions were the largest they had ever been. Yet, despite the growing international negative public opinions, after the initial invasion period of a little over a month, an additional forty-five heads of state led their countries to support the US (the Coalition of the Willing)<sup>5</sup> and its war in Iraq.

As of 2005, just behind the contributions of the US, the United Kingdom (UK) had 8,000 troops in Iraq; South Korea had 3,300; Italy had 3,000; Poland had 1,500 troops; and Australia supported war efforts with 750 troops. However, the 2005 Pipa (Program on International Policy Attitudes) report recorded noteworthy public opposition within each of these countries which had deployed military personnel to Iraq. Fifty-seven percent of British surveyed preferred removal of all troops deployed in Iraq, 42% of South Koreans wanted to

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<sup>4</sup> Caldwell, *op. cit* in note 1, p. 23.

<sup>5</sup> When referring to the Coalition of the Willing member states this is excluding the US, in order to get a more accurate reading of the international community outside of the US.

scale back the deployed, 60% of Italians wanted to remove troops completely, and 56% of the Japanese voters wanted the same. Fifty-three percent of Australians wanted to bring the troops back home as well as 59% of Poles replied in favor of removing troops as well. These figures depict the top five countries present in Iraq and show that even the states who had chosen to support the war the most also had some of the highest negative public opinion polls against the war.<sup>6</sup>

The five states from above, led the forty-nine state from the Coalition of the Willing in military assistance. Most of the decisions made to support the US war however, were made by governments and not by the people who make up the democratic states. Listed on the US government's website is a definition of the word democracy and what it means in today's world. It is listed that, "democracy 'is government by the people in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised directly by them or by their elected agents under a free electoral system.'"<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, Abraham Lincoln originally described democracy as, "a government 'of the people, by the people, and for the people.'"<sup>8</sup> These two definitions make up the traditional and popular understanding of what it means to be a democratic state in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

More simply put, the word democracy is of Greek origin and is broken down in two parts: demos meaning people and kratos meaning rule.<sup>9</sup> This idea is the foundation of not only democracy but also of the democratic peace hypothesis. This hypothesis has been the most prominent theory used for to explain why a democratic state would choose to go to war or to abstain from one. Popular visions of the democratic peace theory assume that democratic governments will respect public opinion in the formulation of foreign policy.

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<sup>6</sup> Program on International Policy Attitudes (Pipa), "Global Views of the US Questionnaire and Methodology," *GlobeScan*. (2006): 144.

<sup>7</sup> Howard Cincotta, ed., "Defining democracy," *United States Department of State*. (2010) <http://usinfo.org/mirror/usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/whatsdem/whatdm2.htm>

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica Online Academic Edition, s.v. "Democracy."

However, it is clear in the case of the Iraq war that often public opinion and foreign policy choices were at odds, within the Coalition of the Willing. This thesis attempts to understand this discrepancy by exploring in-depth two country cases - France where negative public opinion coincided with the Jacques Chirac government's choice not to comply with the US, and Great Britain - where the Tony Blair government chose to stand by the US despite strong domestic opposition. As Risse-Kappen suggests, "similarities in public attitudes across various countries do not necessarily lead to similar policies,"<sup>10</sup> I will explore the possibilities of why this has occurred in this case within this thesis.

Continuing from the idea that most states uphold the afore mentioned qualities of a democracy, in the case of both France and Britain, these states should not have agreed to support the US in its war in Iraq. According to Chan and Safran, France's end decision to not support the US in their war in Iraq was paralleled by the drastic negative public opinion on the topic. From January to October 2003 public opposition to the war in Iraq grew from 60% to 81%. Britain, on the other hand, neglected to respond to the negative public opinion. Their opposition polls were lower than most countries at the start of the war but were still significantly negative; by October, 51% of British people were against the war.<sup>11</sup> With these statistics in mind, it is clear that the French government seems to have respected the public's wishes while British government did not. This is evidently a case where the democratic peace hypothesis falls short in explaining foreign policy actions.

More explicitly stated in this hypothesis, the public, within a democracy, has strength enough to change foreign policy. As Ripsman, a well known foreign policy scholar states, clearly,

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<sup>10</sup> Thomas Risse-Kappen, "Public Opinion, Domestic Structure, and Foreign Policy in Liberal Democracies," *World Politics*, 43, no. 4 (1991): 510.

<sup>11</sup> Meril James, "The Gallup International Iraq Poll 2003," The Gallup International Association. (2003), quoted in Steve Chan and William Safran, *Public Opinion as a Constraint Against War: Democracies' Responses to Operation Iraqi Freedom* (*Foreign Policy Analysis* 2, no. 2, 2006), 141.



All democratic states--states that are characterized by popular sovereignty, where the ultimate source of authority resides within the people as a whole --share certain constitutional, procedural and normative features which affect the nature and content of their foreign security policies in similar ways.<sup>12</sup>

The case of Britain is an example of how this is not always true. There are plenty of cases where public opinion seems to have affected foreign policy, however, I will illustrate how this is not always the case.

The most important power in a democracy is entrusted to the head of state. This power is the ability to choose whether or not they will respect the opinions of the people. Mueller introduces the appropriate procedure for making a foreign policy decision within a democracy. The first action democratic policy makers should take into account in order to make appropriate foreign policy decisions is persuasion tactics and how they will portray a policy objective in a good light. Secondly, the policy maker must look at costs and benefits of the action. Thirdly, they must look at political oppositions and how strong and large their following has become. If there is no strong opposition then the politician has much more room to exercise greater influence over his or her people. All of these considerations emphasize the potential power public opinion has over foreign policy, if respected, but if neglected it removes all power from the people and removes one of the most important aspects of a democracy.<sup>13</sup>

Liberal theorists suggest that, "Policymakers in liberal democracies do not decide against an overwhelming public consensus. In most cases, mass public opinion set broad and unspecified limits to the foreign policy choices."<sup>14</sup> This paper however, argues the opposite; that in the present case of Iraq, some states not only ignored public opinion but went directly

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<sup>12</sup> Norrin M. Ripsman, "Domestic Structures and Democratic Foreign Policy: Peacemaking After World War II," Columbia International Affairs Online, (1997) <http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/rin01/index.html>:1.

<sup>13</sup> John Mueller, "'Public Opinion As A Constraint On U.S. Foreign Policy: Assessing the Perceived Value of American and Foreign Lives,'" Columbia International Affairs Online, (March 2000): 2 <http://www.ciaonet.org/isa/muj01/> (accesses May 1, 2010).

<sup>14</sup> Risse-Kappen, *op. cit* in note 10, p 510.

against it. This is evidenced by the case in Britain and the foreign policy choices made to keep supporting the war in Iraq after massive negative public outcry over the last decade. As more and more information comes out regarding the war in Iraq and the international opinion concerning support, it becomes increasingly evident that the liberal democratic peace hypothesis is not appropriate in this situation.

Liberal logic would suggest, when popular public opinion objects to supporting the US led war in Iraq, then a state's foreign policy measures will respect this; however, this does not seem to be the case for Britain or most states within the Coalition of the Willing. This theses will therefore ask the research question, what are the differentiating factors that led one democratic state to neglect popular public opinion and join the Coalition of the Willing and another to respect it? To answer this question I will focus broadly on the Coalition of the Willing member states and then deal more directly with France and Britain.

By first looking at the Coalition of the Willing member states, this allows for an introduction to the topic and broad understanding of my argument. Then the comparative analysis will bring to light the specific differences in foreign policy from two internationally recognized democracies when the type of government as well as location and economic status are held constant. These control variables allow for a more focused analysis of public influence and can then be more broadly applied to other democracies that have committed to supporting the US in its war with Iraq. Maintaining that public attitudes follow similar patterns across the two countries (as well as most Coalition of the Willing member states) this will also help to answer the research question, stated in the paragraph above, more directly. It is important to note here that the relationship between public opinion and foreign policy is observed regardless of political goals or in response to electoral cycle. After studying the relevant literature and analyzing the data from public opinion polls, the information reveals that foreign policy within the liberal democracies stated here is in fact determined more so by

political strategy and security guidelines than public opinion. The paper will provide examples and discuss the implications of this.

There have only been a small number of studies looking at single country cases on the influence of public opinion on foreign policy during the war in Iraq; however, this paper will go beyond the current literature by analyzing two country cases in depth as well as broadly investigating a large group of democratic states that supported the war, the Coalition of the Willing, and their public opinion polls as well. In this thesis I will begin looking at public opinion the year before the war, 2002, and continuing until the end of George W. Bush's presidency in 2008. After the public release of the idea to invade Iraq, public opinion towards the US and its decision changed rapidly; therefore by looking at public opinion and foreign policy during this six year span, changes will be clearly observed.

Outside of an extensive review of the literature by Steve Chan, Andrew Moravcsik, Thomas Risse-Kappen, James N. Rosenau, and William Safran I have examined this relationship by compiling data from multiple public opinion polls with actual, real world foreign policy actions taken by France and Britain. As there are not many up to date articles or books discussing the influence of public opinion on foreign policy decisions in democracies today, much of the information provided here is new and incomparable to other instances of war. To define and measure public opinion, I rely upon the Pew Global Attitudes Project, Pipa global scan, and Gallup data sets. Seeking to contribute to the debate regarding the role of public opinion in foreign policy decision making in democratic states, this paper examines differences in foreign policy concerning the war in Iraq within France and Britain and how and why their political reactions have differed.

My argument provides a refined and updated understanding of the democratic peace hypothesis and its imperfections by observing the research already completed on the international public opinion of the Iraq war and how and why public opinion is unequally

important around the world. Thus, it takes into account the struggle for power and an international voice within the international community, different domestic structures, as well as the different personalities of each leader; therefore allowing for a more generally applicable conclusion that can be related to democracies within the Coalition of the Willing. Next, , a broader look at other democracies in the Coalition of the Willing will be taken in order to showcase how these results are not just one exception to the rule. Finally this paper goes through the history of foreign policy in France and Britain with a comparative analysis with two of the best examples of democracies; showing a country that represents its public and one that does not; this will clearly argue that the democratic peace hypothesis is not applicable in this case.

## CHAPTER 1 – THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The liberal and realist international relations schools have been in debate over which theory best explains why states behave the way they do within the international system for many many decades. In this thesis, only a sector of the debate will be discussed. This part of the debate that will be focused on is public opinion and the affect it has had on foreign policy within democratic states. In this case, liberal and realist theories each seek to explain the affect public opinion has on foreign policy by focusing on different influencing factors. Specifically, scholars focus on the democratic peace hypothesis and deliberate on whether or not this idea can sufficiently account for the different cases in which a democracy may or may not take public opinion into consideration. Moreover this particular piece of “[t]he debate over the democratic peace is theoretically important because it represents another round in the ongoing bout between realism and liberalism.”<sup>15</sup> As liberalism and realism are the two most prominent theories discussing public opinion today and because of space constraint, I will be only discussing these two theories.<sup>16</sup> These theories each give their own explanation, however; as I will explain later, neither of them give completely satisfactory explanations. In this section I will break down the debate and its history.

### 1.1 Liberalism

Andrew Moravcsik, an IR scholar specifically focused on the liberal side of this debate, broadly defines liberal international relations (IR) theory and says how it:

elaborates the insight that state-society relations – the relationship of states to the domestic and transnational social context in which they are embedded – have a fundamental impact on state behavior in world politics. Social ideas, interests, and

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<sup>15</sup> Michael E. Brown, Sean M. Lynn-Jones, and Steven E. Miller, eds. (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Princeton University Press, 1996), 140.

<sup>16</sup> Please note that liberal and realist theory, however, are not the only IR theories that discuss public opinion; however, they are the largest theories involved in the debate. Because of the word restraint, there was not enough space to continue the debate with other theories.

institutions influence state behavior by shaping state performances, that is, the fundamental social purpose underlying the strategic calculations of governments.<sup>17</sup>

In liberal IR theory, scholars agree that “anarchy and institutionalization do not differentiate between domestic and international politics... the question is not how they are different but how to study their unmistakable interaction.”<sup>18</sup> These two quotes demonstrate properly the traditional idea that domestic and international politics are related and illustrate how strongly liberal scholars believe public opinion or domestic concern influences international political decision making.

In Moravcsik’s article entitled *Liberal Theory of International Politics*, he also emphasizes this point by stressing that, “the fundamental actors in international politics are individuals and private groups,”<sup>19</sup> not the government itself. Fundamentally, “[l]iberal theory rests on a ‘bottom up’ view of politics in which the demands of individuals and societal groups are treated as analytically prior to politics.”<sup>20</sup> This is an example of how highly idealistic this theory is. The ‘transmission belt’ that Moravcsik mentions is the link between individuals and their state representatives where idyllically public preferences are transferred into state policy within a democracy. In this theory, the state is merely the puppet to the social actor puppeteers. Here, social interests, although not equally represented, are simply produced to determine international activities.<sup>21</sup>

The democratic peace hypothesis, a specific part of liberal international relations theory, and the most important section for this thesis, is defined as the idea that democracies will not go to war with one another and that if they happen to, violence will remain at an

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<sup>17</sup> Andrew Moravcsik, “Taking Preferences Seriously: A liberal Theory of International Politics,” *International Organizations*, 51, no. 4 (1997): 513.

<sup>18</sup> Peter Gourevitch, “Domestic Politics and International Relations,” (2002) quoted in Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse and Beth A. Simmons, eds., *Handbook of International Relations*. (London, England: Sage Publications, 2006), 310.

<sup>19</sup> Moravcsik, *op. cit* in note 17, p. 514.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 517.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 518.

exceedingly low level compared to other pairs of states fighting. More appropriately, it also discussed in the democratic peace hypothesis that domestic policies and actions affect foreign policy within a democratic state. Furthermore, within this hypothesis, the ‘democratic culture and norms model’ suggests that democracies are more peaceful than other states because citizens will refuse to pay the taxes needed for war and will also refuse to send themselves or their family members to fight in wars, the idea is also known as Kant’s perpetual peace theory. This reasoning will theoretically limit a democratic state from going to war under any circumstance.

Leaders of democracies are pressured to follow opinions of elites as well as the public and if they fail to support either they risk losing electoral votes, monetary support, and even their future decision making influence in some cases. These are the main reasons liberals argue that public opinion is taken into consideration in democracies. Gourevitch stretches this idea and says, “[p]ublic accountability in a democracy limits the range of likely behaviors.”<sup>22</sup> Not only is a leader pressured to take public opinion into consideration, but they are also constrained in their policies as well. Here democracy is seen as a limiting factor to foreign policy decision makers where it can take longer to make decisions and it is very difficult to change policy in a fast and efficient manner.<sup>23</sup>

It is argued by Chan and Safran that “[a] central logic of the democratic peace theory claims that public opinion acts as a powerful restraint against war.”<sup>24</sup> Chan and Safran interpret the democratic peace hypothesis as public opinion constraining democracies from commencing a foreign war of any kind because if a war is initiated and is not supported by the people, democratic leaders run the risk of losing very important votes that could make re-

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<sup>22</sup> Gourevitch, *op. cit* in note 18, p. 316.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 310.

<sup>24</sup> Steve Chan and William Safran, “Public Opinion as a Constraint Against War: Democracies’ Responses to Operation Iraqi Freedom,” *Foreign Policy Analysis* 2, no. 2 (2006): 137.

election impossible.<sup>25</sup> Foreign policy is influenced by the role of interest groups, domestic institutions, ideas, non-governmental organizations, and civil society transnational relations which are all derived from public opinion. Democratic states are designed to take into consideration public opinion as Fearon points out, “Forced by democratic rules to operate publicly, leaders have to worry about ‘audience costs.’”<sup>26</sup> Leaders can lose votes for going against popular opinions as well as for potentially losing the war.

Democratic peace theorists “emphasize political survival as the primary goal of political leaders,” suggesting that, again, public opinion matters to politicians and their foreign policy tactics.<sup>27</sup> In democracies, preemptive wars are rarely popular and therefore, most heads of state will not go against their public to wage a war. Public opinion is seen here as a constraint on leaders and is a check of their power. This may be the most plausible argument today of the liberal theory; however, it still maintains, idealistically that public opinion in any democracy is the main determinate of not only domestic policy but foreign policy as well.<sup>28</sup> Sebastian Rosato discusses liberal theorist’s tendencies to argue that, “several features of democracies, such as freedom of speech and open political processes, make it fairly easy for voters to rate a government's performance. In short, monitoring and sanctioning democratic leaders is a relatively straightforward matter.”<sup>29</sup> However this article fails to take into account what happened in the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, and this is where liberal theory falls short. Rosato, along with many other writers do not look at public opinion and the affect it has had on foreign policy involving the Iraq war because it is unlike most of the past wars where the democratic peace theory can be applied. The Iraq war is one of the

<sup>25</sup> Chan and Safran, *op. cit* in note 24, p. 139.

<sup>26</sup> James Fearon, (1994) quoted in Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse and Beth A. Simmons, eds., *Handbook of International Relations*. (London, England: Sage Publications, 2006), 309-328.

<sup>27</sup> Jack S. Levy, “War and Peace,” in *Handbook of International Relations*, ed. Walter Carsnaes, Thomas Risse, and Beth A. Simmons (London, England: Sage Publications, 2006), 360.

<sup>28</sup> Steve Chan and William Safran, “Public Opinion as a Constraint Against War: Democracies’ Responses to Operation Iraqi Freedom,” *Foreign Policy Analysis* 2, no. 2 (2006): 138.

<sup>29</sup> Sebastian, Rosato, “The Flawed Logic of Democratic Peace Theory,” *The American Political Science review* 97, no. 4 (November 2003): 585-602.



few wars where there are so many examples of leaders going against opinions of the public to get involved in a foreign war.

If war does happen to break out under extraordinary circumstances, liberal IR theorists argue further that soon after the initial period of invasion, “voters simply come to neglect the war entirely as they turn to other, more immediate concerns, particularly domestic ones.”<sup>30</sup> This implies the public will have a decrease in feelings of opposition to a war after they get past the initial invasion phase and can happen in any state, not only in the US. This is once again, not the case for the war in Iraq. As evidenced by the decline in support for the war by most states in the Coalition of the Willing. In fact, international negative public opinion has increased or remained the same level since the invasion in 2003 in most of the states addressed in the tables and graphs in the appendix section at the end of the paper.<sup>31</sup> It could be argued here that there are fewer public protests; however, public opinion polls have shown opinions to be decreasing in many states, especially in Europe. Please refer to the end of the paper to see statistical confirmation (in particular, Table 3.).

There are many instances where governments do not respond uniformly to public pressure. There are also many influencing factors that can make a government’s actions coincide with or deviate completely from public opinion. Realism having been around, arguable, since Aristotle has been recently revived and has responded to this debate by arguing almost the opposite of liberal theory, as they do on most topics in international relations.

## **1.2 Realism**

Realism on the other hand, is focused on power politics and taking advantage of all international power opportunities. Most branches of foreign policy thus suggest ignoring

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<sup>30</sup> Jennifer L. Erickson, “Protests, Policymaking, and Public Opinion: Democracy and the Iraq War in Europe,” (lecture, Cornell University Government Department colloquia and the Northeastern Political Science Association 2005 Annual Conference): 4.

<sup>31</sup> Richard Wike, Global Attitudes Project. Pew Research Center. “Global Unease with World Powers.” (June 2007) <http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=256> (accessed April 20, 2010).

altogether any influence of public opinion and basing foreign policy decisions on how to gain more power and security. This theory is generally focused on the state level and not on the international level where much of foreign policy analysis is involved. This also means that realist theory is not focused on the individual level in most cases and therefore remarkable unconcerned with public opinion in most cases.<sup>32</sup>

The realist theory literature and texts on public opinion tend to avoid discussing one another. There have been very few scholars that discuss both realist theory and public opinion in the same context. Most realist literature discusses system-level analyses and this in turn ignores almost completely the influence of public opinion.<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, public opinion researchers for the most part tend to focus on theoretical paradigms. Therefore, as public opinion literature focuses on individual-level determinants of foreign policy, realism or the system-level focus is nearly always avoided.<sup>34</sup> Because the information on realism in this case, is limited and was created in reaction to liberal theory, the section will be smaller and more condensed.

Realism similarly argues that public opinion can be highly influential on foreign policy choices within a state. Realists suggest that public opinion can be manipulated and changed into what governments want, therefore giving the political leaders more support and power to form foreign policies. Rosenau, an IR theorist, suggests in his book, *Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy*, that foreign policy is not solely determined by external factors; “democratic sources of foreign policy are no less crucial to its content and conduct than are the international situations towards which it is directed.”<sup>35</sup> As a realist, he argues rather that domestic factors can influence and shape foreign policy just as well as international

<sup>32</sup> Sten Rynning and Stefano Guizzini, "Realism and Foreign Policy Analysis," Columbia International Affairs Online, <http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/rys02/index.html> (accessed May 1, 2010): 1-9.

<sup>33</sup> Daniel W. Drezner, "The New New World Order," *Foreign Affairs* 86, no. 2 (2007): 52.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>35</sup> James N. Rosenau, ed., *Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy* (New York, Free Press, 1976), 2.

influences can. He argues that external factors (relationship with other states, international influence,...) and internal factors (public opinion) both play a role in shaping foreign policy. More specifically he states, similarly to the democratic peace hypothesis, that public opinion matters. However, the “top-down”, realist approach is not completely accurate at determining how foreign policy decisions are made either.

Within the realist theory of IR, “It is assumed that the public is easily manipulated by political leaders, because of (1) the slow salience, or significance, of foreign and security policy issues as compared with economic policies, (2) the low degree of knowledge about the issues involved, and (3) the volatility of public opinion.”<sup>36</sup> This idea is in opposition to liberal theory that assumes people manipulate political decision making, not the other way around. To a realist, the public can be easily manipulated because they are generally ill informed of current event and are more concerned with domestic factors than matters of foreign policy making them easily manipulated. Democratic states show a significant amount of biased and one sided information in order to attain optimal support. It is clear that most states use the media and other sources to convince the public to support the foreign policy actions political leaders desire. However, this does not mean that in the end states will take into consideration the public opinion at all when making decisions about foreign policy.

The power elite hypothesis of the realist approach, “according to which popular consensus is a function of the elite consensus and elite cleavages trickle down to mass public opinion,”<sup>37</sup> does not accurately define or explain foreign policy actions any better than liberal theory because if the elite are influencing the public to believe and support matters of the elite’s interest, then public opinion would always, or at least usually, be in support of every

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<sup>36</sup> Risse-Kappen, *op. cit* in note 10, p. 481

<sup>37</sup> Risse-Kappen, *op. cit* in note 10, p. 481.

foreign policy action. It is much more complicated than this and it will be discussed further in the analysis section.

Moravcsik argues himself that, “[p]references are by definition casually dependent on the strategies of other actors and, therefore, prior to specific interstate political interactions, including external threats, incentives, manipulation of information, or other tactics.”<sup>38</sup>

Foreign policy, as it is seen here is first dependant on external factors and then is influenced by internal pressures. Foreign policy decisions are therefore made based on external pressures but dependant on public opinion that has the potential to be manipulated, bribed, and threatened. This idea is too simplistic and lets the manipulation of public opinion become a natural and important part of the foreign policy making process. This in the end makes it easy for policy makers to decide not to take public opinion into account because it is not truly representational of the people any more.

The debate continues, arguing over which theory better represents current foreign policy determinates; however, as it will be discussed in detail next, the data on public opinion and foreign policy actions suggests that public opinion plays little to no role in the case of Iraq. Furthermore, this is not to say that each state will always pursue the policy directly decided by the public alone, but if the state is striving to maintain a democracy then public opinion is required to be present in foreign policy actions. Every democracy can also follow different objectives and challenges. “Each state seeks to realize *its* distinctive preferences under varying constraints imposed by the preferences of *other states*.”<sup>39</sup> The following examples will show how the degree of influence public opinion has on foreign policy can change from state to state.

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<sup>38</sup> Moravcsik, *op. cit* in note 17, p. 515.

<sup>39</sup> Moravcsik, *op. cit* in note 17, p. 516.

### **1.3 Where the gap lies**

Many scholars like Moravcsik, Gourevitch, Rosenau, and Kappen, have argued that public opinion highly influences foreign policy in democracies. This claim is the foundation of liberal democratic theory. According to this, France and Britain, two democracies, should be very sensitive and responsive to their people's opinions concerning their foreign policy due to their history as proficient democracies committed to upholding the proper democratic foundations. It was revealed in the data collected for this thesis that France has seemingly achieved this and corresponded foreign policy and public opinion; whereas, Britain has failed to respect its public opinion and its foreign policy has deviated from its people's attitudes. Because the data shows this, it directly challenges the democratic peace hypothesis. Here, the democratic peace theory does not effectively explain foreign policy actions during the war in Iraq. This idea is supported by many other instances of foreign policy and public opinion splitting as well in the Coalition of the Willing states.

Great Britain is the best example of a modern democratic state rejecting public opinion to pursue other goals and objectives. This is specifically the case in their foreign policy actions towards the war in Iraq. When the United Kingdom (UK) ignored hostile public opinions and supported the US led war in Iraq, this contradicted the democratic peace hypothesis directly. Liberal IR theory specifically suggests that no democratic state will go to war against the public's wishes. Furthermore, France who seems to be respecting the wishes of its people refused to support war efforts and is a case where the democratic peace hypothesis can be applied. However, because liberal and realist theory both fail to explain fully the reasons that not only Britain but the majority of other democratic states in the Coalition of the Willing went against their public opinion in support of the war, a gap exists.

As the liberal democratic peace hypothesis suggested, public is the number one priority of a democratic state and foreign policy decisions will reflect the opinions of the people in all cases, it insufficiently represents the occurrence of the foreign policy decision

made by Tony Blair. It is also limited in explaining why the democracy went to war in the first place. As the people, like most democracies would, of most of the Coalition of the Willing states chose to oppose supporting the US in the war, the appropriate foreign policy decision should have been to follow the decision of the people in most of these cases. There are some examples of Coalition states having a high support for the war, but as evidenced by the tables in the appendix, most states in the Coalition went against strongly oppositional public opinions. In all of the liberal arguments presented in this section, not one can be effectively clarified by the liberal IR theory.

On the other side of the debate, as public opinion was rejected completely, this also brings to light the gap within realist thinking. Realist scholars argue that public opinion is, in many cases, manipulated to fit the decisions of policy makers and elites, but again, the opinions of the British people were not taken into consideration at all; so to say that they were manipulated would mean they would be in support of going to war. However, in reality, they remain against the war still today. Even if elites and political activists were able to manipulate public opinion, it cannot be seen or is irrelevant in this case as the opinions of the British and many of the Coalition member state had no observable affect on deciding to go to war with the US.

After investigating the example of Iraq through both the liberal democratic theory and the realist theory, it is clear that the case of Iraq is very unique from most other wars. This is a case where neither theory can completely and correctly account for the foreign policy action that was chosen by Prime Minister Tony Blair at the time. Britain and France are the best and most clear examples of the two different policy outcomes we are looking at. There are other examples, as has been discussed, but we can learn particularly well that even when there are extreme cases of public opposition of foreign policy, leaders can behave differently and can make different decisions. The next section will display an analysis of the empirical

findings from the graphs and tables I have collected. “[D]ata on public opinion have become readily available for many established democracies only in the recent decades, and most of these countries have rarely encountered situations suggesting a possibility of going to war during this same time span.”<sup>40</sup> This information / study is based on new information that has been explored very little by other scholars. Public opinion has been consistently negative towards the US and its war in Iraq since the first declaration of its intentions in the country; but why, despite this, has foreign policy remained virtually unchanged in all of the Coalition of the Willing member state, especially in Britain?

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<sup>40</sup> Chan and Safran, *op. cit* in note 24, p. 138.

## CHAPTER 2 - COALITION OF THE WILLING

The Coalition of the Willing is an, “*ad hoc* international coalition for military operations” that generally consists of, “a group of countries that backed their words with action, without waiting for another UN resolution,” that was formed to fight in the Iraq war.<sup>41</sup> It is a coalition that was created in 2003 to begin military operations to disarm Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction and liberate the Iraqi people.<sup>42</sup> Contributions from members range from on the ground military participation to just political support. The Coalition consists of 1.23 billion people, 49 countries<sup>43</sup>, a combined Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of about \$22 trillion, and nations from every race and continent around the world.<sup>44</sup>

The reasons most states decided to join the US in the Coalition of the Willing were because, “it was better to curry favor with American than to provoke them.”<sup>45</sup> It was also discussed that the only reason the Vilnius 10<sup>46</sup> states wanted to join the Coalition of the Willing was due to their impending move towards membership with NATO and to get diplomatic points for assisting fellow democracies in anticipation for membership.<sup>47</sup> However, during the initial invasion, only Australia, Denmark, Poland, and the UK supplied troops to aid the US. After occupation was achieved, 33 states in total provided troops to

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<sup>41</sup> Radek Sikorski, “In Iraq with the Coalition of the Willing,” *American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research* (2004): 1.

<sup>42</sup> The White House, “Coalition of the Willing,” (2003) [http://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing\\_room/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing_room/) (accessed May, 3 2010): 1.

<sup>43</sup> See Table 1. for list of Coalition of the Willing member states as of 2003.

<sup>44</sup> The White House, *op. cit* in note 42, p. 1.

<sup>45</sup> Sikorski, *op. cit* in note 41, p. 3.

<sup>46</sup> A group of 10 states that came together in 2000 in order to work together in hopes of a greater chance of receiving NATO membership. (Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia). Jeffery Donovan, “Eastern Europe: Vilnius Group Supports U.S. On Iraq,” *Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty* (February 2003) <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1102148.html> (accessed April 17, 2010).

<sup>47</sup> Dru Oja Jay, “Coalition of the Willing?” *Washington Post* (February 2003). [http://misnomer.dru.ca/2003/02/11/a\\_coalition\\_of\\_the\\_willing.html](http://misnomer.dru.ca/2003/02/11/a_coalition_of_the_willing.html) (accessed April 17, 2010).



help maintain occupation. However, six countries have no military or means of helping in Iraq and are seemingly ill equipped for this Coalition.<sup>48</sup>

The Bush administration has made it clear, “it pays to be an ally rather than a competitor” like Turkey or Israel.<sup>49</sup> There are clear benefits and consequences of assisting the US in a foreign war, and these have been taken into account for the Coalition members who have chosen to help the US. However, so far many of the states that were promised greater business benefits and visa opportunities with the US have felt short changed. Also, the situation in Iraq has not increased to the state that is stable and self sufficient. There has not been an intensive enough reconstruction effort as was previously promised and Iraqi debts are still piled high. Most states planned for a fast war with few casualties, which is not the case as the war reaches its seventh year with no end in sight. Each state that has joined the Coalition has mostly been dissatisfied and has witnessed a rise in negative public opinion towards the war in Iraq since the start.

Before talks of the war started, most Coalition states like Britain, Poland, Japan, Australia, and even France, who is not a Coalition member state, had high favorable views with means reaching to the 80% mark. Then as soon as the war commenced, this favorable opinion decreased and has continued to decrease throughout Bush’s presidency. The average favorable view of the US between these five states reached below 40%. This is astonishing considering that these states still choose to support the war militarily and politically.<sup>50</sup>

It is exceedingly important to take into consideration how the vast majority of Coalition of the Willing states show very negative public opinion towards the US and the war in Iraq when their heads of state have chosen to politically support the war and in some cases leaders have even committed troops from their own military to fight this foreign battle. It is

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<sup>48</sup> Indopedia.org.

<sup>49</sup> Sikorski, *op. cit* in note 41, p. 3.

<sup>50</sup> Please see Table 3. at the end of the paper.

also important to note that most states in the Coalition support democratic governments.<sup>51</sup>

The data shown in Table 4. and Table 5. illustrate the importance of looking at the influence of public opinion on foreign policy within democracies by revealing statistical information that has been ignored for so long by scholars, politicians, and the people that make up these democracies and the foreign policy decisions that support them.

## 2.1 Graphs

At this point, it is exceptionally pivotal that the graphs and tables located in the appendix are taken into consideration. They convey important statistical proof from multiple sources stating clearly that negative public opinion towards the war in Iraq has grown even stronger since President Bush announced ideas of invasion to the public. “In the months prior to the U.S. - led invasion of Iraq, international public opinion was both vocal and visible in its opposition to American policy, culminating in the worldwide record breaking protests of early 2003,”<sup>52</sup> as well as incredibly surprising opinion poll results. This information revealed that most of the states in the Coalition of the Willing were neglecting their democratic traditions and were neglecting public opinion in order to support the war in Iraq. The data presented in the appendix section will back the information given in the previous section with numerical evidence.

Throughout most of the Coalition states protests and polls were in clear opposition of the war, before and after it started. It was undoubtedly expressed all around the world that any assistance to the US once they had gone against the instructions of the United Nations Security Council was objectionable. This is evidenced most clearly in Graph 1. where the long term satisfaction of the US is presented with a sharp negative turn when the war started and this opposition was first ignored.

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<sup>51</sup> Non-democratic members of the coalition of the willing (9 of 49): Azerbaijan- Authoritarian Republic, Eritrea- Authoritarian Republic, Ethiopia- Authoritarian Republic, Kuwait- Absolute monarchy, Rwanda- Authoritarian Rule, Singapore- Authoritarian Republic, Tonga- Absolute monarchy, Uganda- Authoritarian Republic, and Uzbekistan – Authoritarian Republic. (Found at Indopedia.org).

<sup>52</sup> Ross, Andrew and Kristen Ross. *Anti-Americanism*. New York: New York University Press, 2004: 145.

Table 6. shows a short term version of the data presented in Graph 1. and focuses solely on France and Britain. The most important thing to see here is that Britain's public opinion drops so low in 2009 that it even exceeded that of France, holding one of the highest negative public opinion polls of any states.<sup>53</sup> This is exceptionally notable because the British state continues to support the war to this day when public opinion continues to fall. Table 3. looks more broadly at about fifty states and reveals the favorable views of the US from 1999 - 2008. Table 2. and Table 5., completed in 2007 and 2006 show more international public opinion polls to really emphasize the point that opinions of the US dropped drastically in 2003 and have remained low ever since.

Yet, the success of getting state officials to listen and respect these clearly heard voices was mixed. By the day of the invasion on March 20<sup>th</sup>, forty-nine governments had agreed to join the Coalition of the Willing and support the US invasion of Iraq while other governments refused to join and were adamantly against the war, refusing to have any involvement at all, as was the public's popular stance in most countries. During this time some alliances strengthened (Britain), and some were damaged (France), even though in both countries popular opposition to the war was rampant.<sup>54</sup>

Table 1.<sup>55</sup> lays out the most important points of my argument and illustrates the intense drop of support for the US from the international community in 2003, from 71% (The highest in half a century) to 48% (where it has only decreased since). Table 1. also illustrates how both France and Britain have expressed very similar public opinions in the past. Before the US talks of Iraqi invasion the public opinion towards the US was relatively high. Then just after the invasion, public opinion fell drastically and remained very low while President

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<sup>53</sup> Table 6. in the appendix.

<sup>54</sup> Ross, *op. cit* in note 52, p. 148.

<sup>55</sup> Please see tables and graphs in the appendix.

George W. Bush was in power. Table 2. is also helpful in showing how public opinion towards the US is not particularly high and has remained low since the invasion.

The numerous examples of most states in the Coalition ignoring public opinion in this case supports my argument and shows how it is not an exception to the rule, but the rule itself; the democratic states that have followed public opinion are the exception. While taking this into consideration, the next section will examine this idea and the implications it will have for future foreign policy decisions within two specific democracies: France and Britain.

### **CHAPTER 3 – COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS: FRANCE AND BRITAIN**

One of the advantages of a comparative analysis is the ability to analyze and break down causal processes and explore the theorized link between cause and effect. There is not a lack of data representing the vast public opposition towards the US and the war in Iraq; however, there is a gap in the analysis of how much, if any, affect public opinion has had on actual foreign policy relating to the war in Iraq within other democratic states, as addressed earlier, this type of empirical and theoretical information is rarely combined.

The widespread public opposition to the US headed war in Iraq has led to an ocean of statistical representation of this information. Almost nowhere could policy makers say the public was uninterested in what was once considered low interest high politics. The message from the majority of the international public was loud and clear opposition. In particular, in Europe, millions took to the streets to demonstrate their outstanding opposition for the war and called for their leaders to speak and act out against Iraqi invasion. Some governments listened to the cries from their public and acted in opposition to the US and others failed to listen to their people and supported the US. To explain the variation in foreign policy actions towards the US during this time I will examine foreign policy change and public influence with two particular case studies: France and Britain.

Because France and Britain have a long history of being very important members of the international community, Britain with its vast empire and France with its veto power in the United Nations and both of their important seats in the European Union, they are two of the most interesting cases to look at when discussing the war in Iraq. As discussed earlier, France having rejected and Britain having supported the US and the war in Iraq, it shows two nations that have come from a similar background (strong international voices and long time

allays of the US) and have followed different foreign policy paths. By comparing them here it can reveal the reasons and implications for these actions by Chirac and Blair.

In this section, I will review the France-US and Britain-US relationship revealing the possible reasons for different foreign policy outcomes and how the democratic peace theory cannot be applied to foreign policy decisions made by Britain during the war in Iraq. A brief overview of the Coalition of the Willing states has laid the more broad foundation to the claim that public opinion has little to no influence on foreign policy towards the war in Iraq in multiple cases. This comparative analysis will more closely look at the importance of how the divergence of foreign policy and public opinion can develop. Concerning the war in Iraq, “Although French President Jacques Chirac was clearly not speaking in the name of most European governments when he spectacularly opposed the United States over the war in Iraq, he was in tune with European public opinion,”<sup>56</sup> including the Coalition of the Willing.

### 3.1 France

The French have fought with the US on all recent wars (the Persian Gulf in 1991, Kosovo in 1999, and Afghanistan in 2002 – except for Iraq).<sup>57</sup> France is, frequently overlooked as one of the US’s longest allies even though they have had a longer standing alliance than the US and Britain; whose ‘special relationship’ is commonly mistaken for the longest and strongest alliance with the US. France supported the US’s fight for independence from Britain in 1776 and has fought on the same side of every battle ever since, excluding the war in Iraq.

Since the beginning of the 1960’s, the French people have been displeased with American self proclaimed hegemony and have continued to resist its cultural influence within their borders; however, politically they still remain a close ally of the US.<sup>58</sup> As globalization increases, so does the Americanization of France through political and cultural influence.

<sup>56</sup> Dominique Moisi, “Reinventing the West,” *Foreign Affairs* 82, no. 6 (2003): 69.

<sup>57</sup> Risse-Kappen, *op. cit* in note 10, p. 483.

<sup>58</sup> Andrew Ross and Kristen Ross, *Anti-Americanism* (New York: New York University Press, 2004), 147.

Since the Vietnam War, France has interpreted many US foreign policy actions as imperialist and has thus been skeptical of their intentions since. When the US entered Iraq and called for extensive rebuilding from the ground up, this reopened the wound of skepticism. Just as Ross suggests, “U.S. aggression in Iraq may have increased the visibility of American imperialism and provoked widespread popular outrage among the French.”<sup>59</sup> The relationship that was once quiet and consisted of two states willing to compromise turned to loud public unrest. The French people led the widespread protest throughout Europe against American actions in Iraq and were backed by the next two strongest oppositional forces, Germany and Russia. France was one of the most vocal states in Europe with strong opposition.<sup>60</sup> The new French feeling of euro-centrism and greater European integration may have made their turn away from the US easier in the past decade.

Nonetheless, Kristin Ross argues that the newly publicized deep seated hatred of the US within French citizens comes from the 1960’s and is not a recent occurrence. Since the 1956 Suez Crisis the US blocked Anglo-French imperialist activity in Egypt. This changed both French and British relationships with the US. After the Suez Crisis, the French people were skeptical of the US and hesitant to partake in relations with the US but still maintained political ties with the US whereas the British vowed to never step outside of any foreign policy objectives the US pursued. Despite some cultural friction at this time, public opinion remained relatively high towards the US. Then during 1966, the French kicked the US military out of France because of political differences<sup>61</sup>. And finally, thirty years ago during the Vietnam War, the French public was very opposed to the assumed imperialist US fight over trade and finance. With all alliances there exists some disagreements, most of which occurred during the time Charles de Gaulle was president from 1959-1969<sup>62</sup> and has calmed

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 154.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 147-148.

<sup>61</sup> Risse-Kappen, *op cit.* in note 10, p. 482.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 155.

down since. It is still important to note that France, although plagued by a relationship that has been slightly rocky, has still fought in every recent war with the US. Nonetheless, it is possible that the French public sees the 2003 War in Iraq to be a blatant example of how the US imperialist view has not changed.<sup>63</sup>

In this thesis, France is used as an example of the government following public opinion; however, there have been a few examples of French public opinion and foreign policy splitting in the past. This indicates that public opinion influencing foreign policy may not be black and white. It is possible that public opinion could have coincidentally coincided with foreign policy. The first example of this is when the French government went against public opinion in the 1950's and government officials decided to build an independent nuclear force and the second example is when the government went against the people's wishes again in the mid 1960s when France left NATO's military institutions.<sup>64</sup> A third example is how "France has pursued the most pronuclear policy of the four countries [France, The US, Germany, and Japan] and has refused so far to take part in nuclear arms control."<sup>65</sup> This was also done in staunch opposition to public sentiments at the time. The final example is when Mitterrand, the former president of France, accepted the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty) despite popular objections as well. In particular, since the 80's Risse-Kappen argues, "French public opinion seems simply to be disconnected from the policy-making process."<sup>66</sup> These are all examples of the typical presidential dominance in foreign policy matters of France, especially in the Fifth Republic where presidential power has been increased. France has a long standing tradition of ignoring public opinion concerning important foreign policy decisions and this supports the argument that although France seems to have followed their public's opinion in not supporting the US, it was most

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 146-147.

<sup>64</sup> Risse-Kappen, *op. cit* in note 10, p. 481.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 483.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 504.



likely just coincidence that public opinion agreed with the foreign policy decision. This means that Chirac's decision was not influenced by public opinion even though that's what it looks like.

Most French people have negative feelings towards the US due to many factors which consist of: 1. the fear of losing a pivotal role in European foreign policy so they maintain an alternative stance to most EU states and the US; 2. France wants a multi-polar world now that the US political / economic power is waning; 3. the French people hold concern for China, Brazil, and India setting world power and therefore want the European Union to be a stronger power; and 4. France holds traditionalist values and they are increasingly strong today, therefore they want to maintain a strong seat in the international community.<sup>67</sup> These Anti-American views are not constituted in terms of culturalist or psychological terms but in class terms combined with the fear of imperialism. The renewed feeling of French passion accompanied by anti-American sentiments has led to a crack in the US / France relationship.<sup>68</sup> The French continue not to cooperate with the US in its war in Iraq under any circumstances. Even though it is clear their relationship is tarnished and trust is fading, their alliance is still intact although, how this change will affect their relationship in the future is yet to be seen.

France has a strong bureaucratic system, a powerful president, and a weak and fragmented society. French society is known to be fragmented along "ideological, religious, and class lines" leading to a division of foreign policy objectives.<sup>69</sup> This also leads to cleavages in policy as well as public opinion mattering less than it would in a state with a strong society, or a society that is unified and vocal thus more probable to influence foreign policy. However, reactions to the war in Iraq have been uniform than ever before. There has

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<sup>67</sup> Drezner, Daniel W. "The New New World Order." *Foreign Affairs* 86, no. 2 (2007): 35.

<sup>68</sup> Patrick Deer, "The Dogs of War: Myths of British Anti-Americanism," in *Anti-Americanism*, ed. Andrew Ross and Kristen Ross (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2004), 159.

<sup>69</sup> Risse-Kappen, *op. cit* in note 10, p. 489.

been hardly any debate in newspaper articles or in scholarly and political circles as well. French policy makers are still, nonetheless, constantly concerned with stabilizing a vulnerable elite consensus and not on the policy itself or public opinion.

The French centralized political system enhances the French bureaucratic power which increases executive power. This dictates how much power the president is able to maintain and what he or she can do with that power. For instance, usually the more power a president has, the less he or she will listen to the public. The parliament plays a very small role in making and checking policy. The electoral system in France is very polarized and this allows the president to ignore public opinion more easily.<sup>70</sup>

French public opinion is likely to play only a marginal role in the foreign policy-making process. The Fifth Republic's centralized political system and a fragmented societal structure makes it difficult to build a public consensus on policy issues and would be expected to limit the public impact on foreign policy.<sup>71</sup>

So even though in the case of Iraq public opinion and foreign policy parallel each other, it is likely that public opinion still did not affect the final foreign policy decision. In this case President Chirac seems to have followed the public opinion because, like his successor President Sarkozy, he was against the war personally, not because the public influenced him to make that decision. The response of the public only made his decision more easily put into action.

The French policy network is completely dominated by the president, especially concerning foreign policy in Iraq. French elites, who have greater influence on foreign policy than the public, are characterized as being in constant pursuit of greater independence in world politics and usually work to be different than other European policies. "While the French centralized political institutions and the state-dominated policy network seem to constrain the public impact on foreign policy there are a few instances in which public

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 487.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 493.

opinion apparently did play a role.”<sup>72</sup> However these instances are ones that only happen as an exception to the rule as is evidenced by a long history of ignoring public opinion as well as their tendencies to hold on to international power and by trying to stand out in European decision making.

To the French public, foreign policy in France is analyzed, “as a question of construction of identity and projection of the representation of national identity onto the European and global scene.”<sup>73</sup> French foreign policy is decided based on their own state identity and how it can be preserved and held as a strong power and voice. There are very similar public opinions expressed throughout most of Europe but dissimilar foreign policy actions are being taken by most other states, most other European states have backed the US politically. Britain is one state that has very similar public opinion but has not represented the feelings through foreign policy decisions.

The French government as well as the public agreed to not getting involved in the war in Iraq; “the government did not have to be swayed by a threat to its position of power to stay out of the coalition; the government and the public agreed on this point from the start.”<sup>74</sup> The French have refused to be a part of the war in Iraq to this day and their public opinion still maintains the same negative attitude towards the war as it had from the beginning. The final decision to not support the war may or may not have been as a response to the French public opinion, but it just so happened that the government’s decision correspond with public opinion at this time, unlike most other states who decided to go to war with the US.

In particular one of the main reasons the French chose to counter the US decision was because French credibility as a world power in the last decade was waning and it has been argued that Chirac decided against the war to gain political power for standing up to the US

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 504.

<sup>73</sup> Ulla Holm, “Sarkozysm: New European and Foreign Policy into Old French Bottles?” *Diis Working Paper 2009:30* Danish Institute for International Studies, (2009): 5.

<sup>74</sup> Erickson, *op. cit* in note 30, p. 12.

government. Until 2006 when they increased their defense budget to 1.7% of GDP, which is higher than it has ever been, and increased their foreign military presence in the Middle East they were hardly seen as a strong international player.<sup>75</sup> This shows how important international power and international opinions are to France. This recent development was made in response to the implications that have developed since their choice to oppose the war. It is also evident that their power in the international arena is still damaged and will remain that way for the foreseeable future due to their refusal to send any troops in support of the US in its war and the veto of UN military force. While at the same time, it can be argued that the British government decided to support the US in Iraq to gain international credibility and power. The exact reasons for supporting or not supporting the US in Iraq are still unclear; however, the influence of public opinion follows or diverges from foreign policy actions.

### **3.2 Britain**

The second case study will illustrate another close alliance of the US and how the state reacted to the US's idea to invade Iraq. Similarly to France, Britain is one of the closest allies of the US. Supporting the idea that Britain and France came from a similar background relationship with the US, it will be easier to notice any dissimilarities and causes of different foreign policy choices. Because the US and Britain have had a strong relationship for a very long time, it was not completely surprising to see that Blair had agreed to fight alongside the US in battle during the Iraq war. Britain is a perfect example of public opinion and foreign policy decisions splitting. This can be seen in Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5; these depict the surprising fact that the British government rejected their public's opinions and went along with the foreign policy option that Blair (almost alone) found to be the best.

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<sup>75</sup> "Beyond these shores." *Economist* 381, no. 8501, *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (October 2006) 13-14.

Britain has had arguably the closest relationship with the US in the last few decades, and still does today. Since 2000, Britain has been supportive of the US and the war against terror. They have supplied the most troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, besides the US, proving their strong relationship. They even supported the US when they entered the War in Iraq when almost no one else would. For better or worse, this sturdy and positive relationship seems to be staying on the constant path it has been on since the 1850's when they became allies. However, in reaction to their continued positive political relationship after the takeover of Iraq, public opinion surveys show the increase in negative feelings towards the US while Tony Blair continued to support the 'special relationship' whole heartedly with the Bush Administration until its end.<sup>76</sup>

It is important to review the relationship between the US and Britain in order to see how it has grown, how strong it is, and what it may be like in the future. Contradictory to French public sentiment towards the US, "just as the UK has tended to be the US's most supportive ally in the realm of foreign policy, the British have been relatively unresistant to American cultural influences, both highbrow and popular."<sup>77</sup> Their positive relationship may be due to the potentially waning power of the British state compared to what it once was or how similar the two states are culturally but, whatever the reason is, the alliance still remains strong. The Anglo-American alliance is one of the strongest alliances in history; even through the war in Iraq, it has flourished.

Unlike the French system, very simply put, the British government is dominated by two main parties, the Labor and the Conservative parties with a minor third party, the Liberal Democrats. The winning party comes to power and is represented and headed by a Prime Minister (PM). The PM then decides and controls the parliamentary agenda. Tony Blair was

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<sup>76</sup> Wike, *op. cit* in note 3, p. 9.

<sup>77</sup> Alexander Stephan, ed. *Americanization of Europe: Culture, Diplomacy, and Anti-Americanism after 1945*(New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), 23.

Prime Minister from 1997 to 2007 and up until the invasion of Iraq, was known for being conscience of public opinion and had previously represented the public well in his foreign policy decisions. He had justified all of his actions and represented the people's wishes in the cases of both Kosovo and Afghanistan. Iraq was the first time he sent troops to war without the public, his own party's support, or the support of the Foreign Office.

In a survey of 100 Labor Members of Parliament (MP) in February 2002, the question was asked, "Do you believe there is sufficient evidence to justify a military attack on Iraq?" and the responses were as follows:<sup>78</sup>

Yes	8
No	86
No Response	6

To make matters more difficult for Blair, in late 2002, "122 Labour MP's (over a quarter of the parliamentary party) signed a motion expressing 'deep unease at the prospect that Her Majesty's Government might support United States military action against Iraq.'" Blair even refused a Cabinet debate on the subject.<sup>79</sup> Unlike the French case, Blair went against his people and the Labor government to support the US.

The war was commenced and was highly unpopular especially so in the days leading up to the war in 2003. Erickson points out, "Great Britain offered its full support to the United States, despite much opposition even within the ruling Labour Party."<sup>80</sup> This is surprising and unexpected because most states with opposing public views are usually looked

<sup>78</sup> The Sunday Times, February 24th 2002. In Blair's War: Institutional and Individual Determinants of the British Choice in Iraq. Stephen Benedict Dyson and Brianna K. Lawrence. Prepared for Presentation at the 46th Annual Convention of the International Studies Association, Hilton Hawaiian Village, Honolulu, Hawaii. 1st-5th March 2005. p. 24.

<sup>79</sup> Stephen Benedict Dyson and Brianna K. Lawrence, "Blair's War: Institutional and Individual Determinants of the British Choice in Iraq" (Prepared for Presentation at the 46 th Annual Convention of the International Studies Association, Hilton Hawaiian Village, Honolulu, Hawaii. 1 st -5 th March 2005): 28.

<sup>80</sup> Erickson, *op. cit* in note 30, p. 12.

at as 'old Europe' with traditionalist views; however, Britain is not typically viewed as part of that group or known to share the ideas of a traditionalist country. The reasons for negative public opinion vary, but there is no denying the loud presence of this opinion, there was no way Blair could have argued that he did not know.

Vietnam was the last time public opinion in Britain reached as low of a point towards the US. Iraq is different because in correspondence with this negative opinion, diplomatic relations also reached an all time low. In Iraq, US-Britain relations remain high and public opinion remains very negative. When Blair went around the opinions of his people and his party in order to support the US in Iraq, this was out of character. Blair tried to help persuade his public by justifying his decision with the human rights argument. However, as it is evident in the Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5, the British people did not believe this and still maintained that they were unwilling to commit themselves or their state to the US intervention in Iraq, as was suggested by the democratic peace hypothesis.

To show more forcefully the opposition that was being ignored, just before the war commenced, on February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2003 almost two million people protested the war in Britain alone. Opinion polls also matched the position the public portrayed with the protests similarly to what was happening in France at the time. The failure to address the public's and the government's concerns about the war soon also led to many cabinet resignations. However, Blair was able to go against both and commit the British state to war and to supporting the US. Also, the Conservative Party's failure to come up with a legitimate alternative government by the elections held in 2005 made it easy for the Labor party to remain in power and for Blair to continue his time as PM.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Erickson, *op. cit* in note 30, p. 12.

British politics can be classified as competitive, traditionally responsible, and checked by parliamentary oversight.<sup>82</sup> But contrary to the foreseen actions of the British government during and after the months leading to the invasion of Iraq, the respective democratic foreign policy process did not respect the opinions of the British people as it had in the past. Nonetheless, after the US, the UK contributed the most troops to the war and backed the US politically as well. Why did the Blair administration change from a long history of supporting its public to going against it?

It has been discussed in many articles contemplating the British decision to go to war that the majority of the public and parliament members were distracted by the Afghanistan war and were unable to devote the appropriate amount of resistance towards the war. Thus, because of the distraction at the start of the war, public opinion towards the US was not as negative as it was after the war had commenced. Blair could ignore the resistance because it was fairly low, however it increased over time and he continued to support the strongly opposed war. During this initial phase of the war, the British public turned away from the US and public opinion polls dropped rapidly. This turn towards anti-American sentiments is a new occurrence as suggested by Deer, the recent emergence of anti-Americanism in Britain has led most of the British population to show their opinions much more loudly in protests and polls since the war started.

Blair followed Bush into Afghanistan and then into Iraq without any consideration of the disapproval and consequences of these actions. Blair is even sometimes portrayed as ‘Bush’s Poodle’ for following the reckless politics of the US in many cases and “proving unable or unwilling to use his political capital to moderate this recklessness.”<sup>83</sup> The attempt to diminish US hegemonic might has been of debate between Britain and the rest of the European Union for a long time. The decision made by French President Jacques Chirac to

<sup>82</sup> Chan and Safran, *op. cit* in note 24, p. 143.

<sup>83</sup> Lawrence D. Freedman, “The Special Relationship, Then and Now,” *Foreign Affairs* 85, no. 3 (2006): 61.



oppose the war no matter what the circumstance, made Blair's decision to support or go against the US's choice to initiate war that much more difficult. Blair attempted a compromise with France to no avail and as time was running out, Britain moved to support the US.<sup>84</sup>

The assertive claim for global hegemony by the US, has created strife and trepidation within the British public when it comes to dealing with US politics. The abundance of US international might is seen as a possibly increasing threat to British territorial integrity.<sup>85</sup> It is also a blow to British egos when their post colonial state has lost all authority over its once colonized people. The fear of a reversal of their old colonial relationship, as it has been argued, keeps the British government in close support of the US. As evidenced by Table 6., public support of the war has fallen consistently since the start of the war. This development makes public opinion and foreign policy diverge even further. "The new emphasis on 'anti-Americanism' in Britain threatens to mask the instability and volatility of the present situation," and a gap has "opened up between the aggressive war agenda of the trans-Atlantic elites and the various alarmed and bitterly critical sectors of British public opinion."<sup>86</sup> Today, public opinion towards the war and the US has fallen so low that it has the potential of becoming a very large problem if it continues to be ignored.

Six months after the war in Iraq was initiated, it was evident that favorable opinion of the US fell drastically in not only countries that opposed the war but in member states of the Coalition of the Willing as well. This was most drastic however in Great Britain where, "favorable views of the U.S. have declined from 75 percent to 48 percent since mid-2002."<sup>87</sup> The British people were in high support of the US after the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, and like most other states that grew to oppose the US, when the US announced its plan to attack Iraq,

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>85</sup> Deer, *op. cit* in note 68, p. 158.

<sup>86</sup> Deer, *op. cit* in note 68, p. 159.

<sup>87</sup> Joel J. Sokolsky, "The Power of Values or the Value of Power? America and Europe in a Post-9/11 World," Columbia International Affairs Online, (2003): 5.

the public opinion changed drastically. This turn to negative public opinion has continued, and has become even more strongly oppositional. This however, has not had any effect on changing foreign policy towards the war.

Deer, speaks from the heart of the British people when he criticizes Blair by saying, “He is apparently naïve, motivated by uneasy desires, with a secret purpose that we cannot comprehend, and he displays a singular lack of irony.”<sup>88</sup> This is an example of the kind of feelings that have been released into British newspapers and journals since the beginning of 2003. The negative sentiment shown in the opinion polls are strongly supported by these printed opinions of the British government’s action towards the US in the past decade. Some literature has also been released saying how the majority of British people fear that while agreeing to help the US in the war, terrorist will retaliate against British targets and see them as the enemies when they do not agree to the war in the first place. Surprisingly, despite this, the British, unlike some of the Coalition states have not released plans of leaving Iraq any time soon either.

Even as the polls and news papers loudly discuss the opposition to the US, the ‘special relationship’ remains intact. Furthermore, since Margaret Thatcher ran the government, the US and British’s relationship has been plagued by disputes over foreign policy, defense spending, nuclear weapons strategy, European integration, and decolonization. Nonetheless, the two countries seem to have kept a strong bond, even as the US seems to be taking advantage of a close partner. It has been argued many times that their relationship can be classified as only the British struggling for control and the US taking control. There are numerous reasons, as one could argue, that the British government could and should have been the one ally that turned against the US, but it is the one state that has supported the war the most.

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<sup>88</sup> Deer, *op. cit* in note 68, p. 159.

Because the relationship has been surprisingly close for so long and under speculation due to the apparently obligatory bond, some of the agreements between the US and the UK have been kept from the public in order to maintain greater legitimacy. The UKUSA Agreement of 1947 is a much hidden document linking the intelligence gathering agencies of Canada, the US, Australia, Britain, and New Zealand.<sup>89</sup> Publicly, on April 2, 2003, in order to keep the special relationship intact, the “British government announced even closer intelligence ties with the newly created Department of Homeland Security.”<sup>90</sup> This treaty brought them even closer together; not only are their intelligence agencies interlinked, but their nuclear and conventional weapons forces are also very closely intertwined. So much so that Britain is reliant on US nuclear weapons as well as the US nuclear weapons shield.

There have been many reasons developed as to why the relationship has remained strong. Some scholars suggest the alliance is fading or is unstable; however, Blair maintains the idea that Britain is the bridge between Europe and the US and will remain in the relationship in order to support the link. As tensions in the fight against terrorism rise, it is also possible that Blair follows the old saying, ‘keep your friends close but your enemies closer’. Other scholars suggest that Blair is trying to manipulate and guide US leadership to serve British causes.

The two democratic states that were just compared had similar relationships with the US in the past, but have made very different foreign policy decisions based on the same negative public opinion. Tony Blair took on, arguably, the most controversial foreign policy act in British history and acted against democratic values and his public and chose to support the US war in Iraq; while on the other hand Jacques Chirac, although also controversially, seems to have moved in support of his public and chose to go against the war. There are many more examples of states siding with the US and many that decided to act in opposition

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<sup>89</sup> Deer, *op. cit* in note 68, p. 159.

<sup>90</sup> Deer, *op. cit* in note 68, p. 165.

to the US in this case; however, there are many more examples of governments neglecting the public opinion of their state to act in support of the US, the global hegemon.

## CHAPTER 4 – RESULTS / ANALYSIS

France's abstention from and Britain's agreement to join the Coalition of the Willing draws attention to the possible different impact of public opinion on foreign policy. But France, Germany, and Russia are among the few states that have stood in open and complete opposition to the US's war in Iraq. Why this may be will not be discussed here, rather, the idea that democracy is not responsive to public opinion in this case and the argument that this goes against democratic traditions and the democratic peace hypothesis will be supported here through a review of the literature and data collected, as shown above.

The democratic peace hypothesis brings to light the liberal notion that in a democracy, it is generally understood that public opinion is represented through the actions of the political elite and government and thus public opinion will directly influence foreign policy. However after applying this hypothesis to modern day politics, it can be seen through examples of the majority of the Coalition of the Willing states that this is just not accurate in most decisions made concerning Iraq. There are many factors contributing to the actions that leaders of these states have taken but they are very hard to isolate and clearly define. Statistically, there have been very few democracies that have represented their public's opinions towards the war in Iraq and the ones that do are, more likely than not, only coincidentally on the same path. The apparent rejection of the democratic peace hypothesis in many cases thus has significance and is important to note.

Furthermore given the statistical data proving that in the case of Iraq, Blair went against the British public's wishes, it is clear that Blair disregarded traditional democratic standards. Because this is most clear in the case of Britain, it should also be seen here that the democratic peace hypothesis cannot efficiently be applied either. It should be understood that today, depending on many factors (the personality of the head of state, political might, strength of political opposition,...), a state can decide to follow public opinion or it can

decide to ignore it all together. However, there is no theory that can perfectly reason why the British government decided to go against democratic policies and public opinion to support the US and its war in Iraq.

Politically, by heads of state refusing to represent their public, this leads to potential vote loss and even failure to secure a further seat in the government for the future. The reasons different democracies may reject public opinion and strive for alternative foreign policy goals can be incredibly diverse; in the case of Britain and most of the Coalition of the Willing states, it was most likely to maintain international legitimacy and power. Many of the states in the Coalition are aware that working with the hegemon is usually beneficial than working against it. When one is allied with a very powerful state it is important for future foreign policy objectives to support the partner in hopes that in benefits will be returned. In the case of France however, the Chirac government, as was argued earlier, did not necessarily make the decision to oppose the US war in Iraq because of public opinion but did so in addition to their opinions.

The idea that politicians are more willing to go against public opinion only when they are not near an election or in any fear of losing their place is negated by the British and American examples during the war. Blair was re-elected in 2005 when he ran again for the same position during this warring period and also while their actions were against that of their public. Clearly in this case, public opinion has little influence on electing a president who would be in support of public opinion or the foreign policy outcomes that he or she may choose.

As it was mentioned before, scholars have suggested that factors like the 'special relationship' between the UK and the US and the idea that there are many Muslims living in France can contribute to and limit a state from going to war. These arguments are negated due to the fact that these kinds of ideas do not heighten or lessen the head of state's concern

for representing the public.<sup>91</sup> Governments can attempt to manipulate public opinion, but that does not mean that in the end leaders take them into account or that the opinions will have any influence on foreign policy.

Additionally, I would also like to argue that as evidenced by France's history and the failure to follow public opinion in most other democracies participating in the war in Iraq; in the example of France, where it seems that public opinion was taken into consideration, it only seemed to be taken into consideration because the opinions fit the already laid out plan of foreign policy that President Jacques Chirac had decided. This is evidenced in two previous cases where the French government went against the public's wishes. These two examples are when the French government decided to build an independent nuclear force in the late 1950's and when the government left NATO's military institutions in the mid 1960's. Each of these incredibly important accounts were against the people's wishes and have led to a tradition of Chirac having most of the power and the ability to make decisions on his own.<sup>92</sup>

As there are many factors that encourage foreign policy decision, it is difficult to say that public opinion single-handedly drives foreign policy; however, it is more important here to show that in most cases it does *not* affect foreign policy in the case of making foreign policy decisions towards Iraq. Things like societal structure, culture, the role of the media, elite opinion, division of opinion and many other factors have been argued to contribute not only to public opinion but how foreign policy actually plays out. These are all factors that can morph or change public opinion, but they do not affect the end result, foreign policy which is controlled by the head of state.

The information gathered above is meant to question the credibility and the once perceived benefits of the liberal democratic system of these states. This paper also questions the very foundation of what a democracy is today. If, as addressed earlier, a democracy is

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<sup>91</sup> Chan and Safran, *op. cit* in note 24, p. 145.

<sup>92</sup> Risse-Kappen, *op. cit* in note 10, p. 481.

simply 'rule by the people', and peoples' opinions have little effect on the foreign policy decisions made in some countries in this case, then what does this say about 'so called' democracies and the democratic peace theory today? The logistics that underpin the democratic peace hypothesis cannot explain clearly why most of the democratic leaders rejected their people's opinions and chose to take actions based on their personal preferences, or due to external reasons, because the logistics mentioned in the theory chapter have not occurred as predicted by liberal or realist theory supporters.

#### **4.1 Implications**

It is undeniable that after the French decision refusing to support the US in its war in Iraq, vetoing the UN military force in Iraq, a monumental shift of central power to the east after EU enlargement in 2004, and rejecting the 2005 proposed European constitution the voice and role of France in the world is weakening.<sup>93</sup> As addressed above, the alliance is still intact however, it is not a relationship of submission to American will. France "in other words, does not question that America is 'bound to lead.' But some in Europe question whether they are bound to follow, especially when the rallying call from Washington sounds more like a demand for imperial tribute than a call for real multilateralism."<sup>94</sup>

It is possible that in this case it would have been more beneficial for the French state to go against public opinion and support the US in Iraq. The main thing France wishes to achieve, and has been striving to achieve for the last decade, is to have a strong international voice because it has lost its significant and strong position within Europe. It has been argued in many articles that France needs a better relationship with the US in order to have more influence and sway within the international community, as it once had. It would have allowed for France to become more present in the international current events scene and

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<sup>93</sup> "Beyond these shores," *op. cit* in note 75, p. 13-14.

<sup>94</sup> Joel J. Sokolsky, "The Power of Values or the Value of Power? America and Europe in a Post-9/11 World," Columbia International Affairs Online, (2003) <http://www.ciaonet.org/casestudy/soj01/> (accessed February 20, 2010): 8.



would have given them more bargaining power within the EU because of positive relations and possible future influence with the global hegemon. For this very reason, the democratic peace hypothesis is rejected. It is clear here that the foreign policy decision was made separate from the influence of public opinion and was made for reasons that are personal to Chirac.

On the other hand, because the French government made foreign policy choices towards the war in Iraq that corresponded with public opinion, this will allow for the French to have greater trust in their government. It will allow for the French government to have more power in the future. Because of the paralleled opinions and the decision made, it also makes France seem like a more legitimate democracy in the eyes of the international community.

In Britain's case public opinion towards the war has remained low but resistance has decreased. As it has already been discussed, the alliance has remained strong and Britain whether it is receiving more or less international attention from its decision, it is still a strong international player with. However, Tony Blair will always be considered a pushover and almost a joke to the British people and some of the international community. The agreement to support the US and cater to its every will, as some would argue, will negatively affect the UK in the future with fulfilling its foreign policy objectives.

## **4.2 Legitimacy?**

It is important here, to discuss what the impact of not having public support from these nations will mean for the US and their future foreign policy goals. Gowa suggests that “[t]he liberal democratic essence of the United States makes it difficult if not impossible for Americans to ignore the fears, concerns, interests, and demands of its fellow liberal democracies.”<sup>95</sup> This is because in order for any country to have international power and

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<sup>95</sup> Robert Kagan, *Paradise & Power: American and Europe in the new world order* (London: Atlantic Books, 2003), 150.

significance, it must have legitimacy and respect from the international community. Without this, the US lacks the ability to perform as it has since the end of the Cold War. It will be unable to flex its hegemonic might if it has no support from the democratic community.

Kagan adds that in the near future, “American foreign policy will be drawn by American liberalism to seek greater harmony with Europe,”<sup>96</sup> this specifically involves getting the support of the European people, not only their governments. If public opinion continues to be ignored inside and outside of the US, then the democratic style of government may be seen as obsolete in the future and more public protests and conflicts could arise and make it more difficult for decision makers to ignore public opinion. If the US fails to make decisions that the international community is favorable to then problems will arise for future policies “for it is questionable whether the United States can operate effectively over time without the moral support and approval of the democratic world.”<sup>97</sup> Democracies function more efficient and easily with public support, whether international or domestic. The US needs support and alliances to maintain its strong political course of actions.

The way the US conducts itself in the war will determine America’s reputation and how it is able to conduct foreign policy in the future.<sup>98</sup> Henry Kissinger, former secretary of state, even mentioned in a speech in early 2003, “its outcome will determine the way American actions will be viewed internationally.”<sup>99</sup> Consequently, as it is seen in the tables and graphs in the annex, the way the US has behaved thus far has not been received very well internationally and has a potential to limit foreign policy and opportunities for international power in the future. Public opinion polls continued to show falling international public opinions of the US until 2008.

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Kagan, *op. cit* in note 95, p. 150.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 154.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 155.

However, even though international public opinion has been exceedingly low towards the US, this does not seem to have had much affect on the international stance of the US. The Coalition of the Willing is an example that regardless of negative opinions, policy will still go through when the right incentives are involved. Even in spite of the countries that stand to oppose the decisions of the US, there are many that have chosen to support them. As it is evidenced in many cases in the Coalition, states will continue to ignore their public opinion to support what they find to be a more important factor in determining better international relations.

Furthermore, if the US is defending liberalism and democracy within Iraq today, as it has in many other countries, what kind of democracy is it defending? One that does not represent the public? It is important to ask the difficult question here, does neglecting public opinion make a state less democratic? After the Cold War Bill Clinton's administration adopted, "a foreign policy strategy designed to enlarge the 'community of democratic nations.'"<sup>100</sup> Since then, the US has pursued the same foreign policy action to try to bring a voice to people in countries where they are silenced, through democracy. If this is what the US says they are fighting interventionist wars for and are spreading their *raison d'être*, then is the US really spreading democracy or something else?

Even with a new president, President Obama who promises change, there has been very little evidence of any change in foreign affairs concerning the US and its war in Iraq. The US continues to send troops, requests troops from other nations, and shows little sign of getting out of Iraq any time soon.

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<sup>100</sup> Joanne Gowa, *Ballots and Bullets: The Elusive democratic peace* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 3.

## CONCLUSION

In sum, existing explanations of the relationship between public opinion and foreign policy, especially the democratic peace hypothesis and realist theory are weak and rest on false assumptions. My *a priori* suppositions do not correspond well with the findings from the data found in the graphs and tables collected and the British's (as well as the majority of the democracies in the Coalition of the Willing's) actual foreign policy actions in the Iraq war. The majority of member states went to war despite the fact that on average more than half of the population was opposed to the undertaking of war. Yet according to conventional wisdom, these states have defied the traditional values that make up a democratic state and chose to support the US. This not only challenges the democratic peace hypothesis and liberal theory but the idea of a democracy in general. Gowa argues that it is easy to solve this puzzle (Why did France respect the opinions of the public while Britain rejected them concerning the war in Iraq?) and proposes that the simple solution is "unlike decisions about trade, for example, decisions about using force tend to be exigent responses to international events," not just domestic influences.<sup>101</sup> However, this response negates the traditional definition of a democracy, rule by the people. If people have no input in foreign policy can the government still be defined as a democracy?

*Ad hoc* arguments can account for reasons to defy public opinion like the British 'strategic partnership' with the US however, these are irrelevant to the main argument and it does not account for all of the other states that acted similarly, in opposition to public opinions. This empirical analysis of international public sentiments created a more balanced way to compare with foreign policy actions in a war setting that has not been completed before. Most articles written on the topic are either dated literature reviews or are strictly

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<sup>101</sup> Gowa, *op. cit* in note 100, p. 42.

statistical analyses. This paper has taken both statistical analyses as well as significant amounts of literature into account when reviewing and analyzing information.

To restate simply, the democratic peace hypothesis of liberal international relations theory seeks to explain the link between public opinion and political action, mainly foreign policy, of democratic states. “Moreover, it attempts to account for the sharp differences in the frequency of war involvement on the part of democracies” and why some democratic states are seemingly more violent and war prone than others.<sup>102</sup> But if a democracy does not take public opinion into account, then the people cannot limit war and the democratic peace hypothesis becomes nonexistent. If public opinion does not have the ability to be represented in a democracy then this means that it can also no longer limit the outbreak of war, as the foundation of the liberal argument suggests.

It has also been argued by many scholars, “that democracies ...are less likely than non-democratic states to have their policies subverted to serve the particular interests of their leaders, private interest groups or foreign countries.”<sup>103</sup> However, the data supports that in the case of Britain, Blair seems to have chosen to support the US based on what he wanted to do, not what his people or his government wanted. This shows the gap clearly within liberal theory as well as within realist theory. In Britain, public opinion as well as governmental opinion was ignored by Blair. Liberal theory suggests that in a democracy, like that of Britain, public opinion will influence foreign policy decisions made at all times; however, they were clearly not and the opinions were not manipulated as realist theory suggests as well. To further this argument, the many Coalition of the Willing states have also followed a similar course of action and have ignored clear opposition to the war in order to support the US.

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<sup>102</sup> Chan and Safran, *op. cit* in note 24, p. 155.

<sup>103</sup> Kenneth Christie, ed., *United States foreign policy and national identity in the 21st century* (New York: Routledge, 2008), p. xx.

Broadly speaking, this thesis has addressed the link between foreign policy and public opinion in democracies during the Iraq war and asks why some democracies respect and represent public opinion in foreign policy actions while other do not. While letting go of the democratic peace hypothesis and realist theory, it is easier to see that foreign policy actions of democratic governments are not necessarily driven by or made in response to public opinion. As this analysis shows, public opinion does not solely drive foreign policy in most democracies today as evidenced by the foreign policy actions of Britain and most of the other Coalition of the Willing states.

The ability of public opinion to change foreign policy is not as strong as the democratic peace hypothesis suggests. Foreign policy, in the case of France and Britain was influenced by domestic institutions, international pressures, and most of all presidential preferences and personalities. Rosenau displays this idea clearly by suggesting that, “events abroad, nonhuman realities [economic or technological variables], and governmental decision-making processes are the primary determinants of foreign policy and, on balance, they may well be more crucial than any and all domestic sources.”<sup>104</sup>

As the research shows, democracies inconsistently take their public opinions into consideration when making foreign policy decisions. This paper highlights the disconnection that has increased, in Europe and various other parts of the world, between governments and public opinion when it comes to war. The decision to go to war lies mostly in the hands of the government and elites.

Rosato suggests rightly that the, “historical record suggests that wars have often given democratic leaders considerable freedom of action, allowing them to drum up nationalistic fervor, shape public opinion, and suppress dissent despite the obligation to allow free and

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<sup>104</sup> Rosenau, *op. cit* in note 35, p. 4.

open discussion.”<sup>105</sup> Traditional democratic tendencies feed power into the arms of the president that therefore allow them to eventually disregard the public altogether. As this paper was completed under strict time and word constraints, it would be interesting to further this idea and look at the change to democratic structures and traditions over time in greater detail. It would also be interesting to look at how the changes in the idea of democracy will influence and transform democratic states of today and tomorrow.

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<sup>105</sup> Rosato, *op. cit* in note 29, p. 596.

## APPENDIX

**Table 1.**

*Forty-nine countries are publicly committed  
to the Coalition of the Willing:*

Afghanistan  
Albania  
Angola  
Australia  
Azerbaijan  
Bulgaria  
Colombia  
Costa Rica  
Czech Republic  
Denmark  
Dominican Republic  
El Salvador  
Eritrea  
Estonia  
Ethiopia  
Georgia  
Honduras  
Hungary  
Iceland  
Italy  
Japan  
Kuwait  
Latvia  
Lithuania  
Macedonia  
Marshall Islands  
Micronesia  
Mongolia  
Netherlands  
Nicaragua  
Palau  
Panama  
Philippines  
Poland  
Portugal  
Romania  
Rwanda

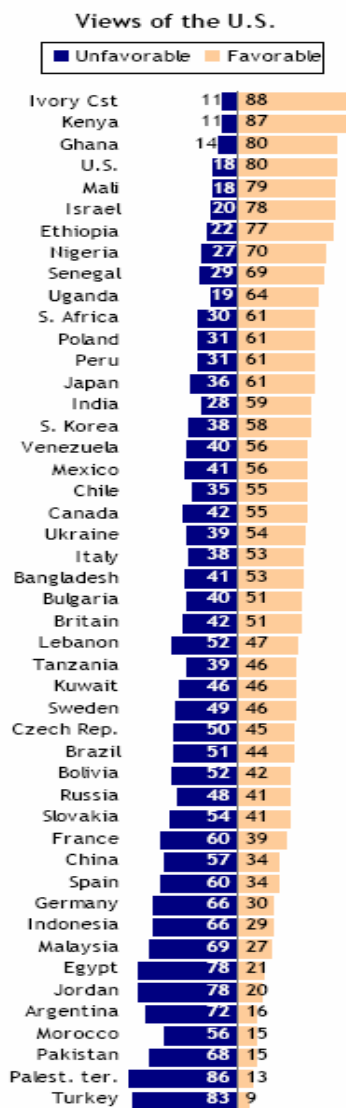
Singapore  
Slovakia  
Solomon Islands  
South Korea  
Spain  
Tonga  
Turkey  
Uganda  
Ukraine  
United Kingdom  
United States  
Uzbekistan<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> The White House, "Coalition of the Willing," (2003) <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2003/03/20030327-10.html>.



Table 2.<sup>107</sup>



<sup>107</sup> Wike, Richard. Global Attitudes Project. Pew Research Center. "Global Unease with World Powers." (June 2007) <http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=256>

**Table 3.**<sup>108</sup>

<b>Favorable Views of the U.S.</b>								
	1999/ 2000	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Britain	83	75	70	58	55	56	51	53
France	62	62	42	37	43	39	39	42
Spain	50	--	38	--	41	23	34	33
Germany	78	60	45	38	42	37	30	31
Poland	86	79	--	--	62	--	61	68
Russia	37	61	37	46	52	43	41	46
Turkey	52	30	15	30	23	12	9	12
Lebanon	--	36	27	--	42	--	47	51
Egypt	--	--	--	--	--	30	21	22
Jordan	--	25	1	5	21	15	20	19
South Korea	58	52	46	--	--	--	58	70
India	--	66	--	--	71	56	59	66
Japan	77	72	--	--	--	63	61	50
Australia	--	--	59	--	--	--	--	46
China	--	--	--	--	42	47	34	41
Indonesia	75	61	15	--	38	30	29	37
Pakistan	23	10	13	21	23	27	15	19
Brazil	56	51	35	--	--	--	44	47
Mexico	68	64	--	--	--	--	56	47
Argentina	50	34	--	--	--	--	16	22
Tanzania	--	53	--	--	--	--	46	65
Nigeria	46	76	61	--	--	62	70	64
South Africa	--	65	--	--	--	--	--	60

1999/2000 survey trends provided by the Office of Research,  
U.S. Department of State.

<sup>108</sup> Wike, Richard. Global Attitudes Project. Pew Research Center. "Global Unease with World Powers." (June 2007) <http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=256>

**Table 4.**<sup>109</sup>

**In support of US unilateral Action in Iraq:**

Australia	12%
Britain	34%
Bulgaria	21%
Czech Republic	33%
Denmark	21%
Estonia	30%
France	24%
Germany	10%
Hungary	18%
Italy	28%
Latvia	26%
Macedonia	10%
Poland	37%
Portugal	35%
Romania	45%
Slovakia	40%
Spain	20%

\* Romania is the only one of the Vilnius 10 that has a majority of the population in support of the war in Iraq

(Vilnius 10: Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia)

\*Based on Misnomer, "A Coalition of the Willing?" February 11, 2003

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<sup>109</sup> Jay, Dru Oja. "A Coalition of the Willing?" *Washington Post* (February 2003). <http://misnomer.dru.ca>

**Table 5.**<sup>110</sup>

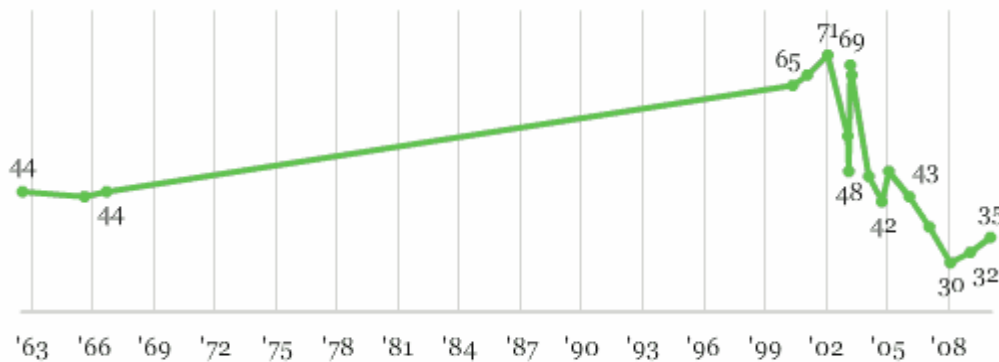
	Generally Negative Attitudes Towards US	Disapprove of US handling war in Iraq	Presence in Middle East Causing More Conflict
<b>Asia</b>			
Australia	60%	78%	72%
South Korea	54%	78%	75%
Philippines	28%	45%	41%
<b>Middle East</b>			
Turkey	69%	90%	76%
<b>Europe</b>			
Great Britain	57%	81%	72%
Germany	74%	88%	73%
France	69%	92%	80%
Italy	47%	81%	69%
Portugal	55%	83%	77%
Poland	24%	52%	56%
Hungary	31%	70%	58%

<sup>110</sup> Globe Scan, 2006. Pipa. *Global views of the US*.

## Graph 1:

*On the whole, would you say that you are satisfied or dissatisfied with the position of the United States in the world today?*

■ % Satisfied



GALLUP

\*The information found in Graph 1. Is located at [gallup.com](http://gallup.com)<sup>111</sup>

## Table 6:

PEW: Opinion of the United States:

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable view of the U.S.?

Percent responding **Favorable**:

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Britain	75%	70%	58%	55%	56%	51%	53%	69%
France	62%	42%	37%	43%	39%	39%	42%	75%

\*The information found in Table 1. Is located at [pewglobal.org](http://pewglobal.org)<sup>112</sup>

<sup>111</sup> James, Meril. "The Gallup International Iraq Poll 2003," The Gallup International Association. (2003). Quoted in Steve Chan and William Safran, *Public Opinion as a Constraint Against War: Democracies' Responses to Operation Iraqi Freedom*. Foreign Policy Analysis, 2006.

<sup>112</sup> <http://pewglobal.org/database/?indicator=1&survey=1&response=Favorable&mode=chart>

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