



Welcome to

BRITAIN



Background and Roles

The United Kingdom was legally established on January 1, 1801 and since then has managed to hold a rather authoritative position in the global atmosphere. Economically speaking, they are not as strong today as they had previously been; that is post World War 1. They suffered greatly from the destruction the war caused, and moreover struggled to overcome the hardships of The Great Depression. This leading trading partner has come a long way and now stands as the fourth largest economy in the world mainly due to the fact that they are the European Union's main exporter of energy. Most recently, they are decreasing the amount of public ownership by encouraging and increasing the use of privatized systems. Companies such as British Airways and British Steel have become privatized since 1979.

Great Britain is an ever-growing "knowledge society" which is the most likely explanation for why business services account for the greatest portion of the country's GDP. In addition to this, foreign visitors are generating funds for the country. Holding over 23.9 million tourists a year, the UK has ranked as the sixth major tourist destination in the world.

Every country has its own social problems, and the UK is no different. The key issues to date are the inclusion of special needs students into the regular school system and the growing unemployment of men in the country. The United Kingdom is focussed on regulating equality in all circumstances thus the above-mentioned topics are of great concern.

The political situation in the UK is rather quiet to date with no major elections or upsets. Within the country there is a constitutional monarchy, which acknowledges a hereditary or elected monarch as the head of state. The United Kingdom doesn't have a written constitution; its body of law is based on common law, statute and "traditional rights".



Tony Blair leads the Labour party as Prime Minister holding 166 seats in the House of Commons. He was the first Labour Prime Minister to be re-elected for a second term and stated at the 2004 conference that he planned on going for a third term. They have strong political ties to the United States which hasn't hurt them yet, but may eventually cause Al-Qaeda to catch up with them.



Jack Straw is the head of Foreign Affairs and has played a major role in the UK's active role in international relations and decision making.

In regards to the Palestine conflict, it is more than obvious how desperately a peace plan is needed. However, the drastic and violent acts of coercion being made by either side is not the solution. In the British peace-keeping mind set, terrorism is completely inexcusable. Blair describes the conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbours as among the most serious, damaging and longest-running political crisis the international community faces, and which undermines security and prosperity for both Israelis and Palestinians. There is a growing concern from officials in relation to the growing humanitarian problem. The Israeli Defence Force are exercising extreme military forces on innocent civilians throughout the occupied territories. We believe that Israel should put a hold on all settlement agreements and cease their unlawful act of building on occupied land.

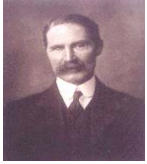
Potential Allies: United States, Members of the G8, European Union, NATO, OSCE, United Nations, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia

Potential Opponents: Al Qaeda, possibly Israel

Timeline of events through the history of UK;

1920- League of Nations is launched in London. Britain was one of the founders in creating this international league to help prevent further conflict.

1921- Ireland gains independence (Republic of Ireland IRA), given dominion status within the British Empire. However Ireland wants to be completely separate.



1922- Bonar Law, conservatives win the election, Labour party become opposition. British broadcasting company (BBC) begins operating.

1923- Bonar steps down, and Stanley Baldwin becomes new PM.

1927- Trade disputes act- makes it illegal for general strikes to take place



1929- Due to the World Stock Market crash unemployment rates increase in the UK

1931- UK experiencing times of hardship. Unemployment rises tremendously and costs of benefits threaten to cripple the country. Economy is failing, Britain declares it's bankrupt. National government from all parties work to help solve their economic problem.

1939- Britain and France declare war on Germany

1940- Winston Churchill is given full power as prime minister. Churchill forms a coalition government, and is especially successful in motivation the country. Battle of Britain occurs, Germany and Britain battle.

1945- UK becomes a secure member of the UN Security Council

1949- UK is a founding member of NATO

1956- Britain involved in Suez Canal crisis. French and British bomb Cairo and take control in the canal area

1960- Countries of British Empire seek independence

1964- New Prime Minister- Harrold Wilson

1971- Irish and British troops are rioting against each other. British come to Ireland to get rid of Northern Ireland security.



1972- Bloody Sunday. British Troops kill 13 of their people for protesting against British Policy of internment. The Irish Republican Army shot back 7 people later on in the year to retaliate for bloody Sunday.

1973- UK joins the European Economic Community (EEC). Energy crisis- because miners refused to work overtime unless wages were increased, led to a lack of fuel supplies for power stations

1974- 3 day week introduced to help beat energy crisis. Miners only worked for 2 days and Industry would be closed the rest of the week, and no energy was used.



1979- Female conservative leader, Margaret Thatcher is brought on board as Prime Minister. She introduces free-market policies.



1984- Miners Strike, after the government decided to shut down numerous pits resulting in job loss, they began to strike. Miners fought with police and engaged in nasty riots. Thatcher refused to give into their demands and began to get rid of the coal industry instead.

1985- Miners return to work after a year. Demands were not met, and pit closures continued.

1987- Black Monday- Stock Market crashes again, twice as bad as first crash in 1929.

1990- Thatcher resigns, and John Major becomes new prime minister. Beef is taken off markets, as Mad cow disease is discovered.

1993- The European Community becomes the European Union (EU)



1997- Labour Party comes back into power- Tony Blair is elected as new Prime Minister.

1999- Minimum wage is set. Bombings in London occur by an individual obsessed with Nazism, targeting blacks and gays specifically.



2001- All milk and meat exports from Britain are banned

2003- UK joins US military led campaign against Iraq

In depth Report:

In 1973 Great Britain became a member of European Community (EC). All countries in Europe were asked to join and in order to join were required to pay a fee. Amongst Britain were a couple of other countries who believed that joining would help to change the way people lived and did business within Europe, as the union had stated it would. The UK was not obliged to any decisions made by the EC, and were permitted to veto anything they felt was unsuitable for the country.

After being a member for two years, the membership was renewed by a referendum to continue in 1975, being part of "Common Market" as it was referred to. Throughout the years, UK continued to be a part of the EC, but the EC began to change. They adapted new agreements for being a member of the EC, and the name was changed to European Union (EU). These included:

Other agreements of joining the Union included,

- showing that the country treated civilians fairly by allowing them to vote in elections and respecting human rights
- Ensuring their economy was running well- the government spent the money well and had little interference in business
- Making changes to their own laws so they don't collide with those of the EU.

Moreover more countries joined, bringing the total to 25 countries on the EU. As result they have gained more power and are continuing to attempt to pass amendments which will make EU laws take precedence over the national laws.

When the UK rejoined in 1975, they were unaware that these major changes would take place, as it was not released to the public but now they cannot back out of it, and current Prime Minister Tony Blair is also in favour of it.

Being a member of the EU, Britain has little power as a country and many find they are suffering from being apart of it rather than benefiting. Decisions that are made within the EU between all members can now out vote Britain's decision, wants or needs. As a result Britain must comply with any laws that majority of countries within the EU vote for.

In 1975, Britain was given a document which stated "No important new policy can be decided in Brussels or anywhere else without the consent of a British Minister answerable to a British Government and British parliament." However, this changed over the years with little notification and consent to Britain.

People of UK, have taken the stance of either Anti Europeans or Pro-Europeans.

The Anti- Europeans believe that being too closely affiliated with Europe is a bad idea because UK is different and they feel the country is loosing its identity and independence. Furthermore, the EU is costing UK 30 million pounds a day from taxes (member fees) which is paid directly to Brussels. Although half of it is given back, the money is to be spent on projects which Brussels chooses for the country. Another major concern is that Brussels is making 70% of Britain's Laws for them in bureaucrats meetings.

For hundreds of years Britain has been a well running country, with no written constitution, to avoid separation of powers, and supremacy. However, with the charter being introduced by EU, Britain will have to adapt it and there is no assurance it will necessarily meet the needs of UK. They will loose flexibility and their unique human rights protection which has been successful since Magna Carta.

On the other hand, Pro Europeans believe that the EU is a great idea and they want the UK to begin using the single currency which has been introduced - the Euro. As UK has not yet adapted to the euro and left the pound, because they are trying to hold on to their identity.

This problem has been an on going one within UK. Much of UK is yearning to be sovereign. One of the major concerns is that having a common economy, currency and common laws, is bad for democracy, survival and keeping a nation of distinct countries within Europe. Creating a country that has all common laws, has fears that Europe will turn into one big country like the U.S

