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In my book *Linguistic imperialism*, published by Oxford University Press in 1992, I analyse how English has become so powerful throughout the world. The book reports on a substantial number of British and US policy documents on the promotion of English as a key instrument of foreign policy.

US policies for establishing global dominance have been explicit since the 1940s. Massive funding came from the US government and from the private sector. For instance, in the mid-1960s the Ford Foundation was funding projects to strengthen English in 38 countries. A recent book on the 'cultural Cold War' describes the activities of the CIA in Europe in attempting to influence academics, journalists and the cultural world.

The British Council was the key instrument for cultural diplomacy and the teaching of English worldwide. Since the 1950s there has been a British strategy for making English a 'world language', the key second language wherever it is not already the first.

There was an obvious need for the British and Americans to coordinate their involvement in building up English teaching worldwide. The university infrastructure for 'English as a Second Language' and the new specialisation 'Applied Linguistics' needed to be built up, virtually from scratch. The governments needed to reduce the element of competition between the two countries which, as George Bernard Shaw put it, are 'divided by a common language'. The US and UK were pursuing broadly similar goals. They needed to exchange information on teacher training, curriculum development and teaching materials, and policy in school and university education.

British activities were discussed at a conference in Oxford in 1955, to which the US government was invited to send delegates. A conference in Washington DC was held in 1959, and attended by five British participants. See the detailed report published by the Center for Applied Linguistics, *Proceedings of the Conference on Teaching English Abroad. May 1959*.

The next conference was held in Cambridge in 1961, again with US participation. Unlike the 1959 conference, no report was produced for public consumption. A confidential internal report was written for the British Council, which I was given permission to quote from in my book. The purpose of the report was to demonstrate that the field of English teaching worldwide was acquiring academic respectability on both sides of the Atlantic, and deserved increased government funding. It was not intended for wide circulation. It is therefore rather more frank and explicit about political goals than language specialists would be when discussing professional issues. Key participants are therefore quoted for the following:

The teaching of English to non-native speakers may permanently transform the students' whole world.

If and when a new language becomes really operant in an undeveloped country, the students' world becomes restructured.

A Ministry of Education – under nationalistic pressures – may not be a good judge of a country's interests.... A nationalistic spirit could wreck all hopes for English as a second language.

English has become not only the representative of contemporary English-speaking thought and feeling but a vehicle of the entire developing human tradition: the best (and worst) that has been thought and felt by man in all recorded times.

This is a rationale for English linguistic imperialism, for all people, at all times. It claims that English is the only language needed in the modern world. It states that newly independent countries may, for 'nationalistic' reasons, be misguided enough to resist English, and that in such cases, their wishes should be over-ruled. This was in the political and commercial interest of the English-speaking countries.

This policy represents a plan for extending worldwide the monolingual policies that were implemented in the United Kingdom and the USA in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (policies that succeeded in restricting but not eliminating linguistic diversity). The position has been broadly similar in France since the Revolution. French efforts to promote French as a world language, in competition with the British and Americans, are presented in Daniel Coste, *Aspects d'une politique de diffusion du français langue étrangère depuis 1945, matériaux pour*

une histoire
(Hatier, 1984).