In 1947, post-World War II (WWII) Europe saw the growing threat of communism and declining economies. This economic and political environment caused President Harry Truman and Secretary of State George Marshall to devise the European Recovery Plan, or ERP. The ERP was an economic stimulus program that injected over $13 billion into the struggling economies of Western Europe. This program, now referred to as the “Marshall Plan,” marked a turning point in American foreign policy. It was a reversal from post-World War I (WWI) isolationism and generated long-lasting relations with other nations.

The Marshall Plan was founded on President Woodrow Wilson’s ideas of multilateralism or international cooperation in economic and diplomatic affairs. Economic prosperity keeps peace throughout the world, and a country with a good economy has little incentive to attack other nations. Wilson proposed that reducing tariffs would facilitate peace. Since multilateralism places all countries on an equal footing in trade (in contrast to bilateralism, which favors one country over other), it encourages prosperity throughout the world. Countries with strong trading relationships are unlikely to wage war against their partners because it would damage the well-being of their citizens.

However, despite Wilson’s efforts, Congress rejected multilateralism because Great Britain, one of the US’s strongest allies, disapproved. To protect its colonial interests, Britain created the Sterling Bloc—the Commonwealth—which reduced tariffs on British colonies including South Africa, India, and Australia. Britain benefitted immensely from this arrangement, which would have been jeopardized by the US reducing tariffs on other nations as a result of greater competition and decreased profitability. Britain’s pressure caused Wilson’s idea of multilateralism to die in a stack of unsigned bills.

The thesis, in italics, is not just a statement. Rather, it makes an argument that the body of the paper will support.

In the second paragraph, the topic sentence in bold explains why other multilateral agreements failed.

The analysis in this paragraph connects the failure of multilateralism to the source evidence regarding the relationship between Great Britain and the US, explains why the relationship between the two countries affected multilateralism. The analysis also relates to the author’s thesis by demonstrating that the Marshall Plan truly was a turning point in American foreign policy.
Notes


ii Ibid., p. 15-17.

iii Ibid.


v Ibid.