

The Suez Crisis and British and French Policy Revaluations Towards Membership of the European Communities

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Abstract

This thesis attempts to demonstrate that, far from being of little or even no importance as some authors have argued, the 1956 Suez Crisis was an event of great significance to the evolution of British and French policies towards membership of the European Communities. It identifies a gap in the historiographies of the Suez Crisis and the European integration process, and seeks to fill it, while at the same time providing a new interpretation of the link between the two areas of historical focus. Using manuscript sources from English, French and American archives, as well as contemporary media articles and personal papers, it will present six ways in which Suez directly influenced the development of British and French policy towards the European Communities: by forcing the British government to review the country's position in the world, by enhancing the career of Harold Macmillan, boosting that of Edward Heath, changing French attitudes towards the Common Market in late 1956, its role in the return to power of General de Gaulle, and the development of the French nuclear deterrent. It will conclude that not was Suez a significant factor, but that without it, there may not be a European Union today.

Recurrent Abbreviations and Conventions

<u>Abbreviation</u>	<u>Reference</u>
A.M.A.E	Archive of the French Foreign Ministry
CPA	Conservative Party Archive
CRD	Conservative Research Department
DDF	Documents Diplomatiques Francaise
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EDC	European Defence Community
EEC	European Economic Community
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EU	European Union
FLN	National Liberation Force (Algerian)
FRUS	Foreign Relations of the United States
FTA	Free Trade Area (Maudling Negotiations)
HMD	Harold Macmillan Diaries
TNA	National Archives Kew London

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Chapter I: Introduction and Literature Review

In November 2016 the world will mark the sixtieth anniversary of the 1956 Suez Crisis; the Anglo-French invasion of Egypt in response to that country's leader, Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser's decision to nationalise the Suez Canal Company.¹ Four months after this, in March 2017 it will be the sixtieth anniversary of the signing of the Treaties of Rome,² and January 2013 marked the fiftieth anniversary of President Charles de Gaulle's veto of the first British application for membership of what is now the European Union.³ Suez, perhaps the most humiliating episode in British post-war history, has long been considered to be something of a taboo subject, and outside academic circles the crisis is not well known in Britain.⁴ Part of the reason for this is the decision by Eden's government to engage in an act of collusion with France and Israel to orchestrate an armed attack on Egypt. This collusion, known as the Protocol of Sèvres,⁵ put Britain at odds with much of the Commonwealth,⁶ and

¹ 'British Move into Egypt Reported', *Times*, 31 Oct., 1956, p. 8.

² 'Further Step in Uniting Europe', *Times*, 26 Mar., 1956, p. 8.

³ 'General De Gaulle Says Entry Will Not Be In His Time', *Times*, 19 Jan., 1963, p. 8.

² 'Further Step in Uniting Europe', *Times*, 26 Mar., 1956, p. 8.

⁴ I. Black, 'A Painful Lesson in Diplomacy', *Guardian*, 31 Oct., 2006; D. Brown, '1956: Suez and the

³ 'General De Gaulle Says Entry Will Not Be In His Time', *Times*, 19 Jan., 1963, p. 8.

⁴ I. Black, 'A Painful Lesson in Diplomacy', *Guardian*, 31 Oct., 2006; D. Brown, '1956: Suez and the End of Empire', *Guardian*, 14 Mar., 2001.

⁵ For the Protocols of Sèvres see: T. Robertson, *Crisis: The Inside Story of the Suez Conspiracy* (London, 1964); M. Semesh & S. Ilan Troen (eds), *The Suez-Sinai Crisis of 1956: Retrospective and Reappraisal* (London, 1990); A. Shlaim, 'The Protocols of Sèvres 1956: Anatomy of a War Plot,' *International Affairs* 73, no. 3 (Jul., 1997), p. 509-530; S.C. Smith (Ed.), *Reassessing Suez 1956: New*

with the United States, whose intervention was decisive in ending the crisis.⁷ Indeed in the history of the Anglo-American 'special relationship' Suez has rightly been portrayed as a particular low-point as well a case study for the decline of Britain in relation to its American ally.⁸

Perspectives on the Crisis and its Aftermath (Aldershot, 2008); S. Ilan Troen, 'The Protocol of Sèvres: British/French/Israeli Collusion Against Egypt 1956,' *Israel Studies* 1, no. 2 (Fall., 1996), p. 122-139; D. Varble, *The Suez Crisis 1956* (Oxford, 2003); G. Warner, 'Collusion and the Suez Crisis of 1956,' *International Affairs* 55, no. 2 (Apr., 1979), p. 226-239.

⁶ For Suez, the British Empire and the Commonwealth see: J. Darwin, *The End of the British Empire* (Oxford, 1991); S. Galpern, *Money, Oil, and Empire in the Middle East: Sterling and Postwar Imperialism, 1944-1971* (Cambridge, 2009); W.J. Hudon, *Blind Loyalty: Australia and the Suez Crisis, 1956* (Carlton, 1989); L. James, *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire* (London, 2004); K. Kyle, *Suez: Britain's End of Empire in the Middle East* (London, 1991); A. Low & B. Lapping, 'Did Suez Hasten the End of Empire?,' *Contemporary Record* 1, No. 2 (1987), p. 31-33; W. Roger Louis, 'Suez and Decolonization: Scrambling Out of Africa and Asia,' in W. Roger Louis (Ed.), *Ends of British Imperialism: The Scramble for Empire, Suez and Decolonization* (London, 2006); J. Melady, *Pearson's Prize: Canada and the Suez Crisis* (Ottawa, 2006); A.J. Stockwell, 'Suez and the Moral Bankruptcy of Empire,' *History Today* 56, No. 11 (Nov., 2006), p. 48; M. Templeton, *Ties of Blood and Empire: New Zealand's Involvement in Middle East Defence and the Suez Crisis, 1947-1956* (Auckland, 1994).

⁷ D.B. Kunz, *The Economic Diplomacy of the Suez Crisis* (North Carolina, 1991).

⁸ For Suez and the 'special relationship' see: S. Freiburger, *Dawn Over Suez: The Rise of American Power in the Middle East 1953-1957* (Chicago, 1992); C. Grayling & C. Langdon, *Just Another Star? Anglo-American Relations Since 1945* (London, 1988); C.C. Kingseed, *Eisenhower and the Suez Crisis of 1956* (Baton Rouge, 1995); D. Nicholls, *Eisenhower 1956: The President's Year of Crisis; Suez and the Brink of War* (New York, 2011); W. Scott Lucas, *Divided We Stand: Britain, the US and the Suez Crisis* (London, 1991); G. Warner, 'The United States and the Suez Crisis,' *International Affairs* 67, No. 2 (Apr., 1991), p. 303-317.

Historiography and Literature Review

When considering the historiography of the Suez Crisis and Anglo-European relations we are in fact talking about several distinct but occasionally intertwined bodies of literature. Firstly we must consider works on the crisis itself for any reference to its impact on or the consequences for Europe. Next there are also the historiographies of Britain's relationship with Europe,⁹ its relationship with France specifically,¹⁰ as well

⁹ M. Camps, *Britain and the European Community 1955-1963* (London, 1964); M.J. Dedman, *The Origins and Development of the European Union, 1945-95* (London, 1996); S. George (Ed.), *Britain and the European Community: The Politics of Semi-Detachment* (Oxford, 1992); S. George, *Britain and European Integration since 1945* (Oxford, 1991); S. George, *An Awkward Partner: Britain in the European Community* (3rd Edition) (Oxford, 1998); P. Gowan & P. Anderson (eds), *The Question of Europe* (London, 1997); D. Gowland & A. Turner, *Reluctant Europeans: Britain and European Integration 1945-1998* (Harlow, 2000); D. Gowland, A. Turner & A. Wright, *Britain and European Integration since 1945: On the Sidelines* (London, 2010); S. Greenwood, *Britain and European Co-operation since 1945* (Oxford, 1992); W. Kaiser, *Using Europe, Abusing the Europeans: Britain and European Integration 1945-63* (Basingstoke, 1996); A. Milward, *The United Kingdom and the European Community Volume I: The Rise and Fall of a National Strategy 1945-1963* (London, 2002); A. Moravcsik, *The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht* (London, 1999); H. Young, *This Blessed Plot: Britain and Europe from Churchill to Blair* (Basingstoke, 1999).

¹⁰ P.M.H. Bell, *Britain and France 1940-1994: The Long Separation* (Harlow, 1997); B. Heuser, *NATO, Britain, France and the FRG: Nuclear Strategies and Forces for Europe, 1949-2000* (Basingstoke, 1997); P. Mangold, *The Almost Impossible Ally: Harold Macmillan and Charles De Gaulle* (London, 2006); H. Parr, "'The Nuclear Myth': Edward Heath, Europe, and the International Politics of Anglo-French Nuclear Co-Operation 1970-3", *The International History Review*, Vol. 35,

as works on France's post-war relationship with European integration.¹¹ This situation has both benefits and drawbacks: On the one hand it ensures that there is an abundance of material to draw on, but on the other it makes it very difficult to draw broad historiographical conclusions. Nevertheless, while remaining aware of this, it is necessary to draw what conclusions are possible and use those to identify a historiographical gap where Suez and Europe are concerned.

The late British historian Alan Milward identified two tendencies on the part of historians who have drawn links between the Suez Crisis and European integration, both of which he asserted to be incorrect. The first was to minimise or dismiss the influence of Suez on the changes in British attitudes towards European integration, specifically the notion of active British participation in this process. The second was to ascribe to Suez a significant role in altering the views of the French government to the proposals that came out of the Messina Conference and Spaak Committee

No. 3 (2013), pp. 534-555; R. Tombs & I. Tombs, *That Sweet Enemy: Britain and France, the History of a Love-Hate Relationship* (London, 2007); J.W. Young, *Britain, France and the Unity of Europe, 1945-1951* (Leicester, 1984).

¹¹ J.C. Allain, F. Autrand, L. Bely, P. Contamine, P. Guillen, T. Lents, G.H. Soutou, L. Thoïs, M. Vaïsse, *Histoire De La Diplomatie Francaise* (Paris, 2005); H.S. Chopra, *De Gaulle and European Unity* (New Delhi, 1974); P. Guillen, 'L'Europe remède a l'impuissance française? Le Gouvernement Guy Mollet et la négociation des traités de Rome 1955-1957', *Revue D'Histoire Diplomatique*, Vol. 102 (1988), pp. 319-335, Translated by Nick Saunders and Dan Whyman; P. Guillen, 'Europe as a Cure of French Impotence? The Guy Mollet Government and Negotiation of the Treaties of Rome,' in E. Di Nolfo (Ed.), *Power in Europe? Volume II: Great Britain, France, Germany and Italy and the Origins of the EEC 1952-1957* (Berlin, 1992), pp. 505-516; W. Hitchcock, *France Restored: Cold War Diplomacy and the Quest for Leadership in Europe, 1944-1954* (Chapel Hill, 1998); M. Vaïsse, 'Post-Suez France', in W.M. Roger Louis & R. Owen (eds), *Suez* (Oxford, 1989).

discussions in 1955 and 1956.¹² To an extent Milward was correct in his portrayal of the literature that has considered Suez and British policy on European integration. Hugo Young for instance in his 1998 work *This Blessed Plot: Britain and Europe from Churchill to Blair* explicitly denied any role for Suez in the British decision to apply for EEC membership in 1961..¹³ Richie Ovendale, Keith Kyle, Simon Smith, Anthony Gorst and Lewis Johnman also rejected a causal link between Suez and Europe although in the case of these authors the view was that as the discussions and negotiations that would result in the creation of the EEC and EURATOM were ongoing prior to Suez, the crisis was merely a coincidence.¹⁴ John W. Young contended that the effects of Suez in many areas had been overstated, and the crisis does not feature at all in works by Sean Greenwood, Wolfram Kaiser and the 2000 tome written by David Gowland and Arthur Turner.¹⁵

Some historians have also claimed that the crisis served as a point of realisation for British policymakers that Britain's position was not as strong as had previously been thought. As a result, they undertook a period of reappraisal, reconsidering various aspects and facets of British policy including the relationship with the European integration project. Authors including Stephen George and Stephen

¹² A.S. Milward, *The United Kingdom and the European Community Volume I: The Rise and Fall of a National Strategy 1945-1963* (London, 2002), p. 252.

¹³ H. Young, *This Blessed Plot* (1999), p. 109.

¹⁴ A. Gorst & L. Johnman, *The Suez Crisis* (1997); K. Kyle, *Suez* (1991); R. Ovendale, *British Defence Policy since 1945* (Manchester, 1994); S.C. Smith (Ed.), *Reassessing Suez* (1998).

¹⁵ D. Gowland & A. Turner, *Reluctant Europeans* (2000); S. Greenwood, *Britain* (1992); W. Kaiser, *Using Europe* (1996).

Bulmer have all made similar claims.¹⁶ Beyond this there is Milward's view that Suez was a factor in the decision of Eden's government to accept and formally adopt Plan G in November 1956.¹⁷ When the focus shifts to France we find similar approaches with the literature either crediting Suez with the French government's decision to reverse its erstwhile opposition to supranationalism and sign the Treaties of Rome in March 1957, or argues that as with Britain, Suez was a coincidence that had no impact at all on the EEC decision in Paris. French historians *such as Maurice Vaisse and Robert and Isobel Tombs, as well as German authors Clemens Wurm and Hanns Jürgen Küsters* have put forward the thesis that Suez humiliated France and the particular circumstances of the British withdrawal and the American pressure that occasioned it left the impression in Paris that France could not rely on its Anglo-American allies. In order to remain a power of the first rank it must take the lead in creating a united Europe under French leadership.¹⁸ 'Anglo-American' authors,

¹⁶ S. Bulmer, 'Britain and European Integration; Of Sovereignty, Slow Adaptation and Semi-Detachment' in, S. George (Ed.), *Britain and the European Community: The Politics of Semi-Detachment* (Oxford, 1992), p. 5; L. Epstein, *British Politics in the Suez Crisis* (1964), p. 200-201; S. George, *Britain and European Integration since 1945* (Oxford, 1991), p. 44; S. George, *An Awkward Partner: Britain in the European Community* (3rd Edition) (Oxford, 1998), p. 10; P. Hansen, 'European Integration, European Identity and the Colonial Connection,' *European Journal of Social Theory* 5, no. 4 (Nov., 2002), p. 493.

¹⁷ A.S. Milward, *The United Kingdom* (2002), p. 252.

¹⁸ H.J. Küsters, 'West Germany's Foreign Policy in Western Europe 1949-58: The Art of the Possible' in C. Wurm (Ed.), *Western Europe and Germany: The Beginnings of European Integration 1945-1960* (Oxford, 1995), p. 68-69; P. Guillen, 'Europe as a Cure of French Impotence? The Guy Mollet Government and Negotiation of the Treaties of Rome,' in E. Di Nolfo (Ed.), *Power in Europe? Volume II: Great Britain, France, Germany and Italy and the Origins of the EEC 1952-1957* (Berlin, 1992), p. 505-516; R. Tombs & I. Tombs, *That Sweet Enemy: Britain and France, the History of a Love-Hate*

particularly Alan Milward and Andrew Moravcsik, who both view Suez as coincidental and irrelevant to the shift in French EEC policy, on the other hand counter that Mollet's government had decided to sign the Treaties of Rome as early as September 1956 and so Suez was not a factor.¹⁹

It is this author's contention that none of the existing arguments about Suez and Europe are satisfactory. The works that have dismissed Suez as having any influence on either British or French policies in Europe are simply incorrect. The cabinet meeting on 8 January 1957 discredits Young's argument about the consequences of Suez not being understood by 1961. Members of the cabinet demonstrated clearly their awareness that Suez had done serious damage to the Anglo-American relationship, with some being of the opinion that there must some change in the basis of it.²⁰ Even backbench MPs were aware as evidenced by Patrick Gordon Walker's newspaper article 'How Can We Save the Commonwealth?'²¹ In academic terms Young is correct that a certain amount of time should elapse between events and attempts to examine them so that objectivity can be ensured. However, politicians and civil servants do not have the luxury afforded to academics and when confronted by a disaster such as Suez, are required to react quickly. Moravcsik and

Relationship (London, 2007), p. 617-618; M. Vaisse, 'Post-Suez France' in WM. Roger Louis & R. Owen (eds), *Suez 1956: The Crisis and its Consequences* (Oxford, 1989), p. 335-337.

¹⁹ A.S. Milward, *The United Kingdom* (2002), p. 261; A. Moravcsik, *The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht* (London, 1999), p. 119-121.

²⁰ TNA, CAB 195/16, C.M. (57) 3, 'Minutes of Cabinet Meeting' (8 Jan., 1957), p. 2-4.

²¹ P. Gordon Walker, M.P. 'How Can We Save the Commonwealth?' *News Chronicle*, 8 Nov., 1956.

Reproduced in TNA PREM 11/1096.

Milward's arguments regarding France are similarly flawed. The French government may have intended to agree to the proposed Common Market by September 1956 but such an assessment runs counter to contemporary views found in Foreign Relations of the United States, articles in respected media outlets, and those of France's lead negotiator at the very negotiations to which Milward and Moravcsik refer.²² Moreover, a French government could sign whatever it wished, it still needed ratification in the French Assembly to be of any effect and as that body had already rejected one such initiative, the European Defence Community, in August 1954 after it was agreed by Pierre Mendès France.²³

The Thesis

This thesis will accordingly ask the following question: In what ways could Suez be viewed as important to British and French policy re-evaluations towards membership of the European Communities? This is a reflection of the fact that the EEC was one of the defining features of Anglo-French relations between 1955 and 1963. For this reason this work will interpret the phrase 'membership of the European Communities' in a broader sense to include French policy on Britain's potential membership. Furthermore, although the main focus of the thesis is the period leading up to the first British EEC membership application, the role of Edward Heath including his successful bid in 1972 will be included on the grounds that Suez was responsible for his career going beyond the traditional trajectory of a Chief Whip, and

²² R. Marjolin, *Architect of European Unity: Memoirs 1911-1986* (Translated by William Hall) (London, 1989).

²³ G. Bebr, 'The European Defence Community and the Western European Union: An Agonizing Dilemma,' *Stanford Law Review* 7, No. 2 (Mar., 1955), p. 173.

because his efforts as the leader of the British bid in 1962 had a direct impact on his later work as Prime Minister.

The British government was faced with several challenges as the 1950s gave way to the 1960s. Macmillan remarked in 1957 that the British people had 'never had it so good',²⁴ but the economy was not growing as quickly as that of the Six, the economic value of Britain's imperial markets was declining as was the efficiency of British industry.²⁵ An ongoing conflict in Malaya and issues in Central and Southern Africa provided points of contention with the Labour Opposition and within the Conservative Government. In November 1960 the election of John F Kennedy signalled potential changes to Britain's relationship with the United States and the nature of the Cold War. Britain had been a nuclear power since October 1952 but it was becoming increasingly clear that the V-Bomber force would soon become obsolete in a world where Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles had altered the strategic balance. The nuclear deterrent was seen as the most important element of British defence policy but by 1960 the British government was struggling to fund the development of a British missile (Blue Streak) and reaching the conclusion that it would be forced by economic necessity to seek the assistance of the United States.²⁶ Lastly, the return to power in France of General Charles de Gaulle had added a further complication to many of these issues. The General was determined that France would

²⁴ 'More Production "The Only Answer" to Inflation: Prime Minister's Plea for Restraint,' *Times* (22 Jul., 1960), p. 4.

²⁵ H. Pemberton, 'Relative Decline and British Economic Policy in the 1960s.' *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 47, No. 4 (Dec., 2004), pp. 989-1013.

²⁶ A.P. Dobson, *Anglo-American Relations in the Twentieth Century: of Friendship, Conflict and the Rise and Decline of Superpowers* (London, 1995), p. 120.

play a more prominent role in the Atlantic Alliance and was prepared to challenge what he saw as the hitherto Anglo-American domination of it.²⁷

It will be argued here that the Suez Crisis was important to British and French policies on the European Communities in three ways: Firstly, it precipitated a change of leadership in Britain, specifically the end of Anthony Eden's Premiership and the accession of Harold Macmillan to replace him. Secondly, Suez influenced the attitude of the French government towards the EEC; removing its opposition to participation in a supranational common market and convincing it that only through membership and leadership of such an organisation, could France ensure it remained a power of the first rank and protect what it saw as its vital interests. In the context of France, Suez was also a factor in the return to power of General de Gaulle through its impact on the Algerian conflict, and on the French decision to develop an independent nuclear deterrent of its own.²⁸ Each of these was to be significant for the first British application for membership of the EEC. Thirdly, and as something of a postscript outside the main timeframe, Suez was instrumental in the rise to political prominence of Edward Heath, the man who took Britain into the European Communities in 1973.

The most immediate impact of the Suez Crisis in terms of British attitudes towards membership of the EEC was the destruction of Anthony Eden's political career, the stalling of R.A Butler's, and the resulting rise of Harold Macmillan to the

²⁷ C.A. Pagedas, *Anglo-American Strategic Relations* (2000), pp. 3-4.

²⁸ M. Vaïsse, 'Post-Suez France' in *Suez 1956: The Crisis and its Consequences*, Eds, W.M. Roger Louis & R. Owen (Oxford, 1989), pp. 335-337.

Premiership.²⁹ What this change meant was that instead of having a Prime Minister who was ambivalent about European integration, and hostile to the idea of British participation in supranational institutions, Britain now had a Prime Minister for whom the concept of a united Europe was desirable not only in the pragmatic context of the Cold War, but precisely the sort of grand high political approach to a problem that appealed to his character. Macmillan did not believe in federalism any more than Eden, but what set him apart from his predecessor was a genuine belief in a united Europe. Macmillan had been an energetic member of the United Europe Movement in the late 1940s and his contemporaries in Britain and outside of it saw him as a 'European' politician.³⁰ Europe was a subject that he thought about continuously and it occupied him irrespective of whether or not it was relevant to his ministerial functions.

We must digress briefly at this point and address an issue that can be problematic for scholars of Anglo-European relations when considering the views of the political figures intimately involved. A recurring feature of present day discourse on Britain's membership of the European Union, and a feature of considerations of men such as Macmillan, Eden, Wilson and Heath, is the idea of being 'pro' or 'anti' Europe, Europhile or Eurosceptic to give the current terms. Edward Heath is relatively straightforward: his career was marked by a desire that Britain should play a full and

²⁹ A. Home, *Macmillan: The Official Biography: Part I: 1894-1956* (20th Anniversary Edition) (Basingstoke, 2008), p. 317.

³⁰ CPA, CRD 2/34/1, Conservative Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee, 'Report of a Meeting' (19 Jul., 1955), p. 1; 'The Year is 1957', *The Economist* (19 Jan., 1957), p. 180; FRUS 1955-1957, Volume IV, Doc. 209 'Memorandum of a Conversation, Department of State, Washington' (11 Jan., 1957).

active part in the European Communities and his biographies and obituaries all stress his fervent belief in an integrated Europe.³¹ Macmillan, Eden and also Churchill are more complex and defy easy or convenient categorisation. While none of them wanted a federal Europe, preferring a cooperative approach that retained national sovereignty, neither were they opposed to the idea of a united Europe.³² Macmillan and his views on European unity has been the subject of some debate amongst his biographers with some claiming that he was no federalist (which he wasn't), or that had he taken Britain into the EEC in 1962 it would have been detrimental to further integration,³³ and others stressing his United Europe days and his attempt in 1952 to persuade Churchill and Eden to adopt a more positive approach to Europe.³⁴

What this thesis will try to do therefore is to move beyond and avoid overly simplistic and general terms such as 'pro-European' or 'Europeanist' and instead take a more nuanced approach. Does Macmillan easily fit into such a category? No: the balance of evidence would not support placing him in the same category as Edward Heath, yet, it is similarly inaccurate to suggest that there was no or little difference between Macmillan and either Eden or Butler when it came to European integration. Macmillan was no federalist - by his own admission he preferred a 'confederal' approach - but what can be said is that he was more positively inclined to the ideas of an integrated Europe. The very concept excited him, appealing to his 'Edwardian'

³¹ J. Campbell, *Heath* (1993), pp. 112-113; P. Ziegler, *Edward Heath* (2010), pp. 116-117.

³² D. Carlton, *Anthony Eden* (1981), p. 285; N. Fisher, *Harold Macmillan* (1982), p. 306.

³³ N. Ashton, *Kennedy, Macmillan and the Cold War: The Irony of Interdependence* (Basingstoke, 2002), p. 127; R.P.T. Davenport-Hines, *The Macmillans* (London, 1993), p. 281.

³⁴ J.W. Young, 'Churchill's 'No' to Europe: The 'Rejection' of European Union by Churchill's Post-War Government, 1951-1952,' *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Dec., 1985), p. 932.

character, specifically the love of grand high political schemes and summit diplomacy. Perhaps the best way to distinguish between Eden and Macmillan is to say that for the former, European integration was a functional problem, an issue to be resolved as and when it became necessary. When European integration was not a pressing concern, Eden was not inclined to devote much time or thought to it. For Macmillan, it was a constant concern, a subject about which he thought actively whether his ministerial role required it or not.

Without Suez, or at least an event of similar scale and character, Macmillan would not have become Prime Minister. He was three years older than Anthony Eden and was not seen as the likely successor to the Prime Minister in the event that he retired or resigned after losing a General Election. R.A. Butler had long been seen as the coming man but Suez was to prove his undoing as much as it was Eden's.³⁵ Despite being considered the 'heir apparent', Butler was not universally popular in the Conservative Party. He was seen as strong on domestic issues such as education and healthcare, but he had an unfortunate legacy as a supporter of appeasement in the 1930s and many Conservatives felt that he was not someone who could or would defend British interests during a foreign policy crisis.³⁶ He was not in favour of attacking Egypt but he neither acted with determination to prevent it, nor gave much indication of strong support. He was also deputising for Eden when the decision to withdraw from Egypt was made under strong pressure from the US and he was thus associated with it. Macmillan, during the informal leadership contest was able to portray Butler as weak where British interests were concerned by referencing

³⁵ E. Pearce, *The Lost Leaders: The Best Prime Ministers We Never Had* (London, 1998), p. 92.

³⁶ K. Kyle, *Suez* (1991), p. 534.

appeasement in his speech to the 1922 Committee and this was sufficient to ensure that the Cabinet and the Conservative MPs chose him to succeed Eden.³⁷

Macmillan was to a large extent responsible for the change in attitude on the part of the British government to the EEC. It was not an immediate change as he himself did not support Britain joining it in 1956 and not all his policies and actions in this area were designed to move Britain closer to membership. He and Peter Thorneycroft originally formulated the British alternative proposals for a partial European free trade area, and until France vetoed the idea in November 1958, Macmillan attempted to create one that included the EEC.³⁸ Macmillan's greatest impact on British policy towards EEC membership came in the summer of 1960. It is submitted that he reached the conclusion at this point that Britain could not afford to remain outside the Common Market and began the process of convincing his government that if terms compatible with and acceptable to Britain's EFTA and Commonwealth partners could be agreed, Britain should sign the Treaties of Rome. There is some dispute as to how early he reached this conclusion, with some authors contending that he did not make up his mind until a year later in 1961,³⁹ but it is this author's view, in line with those of Kristian Steinnes, Wolfram Kaiser, Richard Lamb and Helen Parr, that it was May 1960 that was the crucial moment.⁴⁰ In July 1960 he

³⁷ A. Howard, *Rab: The Life of R.A. Butler* (London, 1987), p. 241.

³⁸ R. Lamb, *The Macmillan Years 1957-1963: The Emerging Truth* (London, 1995), pp. 102-125; P. Mangold, *The Almost Impossible Ally: Harold Macmillan and Charles de Gaulle* (London, 2006), pp. 101-114.

³⁹ D. Gowland, A. Turner & A. Wright, *Britain and European Integration* (2010), p. 53.

⁴⁰ W. Kaiser, *Using Europe* (1996), pp. 115-116; R. Lamb, *The Macmillan Years* (1995), p. 139, H. Parr, 'Transformation and Tradition: Anglo-French Nuclear Cooperation and Britain's Policy Towards

reshuffled his cabinet and promoted men perceived to be supportive of Britain as a member of the EEC, such as Thorneycroft, Soames and Heath, to positions of responsibility. In the summer of 1961 he finally persuaded Parliament to approve negotiations led by Heath to determine on what terms Britain could join the Common Market.

The second way in which Suez changed the situation concerned France directly and in so doing influenced both the British desire to join the EEC, and provided two factors in the frustration of that desire in January 1963. France was as humiliated at Suez as Britain but reached a very different initial conclusion. Whereas the immediate priority of the British government was to repair the damaged relationship with the US, the French government concluded that the only way it could restore French prestige, and ensure it could defend French interests, was to conclude negotiations to create the European Economic Community and European Atomic Energy Agency (EURATOM). Prior to the crisis, and even as late as October/November 1956, there was considerable doubt that France, which had previously rejected supranationalism in the form of the European Defence Community (EDC), would agree to create a customs union.⁴¹ The French government interpreted the American response to the invasion of Egypt and the veiled threat of

the European Community, 1960-1974' in M. Grant (Ed.), *The British Way in Cold Warfare: Intelligence, Diplomacy and the Bomb 1945-1975* (London, 2011), p. 89; K. Steinnes, 'The European Challenge: Britain's EEC Application in 1961,' *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (Mar., 1998), p. 64.

⁴¹ *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-1957, Volume IV, Western European Security and Integration*, Document. 195, 'Telegram from the United States Representative to the European Coal and Steel Community (Butterworth) to the Department of State' (25 Oct., 1956).

nuclear attack by the Soviet Union as evidence that France could not rely on its ally if their interests were not aligned. French Premier Mollet used this feeling to overcome previously well-established opposition to the proposed EEC and convince doubters that France's future lay in leading an integrated Europe.⁴²

In November 1954 tensions between the people of Algeria and the European colonists spilled over into what became the Algerian Uprising. France was determined to retain control of Algeria and the crisis there was to influence Suez. Nasser was known to have been providing moral, financial and military support to the National Liberation Front (FLN) and French leaders determined that they could only hold Algeria if Nasser was first overthrown.⁴³ The defeat in Egypt had something of a reverse impact in Algeria. The French Army, which felt that it had been betrayed by the government of the Fourth Republic, became more politically active and as the crisis in Algeria worsened the army launched a *coup d'état* in May 1958 with General de Gaulle returning to power as a result. Suez also provided French elites with further evidence that US support and protection were not guaranteed. That made possession of a deterrent a national necessity and in 1960 France successfully tested an atomic bomb.⁴⁴

The French decision to support the creation of a common market made the EEC possible and even though British leaders initially remained sceptical that it

⁴² R. Marjolin, *Architect of European Unity* (1989), p. 297.

⁴³ J. Talbot, *The War Without a Name: France in Algeria 1954-1962* (London, 1981), p. 70.

⁴⁴ L. Scheinman, *Atomic Energy Policy in France Under the Fourth Republic* (Princeton, 1965), pp. 105-106.

would prove a viable construct,⁴⁵ by 1958 this scepticism had been replaced by fear that the EEC would damage British trade interests within and outside of Europe, and threaten Britain's relationship with the United States by replacing it as the US partner of choice.⁴⁶ If there was any one factor that compelled the British government to accept the necessity of EEC membership it was the existence and growing strength of the EEC itself. Having tried and failed to prevent its creation, subsume it within a larger European bloc, and force it to adopt more liberal policies by creating a competitor, Britain was left with only one option; to try to join it and hope to shape its policies to suit British interests.

The return of de Gaulle and the French nuclear deterrent belong together to a certain extent. This is because de Gaulle's desire that France develop a credible arsenal complicated the relationship between Britain and France on European matters. While the General had little or no intention of allowing Britain to join the EEC at all, Macmillan's decision at Nassau in December 1962 to purchase Polaris from the US provided de Gaulle with the excuse to veto the British bid.⁴⁷ In short, de Gaulle's return to power made it less likely that Britain would be able to shape European policy in general to suits its interests, or join the EEC as the French President saw British involvement in the European Communities as likely to lead to US domination of them at the expense of France. The French deterrent added a complicating factor to

⁴⁵ TNA PREM 11/1844, 'De Zulueta to Macmillan' (29 May., 1957).

⁴⁶ TNA CAB 129/91, C. (58) 27 'European Free Trade Area: Memorandum by the Paymaster-General' (30 Jan., 1958), p. 3.

⁴⁷ P. Mangold, *The Almost Impossible Ally: Harold Macmillan and Charles de Gaulle* (London, 2006), p. 194.

relations between Britain and France and ultimately gave de Gaulle a pretext to veto in January 1963.

The final way in which Suez impacted British policy towards the European Communities can be summed up by two words: Edward Heath. Heath was as much a beneficiary of Suez as Macmillan but over a much longer timeframe, and he was to have an impact on British policy in both the short and longer term. During the crisis he was the government Chief Whip, which is a role not usually suited to advancement to the most senior of Cabinet positions.⁴⁸ He was well respected within Whitehall but was largely unknown outside of it, also a characteristic of a Chief Whip.⁴⁹ His handling of two backbench rebellions, one from the left-wing of the Conservative Party angered by the decision to attack Egypt in the first place, and a later one by the right-wing which was angered by the decision to withdraw, brought him considerable credit and one of his biographers remarked that Suez was the making of him.⁵⁰ He initially remained as Chief Whip when Macmillan became Prime Minister but in October 1959 was promoted to Minister of Labour. Less than a year later he was promoted again, this time given the title Lord Privy Seal and tasked with acting as the deputy to Foreign Secretary Lord Home.⁵¹ Heath in this capacity led the British negotiating team in Brussels and even though the bid was a failure, he personally emerged with an enhanced reputation in Europe, evidence of Britain's increasing desire to play an active role in the European integration process, and was awarded the

⁴⁸ 'Do Government Chief Whips Have an Afterlife?' <http://nottspolitics.org/2012/10/22/do-government-chief-whips-have-an-afterlife-2/> Accessed 1 March 2013.

⁴⁹ 'Our London Correspondence', *The Manchester Guardian* (12 Jan., 1957), p. 3.

⁵⁰ J. Campbell, *Edward Heath: A Biography* (London, 1993), p. 97.

⁵¹ P. Ziegler, *Edward Heath: The Authorised Biography* (London, 2010), p. 115.

prestigious Charlemagne Prize for his contribution to European unity.⁵² Ultimately he was the Prime Minister who took Britain into the European Communities in January 1973, ten years after the first bid was vetoed. It was Suez that brought him to public attention and gave him the opportunity to demonstrate his abilities, and he is to date the only former Chief Whip to have become Prime Minister, and one of only five to have held one of the other 'Great Offices of State'.⁵³

Historiographical Approach

This thesis will approach the issue of Suez and its influence on British and French policy evaluations towards the European Communities by taking a 'high political' approach. 'High Politics' has been and can be interpreted in several different ways: The most common interpretation comes from studies of international relations and international politics and concerns the categorising of political issues according to their importance and or relevance to the survival of the state. This means that defence, policing, immigration and foreign policy are seen as issues of high politics, while fiscal and social issues are seen as 'low politics' on the grounds that they do not directly concern state survival.⁵⁴ The second interpretation distinguishes between opinion and views at the level of national governments with those prevalent in the wider electorate. In the context of Irish Home Rule in 1888, James Bulpitt differentiated between the two political levels based on the issues with which they were predominately concerned. In this case, he argued that Westminster was predominately concerned with issues of defence and security, while the electorate

⁵² Ibid, p. 141.

⁵³ Chancellor of the Exchequer, Foreign Secretary and Home Secretary.

⁵⁴ S. Hix, *The Political System of the European Union* (New York, 2006).

focussed more on what he called ‘participative politics’, the extension of the franchise, education and employment reform.⁵⁵ To an extent the two interpretations are similar in so far as issues of defence are separated from more domestic concerns, although Bulpitt’s suggests that the differentiation is based on the focus of each level of political participation, as opposed to within them.

A different interpretation will be used here. To an extent, there will be some overlap with the broad idea of Bulpitt as regards a differentiation of views at different levels of government, but this work will distinguish between the two constituent parts of the Westminster level; elected political leaders versus appointed officials, rather than between Westminster and the electorate at large. This is a reflection of two things: the first is that by the late 1950s the electorate paid more attention to and had strong opinions on issues previously seen to be the preserve of government; the second that it is difficult to make a categorical statement as to the opinion of the British electorate on the desirability of EEC membership. The polling undertaken by Gallup between 1957 and 1973 shows an electorate that was not entirely certain what its opinion was. At various points opinion polls suggested support for British membership of the Common Market, while at others, there seemed to be a preference for retaining Britain’s Commonwealth links.⁵⁶

The traditional interpretation of ‘high’ and ‘low’ politics has been a feature of the Anglo-European relationship in a historiographical sense. Both Harold Macmillan

⁵⁵ P. Addison & H. Jones (eds), *A Companion to Contemporary Britain 1939-2000* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 427-428.

⁵⁶ Gallup Poll July 1960, ‘*British Attitudes Towards the Common Market 1957-1972*’ (London, 1973).

and General de Gaulle have had their motivations examined by historians who have debated whether or not foreign or economic considerations were paramount. In Macmillan's case whether he took the decision to apply for EEC membership out of a fear that Britain's relationship with the United States would suffer if it remained outside a European bloc that was steadily growing and that had the favour of the US government,⁵⁷ or because he saw in the EEC the only way to improve the British economy and trade position.⁵⁸ Similarly, de Gaulle's motives for keeping Britain out of the Common Market have been debated with some historians arguing that the General feared British membership would open the Communities to American domination at the expense of France, and others that he was motivated by what Moravcsik termed 'the price of wheat'.⁵⁹

This author is of the view that such distinctions are at best superfluous. It is not possible to distinguish absolutely between foreign and economic considerations because they are intrinsically linked, interdependent. The 1957 Defence Outline of Future Policy', one of the most significant documents in the history of British defence policy stated thus:

⁵⁷ M. Camps, *Britain and the European Community 1955-1963* (Oxford, 1964), p. 336; W. Kaiser, 'To join or not to join: the 'Appeasement' policy of Britain's first EEC application,' in B. Brivati & H. Jones (eds), *From Reconstruction to Integration, Britain and Europe since 1945* (London, 1993), p. 152.

⁵⁸ A. Moravcsik, *The Choice for Europe* (1999), p. 160-165; R.S. Lieshout, M.L.L. Segers & J. van der Vleuten, 'De Gaulle, Moravcsik, and The Choice for Europe: Soft Sources, Weak Evidence,' *Journal of Cold War Studies* 6:4 (2004), pp. 89-139.

⁵⁹ A. Moravcsik, *The Choice for Europe* (1999), p. 7.

Britain's influence in the world depends first and foremost on the health of her internal economy and the success of her export trade. Without these, military power cannot in the long run be supported. It is therefore in the true interests of defence that the claims of military expenditure should be considered in conjunction with the need to maintain the country's financial and economic strength.⁶⁰

In the context of 1960-63 the EEC represented a threat to Britain's diplomatic ties with the US precisely because it was growing at a faster economic rate than Britain and so would represent a more viable long-term partner for Washington. Equally, de Gaulle's supposed focus on economic considerations was based on his awareness that if Britain and Germany, whose economy was growing at a faster rate than France and which had long had greater industrial potential, were both inside the Common Market, France would inevitably lose its position of dominance. In 1963 Germany had the potential to be more powerful than France, but the latter was still seen as the stronger of the two, and it is significant that Adenauer, despite his desire to see Britain join with the Six, was not prepared to jeopardise relations with France by trying to force its hand.

In regards to the role of Civil Service officials in the formulation of policy, this work would not disregard their influence, but maintain that it is difficult to establish just how great that influence was. In the aftermath of Suez the Foreign Office attempted to persuade the government to pursue closer ties with Europe based on nuclear collaboration. Selwyn Lloyd presented his *Grand Design* to the Cabinet in

⁶⁰ Cmnd. 124, 'Defence Outline of Future Policy' (Apr., 1957), p. 1.

January 1957 but although his colleagues agreed that closer ties were desirable, they deemed the method advocated by the Foreign Office to be the wrong approach.⁶¹ Sir Frank Lee's April 1960 report has been cited as instrumental in Macmillan's decision that Britain should try to enter the EEC. Jacqueline Tratt described it as 'the definitive document that was to set Britain on a new course, not only in terms of trade but also in terms of Britain's political role and outlook,'⁶² while D.R Thorpe stated that 'There were many staging points of Macmillan's Damascene journey towards conversion to the European idea, but the Lee memorandum was one of the most vital.'⁶³ Although this author accepts the premise that Lee's report was a factor in Macmillan's decision that Britain should seek membership of the EEC, the decision itself was made by Macmillan, a reflection not only of his desire to maintain control of important policy, but of the position of the Prime Minister in the cabinet system.

The British cabinet system works, in theory, on the basis of collective decision-making. The cabinet meets, considers ideas and papers, and votes on a course of action such as in January 1957 when it considered and rejected Lloyd's *Grand Design*. However, although this is the basis of decision making in the British government, it is complicated by the powerful role played by the Prime Minister. Churchill, Eden and Macmillan were all Prime Minister who expected to control and dominate the agenda of the governments they led, were prone to interfering at

⁶¹ D. Gowland, A. Turner & A. Wright, *Britain and European Integration since 1945: On the Sidelines* (London, 2010).

⁶² J. Tratt, *The Macmillan Government and Europe: A Study in the Process of Policy Development* (Basingstoke, 1996), p. 95.

⁶³ D.R. Thorpe, *Supermac* (2011), p. 468.

department level and preferred ministers who were not strong enough to challenge them on policy. Churchill, who had to be forced out of office by his cabinet, considered Defence to his personal fiefdom and interfered continuously to the chagrin and annoyance of Macmillan who was in 1954/55 the responsible minister.⁶⁴ Eden was a foreign policy expert and although he was compelled to appoint Macmillan as Foreign Secretary in 1955, he replaced him eight months later with Selwyn Lloyd who has been portrayed as malleable to the point of subservience.⁶⁵

Macmillan reached the decision in May 1960 that Britain must join the EEC if appropriate terms could be negotiated. He was not strong enough to simply order his cabinet to agree, and by July 1960 Lloyd was telling Gladwyn Jebb (Britain's Ambassador to France) that there were still divergences between ministers on EEC entry,⁶⁶ and the House of Commons on 25 July that the government was not contemplating a membership bid.⁶⁷ Macmillan was, and within two days he had completed a significant reshuffle of his cabinet that has been interpreted as a precursor towards an entry attempt.⁶⁸ The reshuffle included the promotion of men

⁶⁴ R. Rhodes James, 'Harold Macmillan: An Introduction,' in *Harold Macmillan and Britain's World Role*, ed. R. Aldous & S. Lee. (Basingstoke, 1996), p. 1.

⁶⁵ D. Carlton, *Anthony Eden: A Biography* (London, 1981), pp. 388-389; D.R. Thorpe, *Selwyn Lloyd* (London, 1989), pp. 190-192.

⁶⁶ S. Greenwood, 'Not the General Will but the Will of the General: The Paris Embassy and the European Debate, 1960,' in *The Foreign Office and British Diplomacy in the Twentieth Century*, ed. G. Johnson (London, 2009), p. 183.

⁶⁷ H. of C. Debs, Vol. 627, Cols. 1099-1219, 'European Trade' (25 Jul., 1960).

⁶⁸ M. Camps, *Britain and the European Community 1955-1963* (London, 1964), pp. 314-315; G. Hutchinson, *The Last Edwardian at No. 10: An Impression of Harold Macmillan* (London, 1980), pp. 76-77.

known to be sympathetic to British membership of the Common Market, to significant departments.⁶⁹ This included Christopher Soames to Agriculture, Duncan Sandys to Commonwealth Relations, and Edward Heath as the deputy to new Foreign Secretary Lord Home.⁷⁰

Structure and Methodology

The research methodology of this thesis makes extensive use of primary source material, the bulk of which shall come from the National Archives of the United Kingdom. The thesis will make particular use of the Prime Ministers papers for the Conservative Government 1951-1964 (PREM 11), as well as papers from the political departments of the Foreign Office (FO 371), those from the Cabinet series CAB 128-131 and CAB 134, and files relating to Defence (DO and DEFE) and the Treasury (T). In addition, files from the Conservative Party Archive, located in the Bodleian Library, and files from the archive of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Two series of published documents will also be consulted: Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1952-1954 (Volume XIII), 1955-1957 (IV and XVI), 1958-1960 (VII), 1961-1963 (XIII); and the 1956 and 1963 tomes of the French series Documents Diplomatiques Français.

In addition to the sources listed above, transcripts from Parliamentary Debates will be used, as will published papers such as defence estimates and whites papers,

⁶⁹ S. Greenwood, 'Not the "General Will" but the Will of the General: The Input of the Paris Embassy to the British "Great Debate" on Europe, Summer 1960,' *Contemporary British History*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Autumn, 2004), p. 179.

⁷⁰ 'Lord Home Foreign Secretary,' *Times* (28 July., 1960), p. 10.

those relating to Maudling Negotiations, and the formation of EFTA. Further primary evidence will be taken from the published volumes of Harold Macmillan's diaries as well as the autobiographies and memoirs of figures including Macmillan, Eden, Selwyn Lloyd, Edward Heath, and Robert Marjolin. The remainder of the research material will be drawn from contemporary newspaper and periodical articles including *The Times*, *Guardian*, *Economist*, and *Time*, and secondary literature such as biographies of significant figures, particularly General de Gaulle and Edward Heath whose papers are unavailable at present, and the extensive works on the Suez Crisis, Anglo-European, Anglo-French, and Anglo-American relations between 1950 and 1963.

Much of the existing literature has either ignored the influence of Suez or made only very limited reference to it. Works that have claimed that Suez caused Macmillan's government to undertake a review of its policies that resulted in the decision to seek closer ties with Europe have not supported this assertion with much verifiable evidence. In order therefore to establish whether or not such a review occurred, what prompted it, and what conclusions if any were drawn regarding Europe, it is necessary to examine the official papers. The 1957 Defence White Paper might not mention Suez explicitly, but by analysing the earlier drafts and the discussions that resulted in the final, published document, it is possible to see what influenced it and the people who created it.

To return to the particular choice of sources, this work makes extensive use of the published volumes FRUS and DDF. The papers from the National Archives are useful for identifying the factors behind policy decisions, but they only give the

British perspective. By using DDF and FRUS this work can take a broader view of Anglo-European relations and deal specifically with aspects of the existing historiography that focus on France, and on how British figures were viewed outside of Whitehall. For example, historians have long disagreed as to the extent of Harold Macmillan's 'Europeanism' with some disputing the notion that he was in any meaningful way 'pro-European'.⁷¹ The record of a meeting in Washington DC between US and French officials in January 1957 demonstrates that several of Macmillan's contemporaries, in this case John Foster Dulles and Christian Pineau, considered him to be a supporter of European unity and the most European member of the Conservative Party.⁷² The basis for Sir Alan Milward's view that Suez influenced the Conservative government to adopt Plan G in November 1956 is supported by the account of the French Ambassador to the United Kingdom (Chauvel) who attributed an apparent shift in British policy to the Suez Crisis.⁷³

Beyond official papers from the UK, United States and France, the thesis also utilises contemporary media sources. These have several uses that have contributed to the decision to include them. In the case of Edward Heath, Harold Macmillan and others, articles from *The Times*, *Guardian* and other outlets provide a good indication of how they were perceived by their contemporaries. Chapter Six for example uses

⁷¹ D. Carlton, *Anthony Eden* (1981), p. 285; D.R. Thorpe, *Supermac* (2011), p. 256.

⁷² FRUS 1955-1957, Volume IV, Doc. 209 'Memorandum of a Conversation, Department of State, Washington' (11 Jan., 1957).

⁷³ DDF 1956 Tome. III, 'Chauvel to Pineau' (29 Nov., 1956), pp. 426-427. Translated by Dan Whyman.

newspaper articles to demonstrate the extent to which Edward Heath's public profile and political reputation were enhanced by his handling of the Suez Crisis.⁷⁴

Structurally this thesis is divided into seven chapters including this one: Chapter Two acts as the first of a two part section that considers in detail the claims of some historians that Suez was such a fundamental shock to the British government that it engaged on a process of review, leading to the policy of seeking closer ties with Europe. Chapter Two accordingly deals with the reasons for Suez being such a calamitous defeat for Britain. It considers the Suez Crisis in the context of a phenomenon known as 'heuristics and biases'; the idea that people view events through pre-conceived opinions until something occurs to bring their perception into line with reality. British foreign and defence policy between 1945 and 1956 will be analysed so as to identify why Suez was so disastrous, and whether or not it is fair to say that the British government had enough evidence to perhaps have acted differently.

Chapter Three focuses on the response of the Eden and Macmillan governments to the events in Egypt and tries to ascertain whether there is any documentary evidence for the relatively unsupported assertions of historians that a review occurred after Suez that resulted in a greater focus on Europe. The chapter will examine documents from the National Archives including the 1957 'Defence Outline of Future Policy',⁷⁵ the 'Study of Future Policy for 1960-1970',⁷⁶ and two foreign

⁷⁴ A Student of Politics, 'The Ranks Unbroken', *Sunday Times* (11 Nov., 1956), p. 9; 'Notes of the Week: Revolt Dampened', *The Economist* (8 Dec., 1956), p. 857.

⁷⁵ Cmnd. 124, 'Defence Outline of Future Policy' (Apr., 1957).

policy reviews; one on the state of the Anglo-American relationship; the other on Anglo-American interdependence.⁷⁷ It might seem strange that a thesis focussing on British and French policy re-evaluations of EEC membership should examine documents on the US-UK special relationship but what Chapter Three will demonstrate is that Europe was a point of contention between the US and British governments. The US was frustrated that the British government seemed unwilling to engage positively with the process of European integration, while many in the Foreign Office felt that the US was simply demonstrating a lack of appreciation for the unique and global role that Britain played. Suez, as the chapter demonstrates, made British leaders more conducive to American wishes and the policy of interdependence reflected the fact that Harold Macmillan considered the Atlantic and European circles to be one and the same.

Following on from the Macmillan-inspired policy of interdependence, Chapter Four moves on to the ways in which this thesis believes Suez was of the most significance for the Anglo-European relationship; the fall from power of Anthony Eden and his being replaced by Macmillan rather than Butler. The chapter examines the impact of Suez on Macmillan's hopes of becoming Prime Minister, taking the view that without at least some sort of foreign policy crisis those hopes were slim. The views on Europe of Eden, Butler and Macmillan will be considered and it will be concluded that Macmillan's more positive attitude towards European integration,

⁷⁶ TNA CAB 129/100, F.P. (60) 1 'Future Policy Study 1960' (24 Feb., 1960).

⁷⁷ TNA CAB 130/39, 'The Position of the United Kingdom in World Affairs' (1 May., 1958); CAB 129/92, C. (58) 77 'The Effects of Anglo-American Interdependence on the Long-Term Interests of the United Kingdom' (10 Apr., 1958).

reflected in his May 1960 decision to try to enter the EEC, was crucial to the evolution of British policy.

Chapter Five takes the focus away from the British government and examines the effect of Suez on France. It takes the view that the crisis persuaded the French government that its interests lay in membership and leadership of a European Common Market, and the possession of nuclear weapons. It also influenced the conduct of the Algerian Uprising and through this played a role in Charles de Gaulle returning to power in May 1958. As the chapter demonstrate, each of these had an impact on Britain and its relationship with the European Communities. The first forced the British government to accept that detachment was no longer a viable prospect as this had been based on the assumption that the French government would never agree to the creation of a supranational organisation. This, the return of De Gaulle and the development of the French deterrent turned Suez into something of a paradox: It set the British government down the path that ended with the first application for EEC membership, and at the same time, set in motion the factors that would combine to frustrate it in this endeavour.

Chapter Six looks at the impact of the Suez Crisis on the career of Edward Heath. As Heath's most long-lasting contribution to the Anglo-European relationship (his taking Britain into the EEC) occurred outside of the main timeframe of this thesis, the chapter is somewhat an addition. Nevertheless, as Heath's career was launched by Suez, and his unsuccessful attempt to lead the Macmillan entry bid gained him much credit in Europe, and went some way to convincing European leaders that the British government was serious about membership, it is included here.

Chapter Six will explore the role Heath played in preventing the fall of the Conservative government during the crisis, the origin of the views on Europe that made him famous, and the ways in which his actions between 1960 and 1973 contributed to Britain's accession to the EEC.

Overall, this thesis will demonstrate that far from being a coincidental even of marginal or no relevance to the Anglo-European relationship, Suez was an event of considerable significance, and should be considered in a European context as it has an Anglo-American, and an imperial one. It was instrumental in the development of the careers of two Prime Ministers; one of whom (Macmillan) led his country to accepting the necessity of EEC membership and attempted to achieve that membership; the other (Heath) was appointed to lead Macmillan's negotiating team in 1961, and succeeded in 1973 where his predecessor had failed. Suez helped Guy Mollet convince the sceptical members of his government that France's future lay in leading an integrated Europe, persuaded French leaders to accelerate the development of a nuclear deterrent, and helped de Gaulle return to power. Lastly, while it is not viable to conclude that Suez caused an immediate reversal of British policy on EEC membership, it did provoke a reappraisal and in the longer-term set the British government on a road that led, eventually and despite significant obstacles, to its membership of the modern European Union.

Chapter II: Perception vs Reality: The Suez Crisis

Introduction

One of the two main arguments in the existing historiography of Suez and Anglo-European relations is that the crisis revealed to British policymakers the extent to which Britain could no longer behave as if it were one of the great world powers.¹ Britain, and France were diplomatically isolated at the United Nations, and were forced to end their invasion of Egypt when it had barely started, despite it enjoying initial military success. For this argument to hold up under scrutiny, it must follow that for weakness to have been revealed, it must have been assumed by British policymakers that the country was in a much stronger position in the summer and autumn of 1956 than it fact was the case. This is an example of ‘perception vs reality’, the idea that there is no necessary link between objective ‘reality’ and one’s perception of it. In political science this phenomena is known as heuristics and biases

¹ S. Bulmer, ‘Britain and European Integration; Of Sovereignty, Slow Adaptation and Semi-Detachment’ in, S. George (Ed.), *Britain and the European Community: The Politics of Semi-Detachment* (Oxford, 1992), p. 5; L. Epstein, *British Politics in the Suez Crisis* (1964), pp. 200-201; S. George, *Britain and European Integration since 1945* (Oxford, 1991), p. 44; S. George, *An Awkward Partner: Britain in the European Community* (3rd Edition) (Oxford, 1998), p. 10; P. Hansen, ‘European Integration, European Identity and the Colonial Connection’, *European Journal of Social Theory*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (Nov., 2002), p. 493.

and there is an extensive body of literature devoted to it.² According to one example, from a June 2010 *Scientific American* article,

We assume that the external world maps perfectly onto our internal view of it—an expectation that is reinforced by daily experience...That there should be a match between perception and reality is not surprising, because evolution ruthlessly eliminates the unfit. If you routinely misperceive or even hallucinate and act on those misapprehensions, you won't survive long in a world filled with dangers whose avoidance requires accurate distance and speed assessments and rapid reactions.³

Henry Kissinger (US Secretary of State 1973-1977) once gave another relevant example of this phenomenon, although he did not describe it as such, when discussing the differences between British and American foreign policy. Kissinger described the US realisation in the 1960s and 1970s that there were limits to its power as 'a rude awakening', implying that US perceptions of itself and its power had not been in synch with reality.⁴ The 1956 Suez Crisis further demonstrates that this idea of

² e.g. A. Tversky & D. Kahneman, 'Judgement Under Uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases', *Science*, Vol. 185, No. 4157 (Sep., 1974), pp. 1124-1131; M. Bassin, 'Inventing Siberia: Visions of the Russian East in the Early Nineteenth Century', *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 96, No. 3 (Jun., 1991), pp. 763-794.

³ C. Koch, 'Looks Can Deceive: Why Perception and Reality Do Not Always Match Up,' *Scientific American* (24 June, 2010), <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/looks-can-deceive/> Accessed 5 July 2014.

⁴ H. Kissinger, 'Reflections on a Partnership: British and American Attitudes to Postwar Foreign Policy', *International Affairs*, Vol. 58, No. 4 (Autumn, 1982), p. 575.

perception falling behind reality can be as true in a historical sense as it is in a scientific one. Britain's actions in the months that followed President Nasser's nationalisation of the Suez Canal, culminating in the ill-fated Operation Musketeer, were based on faulty assumptions about its diplomatic and military strength. Success in Egypt depended on two things; the ability of the British Armed Forces to retake swiftly and hold the Canal,⁵ and the government's ability to ensure that if Britain's allies did not actively support an invasion of Egypt, they would at least not take steps to actively oppose one.⁶

As events transpired, neither of these prerequisites was realised. The Chiefs of Staff delivered a stark negative verdict when asked if it was militarily feasible to immediately retake the canal, and so a period of military build-up was necessary.⁷ Lacking the ability to defeat the Egyptians in the immediate aftermath of nationalisation, it was imperative that British diplomats either persuade the United States to support Britain, or prevent the United Nations and other international actors from insisting on a diplomatic solution that did not return the canal to Anglo-French ownership.⁸ What this chapter will determine is the extent to which British policymakers failed to recognise that Britain was not capable in military and diplomatic terms, of successfully launching an aggressive military operation in the

⁵ R. Fullick & G. Powell, *Suez: The Double War* (Barnsley, 2006), p. 13.

⁶ W.W. Aldrich, The Suez Crisis a Footnote to History, *Foreign Affairs*, Volume 45, Issue 3 (Apr 1967), p. 552.

⁷ TNA, CAB 134/1217, EC. 56 (5), 'Action Against Egypt – Outline Plan,' Memorandum by the Chiefs of Staff, p. 4.

⁸ HMD vol. I (30 Jul., 1956), pp. 579-580.

face of concerted opposition. It will show that Britain overestimated its ability to influence the policy of the United States, and that its assumed position of leadership of the Commonwealth was similarly erroneous.⁹ To do this it will analyse British foreign policy between 1945 and 1956 and examine how much influence and leadership Britain actually possessed. It will also look at Anglo-European relations in this period so as to set the contextual scene for the later chapters, particularly as European nations were broadly supportive of the Anglo-French invasion of Egypt, seeing it as an attempt to reassert European position and values at a time when these were perceived to be disregarded or marginalised by the superpowers.¹⁰

In addition to examining British diplomatic strength between 1945 and the Suez Crisis, this chapter will also analyse British defence policy so as to determine how far apart the expectations of the Eden government were from the capabilities of the armed forces, and how this had come about. British economic policy however will not be examined here. While the pressure that the US placed on Britain was economic, refusing to sanction a loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to support Sterling, British policymakers were not guilty of failing to reconcile perception with reality in this area. Internal Treasury documents and Harold Macmillan's contemporaneous entries in his diary highlighted the risks and costs to the British economy in launching a military operation such as *Musketeer*, and had Britain not overestimated either its diplomatic strength, or the ability of the armed

⁹ TNA PREM 11/1096, 'UK High Commissioner in India to Commonwealth Relations Office' (5 Nov., 1956).

¹⁰ TNA PREM 11/1143, 'Adenauer to Eden' (22 Nov., 1956); PREM 11/2002, 'Gerbrandy to Eden' (4 Jan., 1957).

forces to retake the canal before diplomatic opposition could take effect, the economic issues would not have mattered.¹¹

Suez and the ‘Three Circles’

Winston Churchill coined this phrase, which has often since been used to describe British foreign policy after the Second World War. In Churchill’s view, Britain occupied a unique position at the centre of three geopolitical circles; the Anglo-American ‘special relationship’, the British Empire (or the remnants of it) and Commonwealth, and continental Europe.¹² Having emerged from the Second World War victorious but economically dependent on aid from the United States,¹³ Churchill saw the three circles as Britain’s way of compensating for the loss of much of the Empire and remaining a global power.¹⁴ Although all three circles were seen as essential to Britain, there was something of a hierarchy involved. Europe was seen as

¹¹ R. Cooper, ‘A Weak Sister? Macmillan, Suez and the British Economy, July to November, 1956’, *Contemporary British History*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (Sep., 2008), pp. 297-316.

¹² G. Warner, ‘Why the General Said No’, *International Affairs*, Vol. 78, No. 4 (Oct., 2002), p. 872.

¹³ J. Dickie, *Special No More: Anglo-American Relations: Rhetoric and Reality* (London, 1994), pp. 34-39; H. Mackenzie, ‘Justice Denied: The Anglo-American Loan Negotiations of 1945,’ *Canadian Review of American Studies*, Vol. 26 No. 1 (Winter 1996), pp. 79-110.

¹⁴ J.T. Grantham, ‘British Labour and the Hague ‘Congress of Europe’: National Sovereignty Defended’, *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (1981), p. 445; W. Wallace, ‘The Collapse of British Foreign Policy’, *International Affairs*, Vol. 81, No. 1 (Jan., 2005), p. 53; J.W. Young, ‘Churchill’s ‘No’ to Europe: The ‘Rejection’ of European Union by Churchill’s Post-War Government, 1951-1952’, *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Dec., 1985), p. 930.

the least important of the circles, while the American and Commonwealth links occupied pride of place.¹⁵

The Anglo-American ‘Special Relationship’

The term ‘special relationship’ has long been a fixture of coverage of British foreign and defence policy, and of Anglo-American relations. It has also been one of the most controversial phrases of the modern era with many commentators expressing scepticism as to its very existence, let alone its extent.¹⁶ Similarly, the ‘special relationship’ has been the subject of an extensive body of academic literature, some works taking a sceptical view,¹⁷ while others either describing the relationship, particularly its high and low points, in a more dispassionate manner,¹⁸ or focusing on

¹⁵ F. Bedarida, ‘Winston Churchill’s Image of France and the French’, *Historical Research*, Vol. 74, No. 183 (Feb., 2001), p. 104.

¹⁶ P. Elan, ‘The Special Relationship: Uncovered – Radio Review’, *The Guardian* (26 Jun., 2014). Accessed 12 September 2014. The article deals with Peter Hitchens Radio 4 program on the subject and his view that far from there being a special relationship, the US as historically been a manipulative power that sought to supplant Britain as the dominant western (if not global) power.

¹⁷ C. Bell, *The Debatable Alliance: An Essay in Anglo-American Relations* (Oxford, 1964); J. Dickie, *Special No More* (1994); C. Grayling & C. Langdon, *Just Another Star? Anglo-American Relations Since 1945* (London, 1988).

¹⁸ C.J. Bartlett, *The Special Relationship’ A Political History of Anglo-American Relations Since 1945* (Harlow, 1992); A.P. Dobson, *Anglo-American Relations in the Twentieth Century: Of Friendship, Conflict and the Rise and Decline of Superpowers* (London, 1995); J. Dumbrell, *A Special Relationship: Anglo-American Relations from the Cold War to Iraq* (2nd Edition) (Basingstoke, 2006).

specific aspects of it.¹⁹ The Suez Crisis has often been seen as a particularly low point in the history of Anglo-American relations.²⁰ It was the United States who applied economic pressure to compel Britain (and France) to halt the invasion of Egypt by refusing to sanction a British drawing from the IMF, and refusing to supply it with oil until Operation Musketeer was ended.²¹ Equally, and to present the American perspective, Britain started a reckless war and, in collusion with France and Israel, lied to its American ally.²²

The exchange of messages between Anthony Eden and President Eisenhower was indicative of the extent to which Britain and the US diverged; the anger, shock and disapproval of the US, its determination to insist on British withdrawal before even considering aid to London, and the desperate situation in which Eden found himself, were all more than clear. On 30 October Eisenhower wrote to Eden

¹⁹ P. Boyle, 'The 'Special Relationship' with Washington', in J.W. Young (Ed.), *The Foreign Policy of Churchill's Peacetime Administration 1951-1955* (Leicester, 1988); K. Ruane & J. Ellison, 'Managing the Americans: Anthony Eden, Harold Macmillan and the Pursuit of 'Power by Proxy' in the 1950s', *Contemporary British History*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Autumn, 2004), pp. 147-167.

²⁰ S. Freiburger, *Dawn Over Suez: The Rise of American Power in the Middle East 1953-1957* (Chicago, 1992); W. Scott Lucas, *Divided We Stand: Britain, the US and the Suez Crisis* (London, 1991); G. Warner, 'The United States and the Suez Crisis', *International Affairs*, Vol. 67, No. 2 (Apr., 1991), pp. 303-317.

²¹ FRUS, 1955-1957 Volume XVI, Suez Crisis, July 26-December 31 1956, Doc. 500 'Memorandum of a Conference with the President' (5 Nov., 1956).

²² FRUS, 1955-1957 Volume XVI, Doc. 411 'Memorandum of a Conference with the President' (29 Oct., 1956); FRUS, 1955-1957 Volume XVI, Doc. 637 'Memorandum from the Secretary of State's Special Assistant for Intelligence (Armstrong) to the Secretary of State' (5 Dec., 1956).

expressing astonishment that Britain did not consider herself bound by the 1950 Tripartite Agreement, the undertaking by Britain, the US and France to inform and consult with each other in a combined effort to maintain the territorial status quo in the Middle East.²³ Eden's response, which the President received during a conference between Eisenhower and his advisors including Secretary of State Dulles, reiterated this and the remarks of both Eisenhower and Dulles include the latter's view that Britain assumed that the US would feel obligated to render economic assistance rather than see it collapse.²⁴ Eisenhower responded to this by questioning Britain's value as an ally and remarked that the necessity to support the British was not as great as they supposed.²⁵ A week later and Eden's tone in telephone conversations has a hint of desperation to it, seeking to visit Washington DC,²⁶ and being rather anxious when Eisenhower, on the basis of advice from his officials, moved from being open to the idea,²⁷ to agreeing to it but not the timing.²⁸ In fact, Eisenhower was telling Dulles

²³ FRUS, 1955-1957 Volume XVI, Doc. 418 'Message from President Eisenhower to Prime Minister Eden' (30 Oct., 1956).

²⁴ FRUS, 1955-1957 Volume XVI, Doc. 421 'Message from Prime Minister Eden to President Eisenhower' (30 Oct., 1956).

²⁵ FRUS, 1955-1957 Volume XVI, Doc. 419 'Memorandum of a Conference with the President' (30 Oct., 1956).

²⁶ FRUS, 1955-1957 Volume XVI, Doc. 536 'Memorandum of a Telephone Conversation Between President Eisenhower in Washington and Prime Minister Eden in London' (7 Nov., 1956).

²⁷ FRUS, 1955-1957 Volume XVI, Doc. 538 'Transcript of a Telephone Conversation Between President Eisenhower in Washington and Prime Minister Eden in London' (7 Nov., 1956).

²⁸ FRUS, 1955-1957 Volume XVI, Doc. 540 'Transcript of a Telephone Conversation Between President Eisenhower in Washington and Prime Minister Eden in London' (7 Nov., 1956).

that Eden's visit should be 'contingent on certain events taking place in advance',²⁹ those events being a ceasefire and Anglo-French withdrawal from Port Said, These conditions were communicated as such to Eden.³⁰

This chapter examines the extent to which the British government was aware of the scale of the disaster of Suez in the aftermath of its withdrawal under American economic and diplomatic pressure. What was clear though was that Britain had gravely overestimated its ability to influence the US. It had believed that the special relationship was such that America would acquiesce in its invasion of Egypt rather than see its economy collapse³¹ or it reduced to what Macmillan had described as the status of 'another Netherlands' if it was unable to reassert control over Suez.³² But it is necessary here to look back over the period 1945-1956 to determine whether or not the special relationship was in fact as close and subject to as much British influence as Britain's actions at Suez would indicate.

An incident during the Second World War best describes certain attitudes on the part of Britain when it came to Anglo-American relations. Macmillan described the situation to Richard Crossman in terms of the British being the Greeks to America's Rome, advising him to ensure that US officials were always in a position

²⁹ FRUS, 1955-1957 Volume XVI, Doc. 542 'Memorandum of a Conversation (Eisenhower, Dulles and Hoover Jr) (7 Nov., 1956).

³⁰ FRUS, 1955-1957 Volume XVI, Doc. 545 'Message from President Eisenhower to Prime Minister Eden' (7 Nov., 1956).

³¹ HMD vol. I (9 Sep., 1956), pp. 595-596.

³² R. Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors* (London, 1964), pp. 462-463.

of authority while the British did most of the work. Allowing the Americans to think they were running things would enable the British to run them themselves.³³ In 1944 the Foreign Office was of a similar opinion, seeking ‘to make use [of] American power for purposes which we regard as good’.³⁴ In the early 1950s Anthony Eden pursued a policy described by Ruane and Ellison as ‘power by proxy’³⁵, in essence Britain using American power to support British interests. This was based on the premise that the US needed and would welcome British guidance in its new role as the dominant member of the western alliance.³⁶ Anthony Eden’s 1952 study ‘British Overseas Obligations’ had the following to say:

Our aim should be to persuade the United States to assume the real burdens in such organisations³⁷, while retaining for ourselves as much political control –and hence prestige and world influence- as we can.³⁸

³³ P. Mangold, *The Almost Impossible Ally: Harold Macmillan and Charles De Gaulle* (London, 2006), pp. 36-37.

³⁴ D. Reynolds, ‘Rethinking Anglo-American Relations’, *International Affairs*, Vol. 65, No. 1 (Dec., 1988), p. 96.

³⁵ K. Ruane & J. Ellison, ‘Managing the Americans: Anthony Eden, Harold Macmillan, and the Pursuit of ‘Power-by-Proxy’ in the 1950s’, *Contemporary British History*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Autumn, 2004), pp. 147-166.

³⁶ J. Dumbrell, *A Special Relationship: Anglo-American Relations From the Cold War to Iraq* (2nd Edition) (Basingstoke, 2006), p. 17.

³⁷ South East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO), Middle East Defence Organisation (MEDO).

³⁸ TNA, CAB 129/53, C (52) 202, ‘British Overseas Obligations: Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs’ (18 Jun., 1952), p. 6.

An examination of both British and American sources for the period makes clear that such a policy had little prospect of success as regards Suez, and that British experiences in negotiations with the US prior to Eden's study should perhaps have made that obvious. Although the post-war Labour government has been given some credit for the formation of NATO, the Truman Doctrine, and the European Recovery Program (Marshall Aid),³⁹ it cannot in general be said that these were examples of Britain influencing US policy. In each case the actions of the US were based on a calculation of what was in America's interest, particularly in the context of the Cold War, and there are several examples of British influence having no positive impact at all on the US. Within days of the end of the war against Japan in August 1945 the US had cancelled Lend Lease⁴⁰ and in 1946 passed the Atomic Energy Act, better known as the McMahon Act, ending the wartime collaboration on the development of nuclear weapons.⁴¹ The US did provide a substantial loan to Britain in December 1945, but while British negotiators such as John Maynard Keynes felt that Britain's wartime sacrifice should merit continued financial assistance from the US, neither their

³⁹ C. Wrigley, 'Bevin, Ernest (1881-1951)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004) <http://www.oxforddnb.com.oxfordbrookes.idm.oclc.org/view/article/31872?docPos=1>, accessed 27 Sep., 2014.

⁴⁰ P. Howlett, 'The Wartime Economy 1939-1945', in R. Floud & D. McCloskey (eds), *The Economic History of Britain Since 1700: Volume III 1939-1992* (2nd Edition) (Cambridge, 1994), p. 20; R. Ovendale (ed.), *The Foreign Policy of the Labour Governments 1945-1951* (Leicester, 1984), pp. 5-6.

⁴¹ M. Gowing, 'Nuclear Weapons and the 'Special Relationship'', in W.M. Roger Louis & H. Bull (eds), *The Special Relationship: Anglo-American Relations Since 1945* (Oxford, 1986).

American counterparts, nor the American public, were agreeable.⁴² Moreover, the loan was conditional on Sterling being made a fully convertible currency within one year, and the abolition of the system of imperial trade preference,⁴³ two conditions that were condemned by Conservative Members in the House of Commons.⁴⁴ It should be pointed out that the US chose not to force either condition when it was clear that Britain could not viably comply in a short space of time,⁴⁵ but the fact remains that US aid to Britain did not come for free, and that past collaboration and shared wartime sacrifice counted for less than Britain thought it should.

After the Conservatives returned to office in 1951 there was little change and the US showed neither the need, nor the desire, for British guidance. In several areas British influence over US policy was negligible. The British position during the discussions over a Middle East Command was that a British general should be in command, and they wanted the same person to also hold the command of NATO's south-eastern flank.⁴⁶ The American record of a meeting between Churchill and President Eisenhower on 8 January 1952 shows Churchill and Eden repeatedly stressing the necessity that the final communiqué make clear the determination of

⁴² H. Mackenzie, 'Justice Denied: The Anglo-American Loan Negotiations of 1945', *Canadian Review of American Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (Winter, 1996), pp. 79-110.

⁴³ J. Dickie, *Special No More* (1994), pp. 34-39.

⁴⁴ H. of C. Debs., vol. 425, cols. 1611-46, 'Anglo-American Loan Agreement (19 Jul., 1946).

⁴⁵ D. Reynolds, 'Rethinking Anglo-American Relations', *International Affairs*, Vol. 65, No. 1 (Dec., 1988), p. 93.

⁴⁶ FRUS, 1952-1954 Volume IX Part 1 The Near and Middle East, Doc. 55 'Negotiating Paper Prepared in the Department of State' (4 Jan., 1952).

Britain and the US to work together in the Middle East – but also that the US could not agree to one officer holding two separate commands.⁴⁷ The overall tone of the respective positions is that the British participants were markedly more eager to stress Anglo-American agreement than were the Americans. Eisenhower did state that it was important that both sides understood each other, but it is clear that understanding the position of the UK and agreeing with it was not the same thing.⁴⁸ An 11 February letter from the Secretary of Defence to the Secretary of State advocated the opposing of British two-hat (a British general holding the Middle East and a NATO command simultaneously) proposals, and that the UK should not even be informed of the creation of a State Department-Defence Department working group until the US position on Middle East Command had been finalised.⁴⁹ A National Intelligence Special Estimate dated 17 March 1952 detailed the problems with the proposed Middle East Defence Organisation, specifically linked the issue of Egyptian participation to British acceptance of withdrawal from the Canal Zone, detailed US concerns about Arab opinions regarding the UK, and speculated that Arab cooperation with MEDO could lead to a reduction of British and French influence in the region.⁵⁰

These US accounts, and the views expressed by American officials in private and in discussions with the British, do not support Eden's idea that Britain could

⁴⁷ FRUS, 1952-1954 Volume IX Part 1, Doc. 56 'United States Minutes of Meeting' (8 Jan., 1952).

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ FRUS, 1952-1954 Volume IX Part 1, Doc. 62 'The Secretary of Defence (Lovett) to the Secretary of State' (11 Feb., 1952).

⁵⁰ FRUS, 1952-1954 Volume IX Part 1, Doc. 65 'National Intelligence Special Estimate: Prospects for an Inclusive Middle East Defense Organization' (17 Mar., 1952).

harness American power to the benefit of British policy. American opposition to British proposals, the desire to exclude Britain from their Working Group, and the prospect of the US using MEDO to increase its influence in the Middle East at the expense of Britain strongly suggest the opposite. This is the argument of Steven Freiberger whose work presented Anglo-American relations in the Middle East as the US attempting to reduce British influence and replace it as the dominant western power.⁵¹ Britain faced a similar lack of success in shaping American policy over the European Defence Community,⁵² and over military relations with Australia and New Zealand. In the same vein that Britain favoured the creation of an integrated military organisation in the Middle East, it advocated the creation of a South East Asia Treaty Organisation. The US supported the development of the military capacities of Australia and New Zealand and concluded the ANZUS Pact, a tripartite agreement between it, Australia and New Zealand that committed the US to the defence of its allies, but was not prepared to go beyond this and commit to a regional pact.⁵³

It is not possible within the limits of this work to explore the full scope of Anglo-American relations between 1945 and the Suez Crisis. However, the immediate post-war loan negotiations, and the making of the Middle East Defence Organisation and the South East Asia Treaty Organisation, are three examples that demonstrate the

⁵¹ S.Z. Freiberger, *Dawn Over Suez* (1992), p. 215.

⁵² K. Ruane, 'Agonizing Over Re-Appraisals: Anthony Eden, John Foster Dulles and the Crisis of European Defence 1953-1954', *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (Dec., 2002), pp. 159-160.

⁵³ FRUS, 1952-1954 Volume XII, Part 1, East Asia and the Pacific (in two parts), Doc. 1 'Position Paper Prepared in the Department of State: The Military Role of Australia and New Zealand' (29 Dec., 1951).

extent to which the British notions of influencing and shaping American policy were wholly unrealistic. The US was not completely indifferent to Britain and was more than prepared to render assistance, but America was not prepared to sacrifice its own interests so as to conform to the idea of a special relationship, nor was it amenable to the sort of pressure and influence that Eden and others believed it would be. Suez was, of course, a significant event that demonstrated the extent to which Britain could neither rely on the US when their interests were not aligned, nor shape its policy to Britain's advantage. However, given the nature of Anglo-American relations in the decade leading up to the crisis, it is somewhat surprising that British policymakers should have assumed that America would acquiesce in such a dubious undertaking as Operation Musketeer.

The Empire and Commonwealth

In June 1952 Anthony Eden, then Foreign Secretary, wrote his memorandum *British Overseas Obligations*. In addition to statements regarding Britain not being a self-sufficient economic unit and that the non-Communist world faced an external threat, Eden made the following statement about Britain's position in world affairs:

Secondly, withdrawal from a major commitment would affect the international status of the United Kingdom. By reducing the value of the United Kingdom as a partner and ally, it would undermine the cohesion of the Commonwealth and the special relationship of the United Kingdom with the United States and its European partners and other allies. Their attitude towards us will depend largely on our status as a world Power and upon their belief that we are ready and willing to support them. It is evident that in so far as we reduce our commitments and

our power declines, our claim to the leadership of the Commonwealth...will be, *pro tanto*, diminished.⁵⁴

The above paragraph contains within it elements of two British assumptions specific to the Commonwealth: The first was that Britain's leadership of the Commonwealth was an established fact rather than its own self-perception. The second was that the Commonwealth as an institution was as important to its members as it was to the United Kingdom. Suez revealed both of these assumptions to be deeply flawed.

Implicit in the assumption of leadership was the belief that Britain could guide the policies of Commonwealth members in the same way that it could those of the United States. Krishnan Srinivasan wrote in a 2006 article *Nobody's Commonwealth? The Commonwealth in Britain's Post-imperial Adjustment* that the Commonwealth had been designed by Britain to provide a surrogate for colonial rule, an instrument to replace formal empire with a British sphere of influence.⁵⁵ Of significance to this discussion is the role of the Baghdad Pact. Conceived as a way of preventing an increase in Soviet influence in the Middle East,⁵⁶ the Pact included Pakistan in its membership and that country retained close defence links with the United Kingdom, theoretically adding a further rationale for any British assumptions of support from

⁵⁴ TNA, CAB 129/53, C (52) 202 'British Overseas Obligations: Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs' (18 Jun., 1952), p. 2.

⁵⁵ K. Srinivasan, 'Nobody's Commonwealth? The Commonwealth in Britain's Post-imperial Adjustment' *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (Jul., 2006), p. 257.

⁵⁶ A. Sanjian, 'The Formulation of the Baghdad Pact' *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (Apr., 1997), p. 226.

Karachi in 1956.⁵⁷ In the event, on the former ‘white’ dominions of Australia, New Zealand and South Africa supported Britain at Suez.⁵⁸ Sir Sidney Holland, Prime Minister of New Zealand 1949-1957, messaged Eden to the effect that Britain was not without friends and that New Zealand expressed ‘profound admiration of you and all you have done leading up to and during these extremely difficult days’.⁵⁹ Holland’s Australian counterpart Sir Robert Menzies wrote to Eden that in his view an Anglo-French withdrawal away from the Canal Zone would leave it unprotected, and that public opinion in Australia was ‘steadily consolidating in favour of action you have taken’.⁶⁰ The majority of the Commonwealth however was appalled at the attack on Egypt and the reactions of India and Pakistan were of particular concern.

India and Pakistan were both members of the Commonwealth, although this situation was not one of enormous conviction. India had been sceptical about the benefits of membership and concerned that it might limit its practical independence. Pakistan, for its part, was a member of the Baghdad Pact and was wary of the threat it perceived from India. The reluctance of Britain to elevate the dispute between India

⁵⁷ J. Mohan, ‘India, Pakistan, Suez and the Commonwealth’ *International Journal*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (Summer., 1960), p. 199.

⁵⁸ D. Goldsworthy, ‘Australian External Policy and the End of Britain’s Empire’ *The Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (2005), p. 17; W. MacMahon Ball, ‘The Australian Reaction to the Suez Crisis July-December 1956’ *The Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (1957), p. 131; D. Reynolds, ‘Empire, Region, World: the International Context of Australian Foreign Policy since 1939’ *The Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol. 51, No. 3 (2005), pp. 347-348.

⁵⁹ TNA PREM 11/1096 ‘Holland to Eden’ (5 Nov., 1956).

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, ‘Menzies to Eden’ (6 Nov., 1956).

and Pakistan over Kashmir to an issue that concerned the Commonwealth as a whole was a source of frustration to Pakistan, and its religious links with Egypt meant that there existed a gulf between the sentiments of the Pakistani populace (more inclined to support Egypt) and its government that saw its military alliance with Britain as essential for its defence. Neither Pakistan, nor India were consulted by Egypt before it nationalised the Suez Canal and neither country agreed with that action once they became aware of it.⁶¹ However, the decision of Britain and France to launch a war of aggression against Egypt provoked a very angry response in New Delhi and Karachi. On November 3rd the UK High Commissioner in Pakistan (Acting) telegraphed the Commonwealth Relations Office (CRO) the details of his meeting with Prime Minister Suhrawardy. The latter informed him that public opinion in Pakistan was that the UK had endangered the safety of all minor countries and that the Baghdad Pact could not survive if one member was guilty of aggression. Suhrawardy also told the Commissioner that if the UK did not accept the UN Mandate then Pakistan would withdraw from the Commonwealth on the grounds that membership would be inconceivable if the organisation was headed by an aggressor nation.⁶² The next day, November 4th, the Commissioner despatched an additional telegram in which he relayed the words of a statement made by Suhrawardy that there was strong feeling in Pakistan that events in Egypt constituted a threat to the entire Muslim world.⁶³

⁶¹ J. Mohan, 'India, Pakistan, Suez and the Commonwealth' *International Journal*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (Summer., 1960), pp. 186-188.

⁶² TNA PREM 11/1096 'UK High Commissioner in Pakistan (Acting) to CRO' (3 Nov., 1956).

⁶³ *Ibid*, UK High Commissioner in Pakistan (Acting) to CRO' (4 Nov., 1956).

Suhrawardy himself wrote to Anthony Eden on November 4th detailing his opinion on Britain's actions in Egypt and the following is of particular significance:

While we understand how acute have been your anxieties over the situation in the Middle East we find ourselves unable to support action the United Kingdom and French Governments have chosen to adopt in that behalf. Egypt's recalcitrance in arriving at a settlement satisfactory to Users being a consideration apart, the present outbreak of hostilities in Middle East is entirely responsibility of Israel...In these circumstances public opinion throughout the world must hold Israel as a wanton aggressor. That the United Kingdom and French Governments...should have seen fit to impose terms on Egypt far more severe than those imposed on Israel is a consideration which must cause deep resentment throughout the Muslim world, to which we in Pakistan cannot remain indifferent. It is tragic that Suez Canal, which intervention was designed to defend has been blocked, not as a result of war between Israel and Egypt, but as a result of Anglo-French aerial attack on Egyptian military targets...we cannot condone or uphold this resort to force, especially when the United Nations is already seized of the matter. I would, therefore, most earnestly request you to reconsider course of action...The first requirement in retrieving situation, to my mind, would be to accept verdict of General Assembly. Refusal to do so would not only shatter the very concept of which United Nations is build, but will render our position, as a member of the Commonwealth and Baghdad Pact, increasingly difficult.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Ibid, Suhrawardy to Eden (4 Nov., 1956).

India's attitude was broadly similar to that of Pakistan. The UK High Commissioner in India (Malcolm Macdonald) conveyed the views of certain Indian political leaders to the British government in a series of telegrams on November 5th. The first briefly conveyed some answers Prime Minister Nehru had given to correspondents including that 'he considered Anthony Eden's explanations of Anglo-French action "totally unconvincing and unsatisfactory"', and that he could not say if the British action had weakened Commonwealth ties. Of particular note was the reference to Nehru's tone being angry when he stated that war was being waged by Britain and France on Egyptian soil when what had happened was that Israel attacked Egypt.⁶⁵ In the second Macdonald recounted two meetings he had with U.N. Dhebar, President of the ruling Congress Party, who told him that Britain's hitherto strong reputation in Asia had been completely destroyed by its actions in Egypt. Moreover, the Commissioner reported that Britain's friends in Egypt were stunned and shocked by its policy, viewing it as contrary to UN and other treaty obligations and likely to defeat British attempts to strengthen its influence in the Middle East. The Commissioner added his own assessment including a warning that there were growing demands that India leave the Commonwealth and that if a difference of opinion with Britain continued the Indian government might not be able to oppose such demands.⁶⁶ A third telegram advised the CRO that in Macdonald's opinion, Dhebar was correct when he predicted a reduction in British influence in Asia, and that 'if our policy is not quickly modified...our reputation in India and beyond will suffer irreparable damage'.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Ibid, 'UK High Commissioner in India to CRO' (5 Nov, 1956, 07:50).

⁶⁶ Ibid, 'UK High Commissioner in India to CRO' (5 Nov., 1956, 09:39).

⁶⁷ Ibid, 'UK High Commissioner in India to CRO' (5 Nov., 1956, 10:26).

The diplomatic exchanges with members of the Commonwealth reveals much in the context of the post-war period. The first is that there appeared to be at least some semblance of recognition that Britain retained a position of influence within the Commonwealth even if that fell short of formal leadership. Suhrawardy referred to the Commonwealth being headed by an aggressor in the context of Pakistan's position within it and Dhebar remarked to Macdonald that prior to Suez Britain had great influence in Asia, more in fact than even the United States.⁶⁸ The second, and more significant in the context of Suez, was that influence or leadership did not mean that Commonwealth countries would simply follow Britain's lead. Suez demonstrated that quite conclusively. What matters here is whether or not there is any evidence to suggest that British leaders should perhaps have behaved differently when it came to action against Egypt and the sentiments of the rest of the Commonwealth.

In diplomatic, economic and military terms the Commonwealth was of paramount importance to Britain and this is reflected in several instances between 1945 and 1956. In 1955 and 1956 agreements were reached to supply Pakistan with five destroyers and loan HMS Chivalrous for four years, and to sell an aircraft carrier to the Indian Navy.⁶⁹ In each case the rationale for reducing the number of available ships to the Royal Navy was the need to ensure that India and Pakistan remained dependant on the UK for the acquisition of military equipment. The British

⁶⁸ Ibid, 'UK High Commissioner in Pakistan (Acting) to CRO' (3 Nov., 1956); 'UK High Commissioner in India to CRO' (5 Nov., 1956, 09:39).

⁶⁹ TNA CAB 131/16, D.C. (55) 27 'Aircraft Carrier for the Indian Navy: Memorandum by the First Lord of the Admiralty' (25 Jul., 1955); CAB 131/16, D.C. (55) 11 'The Loan of HMS Chivalrous to the Royal Pakistan Navy' (20 Oct., 1955); CAB 131/16, 'D.C. (55) 18 'Destroyers for Pakistan' (13 Dec., 1955); CAB 131/17, D.O. (56) 2 'Warships for Pakistan' (3 Feb., 1956).

government spent considerable time in the aftermath of India's independence striving to ensure that it remained in the Commonwealth, a multilateral rather than bilateral effort involving Canada among other nations and a reflection that Britain needed the support of other members of the Commonwealth.⁷⁰ India required especial care because while it agreed to remain a member, it did not consider the Commonwealth to be more important than its own interests and ability to pursue those independently. Nehru for example, while in office, insisted that sovereignty and equality of the member states be direct principles of the Commonwealth itself. While Pakistan repeatedly tried to make Kashmir a topic of Commonwealth discussions, India steadfastly refused to allow its disputes with Pakistan and other members be discussed, let alone settled at the Commonwealth level.⁷¹

There are two examples of the care that Britain took, and in fact had to take, when it came to the sentiments of Commonwealth members. The first was the Anglo-American loan negotiations of 1945/1946, which included an American demand that in exchange for a loan, Britain abandon its system of imperial preference. As the Dominions (Canada, New Zealand, South Africa and Australia) had extensive economic interests in imperial preference it was not practical for Britain to treat the

⁷⁰ H. Mackenzie, 'An Old Dominion and the New Commonwealth: Canadian Policy on the Question of India's Membership, 1947-1949', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (Sep., 1999), pp. 82-112; A.I. Singh, 'Keeping India in the Commonwealth: British Political and Military Aims 1947-1949', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (Jul., 1985), pp. 469-481.

⁷¹ J. Mohan, 'India, Pakistan, Suez and the Commonwealth' *International Journal*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (Summer., 1960), pp. 194-196.

loan issue as a purely bilateral one between itself and the United States.⁷² Accordingly, Britain was compelled to undertake negotiations while dealing with demands for information from Commonwealth members concerned that any agreement signed by Britain that included the abolition of imperial preference would undermine their own interests.⁷³ The second concerned the coronation of Elizabeth II and the precise wording of the Accession Proclamation. Philip Murphy's 2006 article 'Breaking the Bad News: Plans for the Announcement to the Empire of the Death of Elizabeth II and the Proclamation of Her Successor 1952-1967' detailed the complications that arose in 1936 over the attendance of the Irish and South African High Commissioners at the Accession Council and the signing of the Accession Proclamation, and stressed the concern in the Foreign Office that there should be no repeat in 1952.⁷⁴ Of particular importance in 1952 was the official title with which the new monarch would be proclaimed. Norman Brook, the Cabinet Secretary, convened a committee and considered a suggestion by the Indian High Commissioner (Menon) that he could only sign if the phrase 'Head of the Commonwealth' was inserted, on the grounds that India was a Republic and so the Queen was not Head of State.⁷⁵ The Cabinet considered Brook's conclusions and although Churchill objected to the

⁷² F. McKenzie, 'Renegotiating the Special Relationship: The Commonwealth and Anglo-American Economic Discussions, September-December 1945', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (Sep., 1998), pp. 71-72.

⁷³ *Ibid*, pp. 78-79.

⁷⁴ P. Murphy, 'Breaking the Bad News: Plans for the Announcement to the Empire of the Death of Elizabeth II and the Proclamation of Her Successor 1952-1967', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Mar., 2006), pp. 141-143.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, p. 143.

removal of the term 'Imperial Crown' the resulting proclamation was worded in such a way that it took considerable care over Commonwealth sensibilities.⁷⁶

The impact of the Suez Crisis on Britain's Commonwealth relations is a further instance of how British policy seemed to either be unaware of diplomatic reality, or was pursued despite it. Throughout the period 1945-1956 Britain displayed a particular regard for the Commonwealth, and attached great importance to it in economic, diplomatic and military terms. Furthermore, it was an organisation that was theoretically led by Britain and so should perhaps have been an entity that could be relied upon for support. Suez demonstrated that this was patently not the case. Suhrawardy referred to British leadership of the Commonwealth and the Baghdad Pact but made it clear that Pakistan was opposed to Suez and advocated leaving the Commonwealth over the issue. What is so remarkable about Suez, in this context, is how the British government that had taken such care to avoid offending Commonwealth feeling over something as seemingly benign as the precise wording of a Royal Proclamation (that did not even technically apply to several members), could engage in behaviour so egregious that it nearly split the organisation in which it placed such great stock and value. Eden's and Britain's explanations for the attack on Egypt were rejected by Commonwealth members such as India and Pakistan, and as with the United States, any sentimental attachment to Britain, or amenability to cooperating closely with it on the part of the Commonwealth, to say nothing of the notion of British leadership, was insufficient to overcome the shock and anger that the invasion of Egypt had generated in Commonwealth capitals.

⁷⁶ TNA, PREM 11/39, 'C. (52) 22, 'Form of Accession Proclamation: Note by the Cabinet Secretary' (6 Feb., 1952).

Europe

Europe occupies a different position when considering Suez as an instance of the gap between perception and reality. This difference is rooted in two things: the first, that Europe did not occupy as much importance as the United States or the Commonwealth in British foreign policy,⁷⁷ and second, that Europe in fact supported Britain and France over Suez. The European powers were significant in the context of the Cold War, and European integration was an issue in which Britain took a considerable, if somewhat passive and occasionally obstructive, interest. Oliver Wright, UK Ambassador to Denmark and later the Federal Republic of Germany, portrayed British attitudes at the time as contemptuous, based on the view that the European idea would not succeed and was a ludicrous plan.⁷⁸ Winston Churchill was among those who had long advocated a united Europe, seeing it as the best way to ensure peace on the continent, and in the aftermath of the Second World War this concern became even more pressing than it had ever been.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, British policymakers were of the view that Britain did not occupy the same position as its European neighbours. It was the only wartime European belligerent who had not been invaded and or occupied during the war, and saw itself as a world power rather than merely a European one, a reflection of the fact that it retained a large Empire and had

⁷⁷ D. Gowland & A. Turner, *Reluctant Europeans: Britain and European Integration 1945-1998* (Harlow, 2000), p. 26.

⁷⁸ J. Toomey, *Harold Wilson's EEC Application: Inside the Foreign Office* (Dublin, 2007), p. 2.

⁷⁹ TNA CAB 129/48 C. (51) 32 'United Europe: Note by the Prime Minister and Minister of Defence' (29 Nov., 1951), p. 1.

global military and diplomatic commitments.⁸⁰ This was reflected in Britain's response to the various European initiatives between 1945 and 1956.

Labour's Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, has been credited with playing a leading role in the European acceptance of the Economic Recovery Program (Marshal Aid) and the creation of NATO and the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC, now the OECD).⁸¹ However, while Britain was keen to support intergovernmental approaches to European unity, the Labour government rejected the Schuman Plan, which created the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in June 1951.⁸² Herbert Morrison made the famous comment that the Durham Miners would not wear it⁸³ (the Schuman Plan), and the government's objection was to agreeing in principle to any sort of supranational body that would limit the power of Parliament, as a precondition to negotiations.⁸⁴ Although the Conservative Opposition criticised the government in the House of Commons Debate in June 1951, notable for

⁸⁰ Ibid, p. 2.

⁸¹ C. Wigley, 'Bevin, Ernest (1881-1951)' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Online Edition (Oxford, 2008), <http://www.oxforddnb.com.oxfordbrookes.idm.oclc.org/view/article/31872?docPos=1> Accessed 22 October 2014.

⁸² http://www.cvce.eu/obj/treaty_establishing_the_european_coal_and_steel_community_paris_18_april_1951-en-11a21305-941e-49d7-a171-ed5be548cd58.html Accessed 22 October 2014.

⁸³ E. Dell, *The Schuman Plan and the British Abdication of Leadership in Europe* (Oxford, 1995), p. 169.

⁸⁴ Cmd. 7970 'Anglo-French Discussions regarding French proposals for the Western European Coal and Steel Industries' (May-June 1950), p. 8.

the first parliamentary speech given by Edward Heath,⁸⁵ this had all the hallmarks of party politics rather than a deeply-held difference in principle, and once the Conservatives returned to office in 1951 they showed no more willingness than Labour when it came to British participation in supranational institutions.⁸⁶

One of the first things done by Churchill's government in regards to Europe was the issuing of a memorandum by the Prime Minister in late November 1951. Churchill maintained that while he favoured a united Europe, he had never envisaged Britain should become an integral part of a European Federation, nor ever supported such an idea.⁸⁷ Britain should not obstruct European integration but favour it and seek the support of the United States in that endeavour. However, what is particularly striking, although not surprising, about Churchill's memorandum is the listing of Britain's priorities.

Our first object is the unity and the consolidation of the British Commonwealths and what is left of the former British Empire. Our second, the "fraternal association" of the English-speaking world; and third, United Europe, to which we are a separate closely- and specially-related ally and friend.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ H. of C. Debs, Vol. 476, Cols. 1907-2056, 'The Schuman Plan' (26 Jun., 1950).

⁸⁶ J.W. Young, 'Churchill's 'No' to Europe: The 'Rejection' of European Union by Churchill's Post-War Government, 1951-1952', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Dec., 1985), pp. 923-937.

⁸⁷ TNA CAB 129/48 C. (51) 32 'United Europe: Note by the Prime Minister and Minister of Defence' (29 Nov., 1951), p. 1.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, p. 2.

Pro-European Conservatives, most notably Harold Macmillan, attempted to convince the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden to adopt a more positive line on European integration, but were unsuccessful.⁸⁹ Under the leadership of Churchill, and then Eden from 1955, Britain's rebuff to Europe took its most famous forms; the rejection of the European Defence Community, and the Messina-Spaak discussions. As with most areas of scholarly interest, Britain and European defence has seen traditional arguments countered in recent years by revisionist approaches. Sean Greenwood is one scholar who has presented a traditional argument, namely that British hostility to the proposed EDC was a factor in that project's demise in August 1954.⁹⁰ Others such as Kevin Ruane and Eden biographer David Dutton have adopted a revisionist approach that contends that Eden was far from hostile to the EDC, merely feeling that Britain could not participate but that he nevertheless took a positive approach to it.⁹¹ Leaving aside the issue of Eden's personal views on European integration which are dealt with in Chapter Four, the issue that concerns us here is the continuing view that Britain could not participate in the EDC even though it supported its creation. The same cannot be said about the Messina Conference and the negotiations that followed it.

⁸⁹ HMD vol. I (25 Nov., 1951), pp. 118-119; Ibid (29 Nov., 1951), p. 120; Ibid (4 Dec., 1951), p. 121; Ibid (7 Dec., 1951), pp. 122-123.

⁹⁰ S. Greenwood, *Britain and European Cooperation Since 1945* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 42-60.

⁹¹ D. Dutton, *Anthony Eden: A Life and Reputation* (London, 1997), p. 312; K. Ruane, 'Agonizing Reappraisals: Anthony Eden, John Foster Dulles and the Crisis of European Defence, 1953-54', *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (Dec., 2002), pp. 152-153.

More than any other event in the years 1945 to 1956, the discussions at Messina and the Spaak Committee have demonstrated Britain's reluctance to be an active participant in the integration process. The phrase 'missing the boat' epitomises British policy and its consequences in this particular period and reflects a view that Britain might have had more success in Europe over the longer term if it had been a member from the start and thus able to influence its direction and development.⁹² British leaders were initially slow to realise the significance of the Messina discussions. Anthony Eden and R.A. Butler were both scathing in their dismissal of the Messina Conference. Butler claimed that Eden had told him he was bored by the Messina discussions,⁹³ and he himself described them as 'some archaeological excavations in an old Sicilian town that need not concern Britain'.⁹⁴ Even Harold Macmillan was slow to realise the significance of Messina, although as a diary entry mentions Spaak's pessimism as well it is perhaps not too surprising.⁹⁵ The British government was invited to send representatives to participate in the discussions but decided to dispatch Russell Bretherton, a minor official from the Board of Trade, in an observer capacity instead.⁹⁶ Bretherton had a very limited remit and was either asked to leave or withdrawn in November 1955.⁹⁷

⁹² G. Clemens, 'A History of Failures and Miscalculations? Britain's Relationship to the European Communities in the Postwar Era (1945-1973)', *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (2004), p. 223.

⁹³ R. Lamb, *The Failure of the Eden Government* (London, 1987), p. 69.

⁹⁴ A. Moravcsik, *The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht* (New York, 1998), p. 128.

⁹⁵ HMD vol. I (28 Feb., 1956), pp. 539-540.

⁹⁶ TNA CAB 129/76, C.P. (55) 55 'European Integration (Messina Conference): Report by Officials' (29 Jun., 1955), p. 3.

By the spring of 1956 Macmillan and Peter Thorneycroft, President of the Board of Trade, were among those in the government who realised that their earlier scepticism as to the dangers of the Messina discussions might have been an error. Macmillan for instance sent numerous messages to Treasury officials warning that remaining disinterested was not an option. In one such message he argued:

Are we just to sit back and hope for the best? If we do that it may be very dangerous for us; for perhaps Messina will come off after all and that will mean Western Europe dominated in fact by Germany and used as an instrument for the revival of power through economic means.⁹⁸

On 7 July a memorandum signed by the two ministers warned that although it was uncertain whether the efforts of the Six to establish a Common Market would succeed, Britain would be faced with problems in commercial policy if they did and Britain remained outside.⁹⁹ On 27 July Macmillan and Thorneycroft distributed a paper to the cabinet advocating what an inter-departmental report called 'Plan G,' a partial European Free Trade Area.¹⁰⁰ This would cover all commodities except

⁹⁷ H. Young, *This Blessed Plot: Britain and Europe from Churchill to Blair* (Basingstoke, 1999), pp. 71-79.

⁹⁸ TNA T 234/100, 'Macmillan to Bridges' (1 Feb., 1956).

⁹⁹ TNA CAB 129/82, C.P. (56) 172 'Organisation for European Economic Co-operation and Tariffs: Memorandum by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the President of the Board of Trade' (7 Jul., 1956), p. 1.

¹⁰⁰ TNA CAB 129/82, E.I. (56) 14 'United Kingdom Initiative in Europe: Plan G: Interim Report by Officials' (27 Jul., 1956), pp. 1-15.

foodstuffs and over a ten-year period tariffs, protective quotas, export controls, and export subsidies would be progressively abolished.¹⁰¹ The attraction of this plan was that it would enable Britain to retain its trading links with the Commonwealth while not being discriminated against by the Six.¹⁰²

Plan G has had a mixed reputation among historians when considering its motives in the context of the Messina discussions. Sean Greenwood portrayed it as an attempt to sabotage the Common Market discussions,¹⁰³ while Martin Schaad argued that if sabotage was the purpose, then one of several alternative plans would have been adopted.¹⁰⁴ Whether or not it was designed to scupper the Common Market, the British government did not initially accept the plan. Lord Home in his capacity as Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations urged caution in September 1956:

I must warn my colleagues that Plan G could lead to a permanent loosening of the Commonwealth bonds and through that to a weakening of the United Kingdom as a world Power, and this is an important consideration we must take into account even if Commonwealth governments do not press it upon us at this stage.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ TNA CAB 129/83, C.P. (56) 208 'Plan G: Memorandum by the Chancellor of the Exchequer' (11 Sep., 1956), p. 3.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ S. Greenwood, *Britain and European Cooperation since 1945* (Oxford, 1992), p. 70.

¹⁰⁴ M. Schaad, 'Plan G- A 'Counterblast'? British Policy Towards the Messina Countries, 1956', *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (1998), pp. 39-60.

¹⁰⁵ TNA CAB 129/83, C.P. (56) 207 'Plan G and the Commonwealth: Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations' (7 Sep., 1956), p. 1.

Alan Milward, and several other historians who have referenced his work, asserted that the Suez Crisis was responsible for the decision of the government to adopt Plan G in November 1956. He used unpublished notes taken by the then Permanent Secretary to the Cabinet, Sir Norman Brook, which included the words of Lord Salisbury to the effect that Suez had made him revise his previous opposition to Plan G. Milward wrote that Salisbury had opposed Plan G on the grounds that it would weaken Britain's imperial trading links but that Suez had convinced him that these were not as strong as he had thought and that a slight move towards Europe was necessary.¹⁰⁶ Relying on a source that is difficult to access and verify is course a risk but there is other evidence to support both the specifics of the source Milward used, and the more general point that he made. On 13 November Lords Salisbury and Kilmuir remarked in Cabinet that:

In earlier discussion, they had made some reservations. The support for these proposals which had since been publicly expressed both at home and overseas, taken in combination with recent international developments, had gone far to dispel the doubts they had previously entertained.¹⁰⁷

The cabinet minutes as published do not give as much detail as which specific objections Salisbury and Kilmuir had expressed, but, the reference to a change of view and international developments would seem to support Milward's account of

¹⁰⁶ A. Milward, *The United Kingdom and the European Community Volume I: The Rise and Fall of a National Strategy 1946-2963* (London, 2002), p. 252.

¹⁰⁷ TNA CAB 128/30, C.M. (56) 83 'Conclusions of a Meeting of the Cabinet' (13 Nov., 1956), p. 4.

Brook's papers. This was not the first time that Suez and Plan G had been considered together by the cabinet. On 18 September the cabinet engaged in a lengthy discussion of Macmillan and Thorneycroft's proposals and the summation includes the following:

The Cabinet-...Agreed that a final decision on whether to agree with these proposals must now depend on the course of the Suez Canal dispute and that, in any even, no final decision could be taken until there had been further opportunity for reflection on the points made in the Cabinet's discussion and the views of other Commonwealth countries were known.¹⁰⁸

Further evidence is to be found in both the account of the French Ambassador on the debate on Plan G in the House of Commons on 26 November, and the debate itself. Chauvel observed the debate and cabled Pineau that he felt recent events (Suez) were a factor in the proposals for a partial free trade area.¹⁰⁹ Macmillan's speech that opened the debate did not contain anything that this author can see would prompt such a comment, however, the response of Harold Wilson, then Shadow Chancellor, does. The following could explain Chauvel's comment:

I do not think any hon. Member opposite can deny that what Western Europe is primarily interested in today is oil. The right hon. Gentleman will not, I am sure, seek to deny his share of the responsibility in the desperate situation which has

¹⁰⁸ TNA CAB 128/30, C.M. (56) 66 'Conclusions of a Meeting of the Cabinet' (18 Sep., 1956), p. 7.

¹⁰⁹ DDF 1956 Tome. III, 'Chauvel to Pineau' (29 Nov., 1956), pp. 426-427. Translated by Dan Whyman.

been forced on Western Europe...The first thing I want to say about it is that it is not in any way a panacea for the economic ills either of this country or of Western Europe.¹¹⁰

A further passage that may have resonated with the French Ambassador is the following from Geoffrey Rippon's contribution to the debate:

One positive result of the Suez crisis is that it has given a new impetus to European co-operation. I think it is a fact of the highest significance that the interruption of the flow of oil, which is a common threat, is being met by concerted action. Some years ago, President Auriol of France said: "Europe must unite herself if she wishes to recover and live, and if she does not want American assistance to be a gesture without future or a humiliating charity". I think that recent events have given emphasis to his words...The nations of Europe today are learning the lesson that they must stand together in defence of their common interest, in the last resort, nobody else will be prepared to do it for them.¹¹¹

Europe was never considered as important a geopolitical area as were the United States and the Empire/Commonwealth, the two circles that were seen as giving Britain a world role rather than a merely European one. Yet, at Suez, it was the circle that Britain by turns dismissed and even attempted to harass that was supportive of its actions in Egypt. European nations had accepted US aid, were members of NATO and thus allies of the US, yet, there was a sense in Europe that the new bipolar world order

¹¹⁰ H. of C. Debs, Vol. 561, Cols. 67-68, 'European Trade Policy' (26 Nov., 1956).

¹¹¹ Ibid, Col. 142.

dominated by the US and USSR did not sufficiently take European concerns and interests into account.¹¹² In defending their colonial interests in Egypt, Britain and France were seen as defending European values as a whole, a view borne out by the diplomatic cables. The former Dutch Prime Minister, Pieter Gerbrandy, cabled Eden to the effect that he felt Britain had been betrayed by the US, which was described as having torpedoed a sound action and pursued an incomprehensible policy.¹¹³ Konrad Adenauer responded to Eden's gratitude for German support by stating that one stands by one's friends¹¹⁴ and was reported by the Foreign Office to have spoken to Mollet of the danger of the superpowers dealing with each other over the heads of the European powers.¹¹⁵ In fact, the French account of the Adenauer/Mollet meeting quotes the German Chancellor as blaming the US for the Suez Crisis in addition to his views on the extent to which it and the USSR considered European interests.¹¹⁶

Suez was predominately a diplomatic defeat for Britain and one that exposed the limits of its influence and significance globally. The Three Circles Policy was predicated on the belief that as Britain occupied a special position at the very centre, and was in effect the common link between them, it could use that to influence policy to its benefit. The pursuit of power by proxy with the United States is an example of

¹¹² P. Hansen, 'European Integration, European Identity and the Colonial Connection', *European Journal of Social Theory*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (2002), pp. 490-493.

¹¹³ TNA PREM 11/2002, Gerbrandy to Eden (4 Jan., 1957).

¹¹⁴ TNA PREM 11/1143, Adenauer to Eden (22 Nov., 1956).

¹¹⁵ TNA PREM 11/1143, Jebb to Foreign Office (6 Nov., 1956).

¹¹⁶ Documents Diplomatiques Francais, 1956 Vol. III, 24 Oct-31 Dec, 'Conversation Between Adenauer and Mollet' (6 Nov., 1956), Translated by Dan Whyman.

this. In the event, the two circles in which it placed the most importance were the ones that deserted it in Egypt. Its perceived leadership of the Commonwealth did not prevent outrage, particularly in India and Pakistan, both of whom considered leaving the organisation itself. The final blow was dealt by the United States and the comment by President Eisenhower that Britain was not as indispensable as it believed,¹¹⁷ provides compelling evidence that in launching an attack on Egypt in the belief that no US opposition would follow, UK perceptions were indeed lagging far behind reality. It is now necessary to consider the second part of this argument; the British Armed Forces at Suez.

Operation Musketeer

The second aspect of the Suez Crisis as an instance of perception versus reality concerns the British armed forces. The crisis as a whole is treated as a failure, disaster and humiliation for Britain, yet historians do not seem to agree when it comes to Operation Musketeer, the Anglo-French attack on and invasion of Egypt. Major Patrick Neke, in a 1991 Monograph for the School of Advanced Military Studies in Fort Leavenworth considered it to be a failure, while M.H Coles, writing in the *Naval War College Review* fifteen years later took the view that it was militarily sound, but undermined by political interference.¹¹⁸ Roy Fullick and Geoffrey Powell take a

¹¹⁷ FRUS, 1955-1957 Volume XVI, Doc. 419 'Memorandum of a Conference with the President' (30 Oct., 1956).

¹¹⁸ Major P.L. Neke, 'Operation Musketeer- The End of Empire: A Study of Organizational Failure in Combined Operations', *School of Advanced Military Studies: United States Army Command and General Staff College* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 1991); M.H. Coles, 'Suez 1956: A Successful Naval

slightly more nuanced view in so far as they consider Musketeer a failure, but add that given the state of the armed forces it could not possibly have succeeded.¹¹⁹

This author takes the view that in order to judge Operation Musketeer it is first necessary to understand what it was supposed to accomplish, and to consider whether it is evaluated on military terms alone, or in conjunction with the diplomatic side of the equation. If the aim was simply to retake the Canal then it is perhaps fair to conclude that if diplomacy had not intervened then, based on the performance of the Army, Navy and RAF in the few days in which they were actively engaged against Nasser's forces, the Canal would have been retaken. The Egyptian Air Force and Navy were neutralised quickly and effectively by their Anglo-French counterparts, and while the land force encountered resistance, the poor terrain had aided this: in any case the Egyptians were being pushed back by the time of the ceasefire.

In trying to determine the success or failure of Musketeer it is pertinent to ask the following question: Was the military operation a failure because of diplomatic intervention by the United States, or was said intervention only possible and effective because the British armed forces were not able to retake the Canal quickly enough for it to be forestalled?

Operation Compromised by Inept Political Leadership', *Naval War College Review*, Vol. 59, No. 4 (Autumn, 2006), pp. 100-118.

¹¹⁹ R. Fullick & G. Powell, *Suez: The Double War* (Barnsley, 2006).

What Did the Government Require the Armed Forces to Do?

The precise aim of Eden's government has been a source of controversy since the immediate end of the crisis itself. Officially, which is to say publicly, Britain and France were determined to regain control of the Canal so as to maintain freedom of passage as enshrined in Article One of the 1888 Convention of Constantinople.¹²⁰ The Cabinet discussions make clear that in fact there were two possible, and in military terms contradictory, objectives: the retaking of the Suez Canal, and the removal from power of Colonel Nasser. Anthony Nutting described Eden's pronouncement in the immediate aftermath of the nationalisation that he wished to topple Nasser.¹²¹ Howard Dooley asserted that regime change in Egypt was a cornerstone of British policy from 1955,¹²² and both Anthony Eden in a telegram to Eisenhower, and Harold Macmillan in a memorandum, advocated military action to remove Nasser.¹²³

In his report on Operation Musketeer, the commander of the 2nd British Corps, General Stockwell, affirmed the need for consistent political direction and stated that

¹²⁰Convention of Constantinople, 29th October 1888 <http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/dept/polsciwb/brianl/docs/1888ConstantinopleConventionon.pdf> accessed 30 December 2014.

¹²¹ A. Nutting, *No End of a Lesson: The Story of Suez* (London, 1967), pp. 34-35.

¹²² H.J. Dooley, 'Great Britain's 'Last Battle' in the Middle East: Notes on Cabinet Planning During the Suez Crisis of 1956', *The International History Review*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (1989), pp. 489-490.

¹²³ TNA, PREM 11/1098, 'Eden to Eisenhower' (5 Aug., 1956); CAB 134/1217, E.C. (56) 9 'Action Against Egypt: Note by the Chancellor of the Exchequer' (7 Aug., 1956), pp. 27-29.

the planning suffered from the lack thereof.¹²⁴ The officers in charge of the military operation were aware that the government desired regime change and were obliged to spend several months seeking clarification that did not arrive until 25 September.¹²⁵ This clarification did not explicitly advocate regime change and the final, approved version of Operation Musketeer envisaged a landing at Port Said (Alexandria would have been a better site if an attack on Cairo were an objective),¹²⁶ suggesting that ultimately, the government settled for retaking the canal rather than changing the Egyptian government.¹²⁷ At the Cabinet meeting called in response to the nationalisation of the Canal, Eden asked the First Sea Lord, Lord Mountbatten, what was available for an immediate military response. Although British forces in the Mediterranean included a substantial surface force of warships and 1200 Royal Marine Commandos in Cyprus that could have blocked the canal, the view of General Templer, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, was that 1200 lightly armed commandos could not hold ground against armoured formations.¹²⁸ The Chiefs of

¹²⁴ TNA WO 288/79, 'Report by Commander 2 (BR) Corps on Operation "Musketeer": Annex B Lessons and Recommendations' (1 Feb., 1957), p. 2.

¹²⁵ TNA CAB 134/1217, E.C. (56) 5 'Action Against Egypt –Outline Plan: Memorandum by the Chiefs of Staff' (16 Aug., 1956), p. 2.

¹²⁶ R. Fullick & G. Powell, *Suez* (2006), p. 18.

¹²⁷ TNA CAB 134/1217, E.C. (56) 53 'Draft Political Directive to the Allied Commander in Chief' (25 Sep., 1956), pp. 1-6.

¹²⁸ D.R. Thorpe, *Eden: The Life and Times of Anthony Eden, First Earl of Avon, 1897-1977* (London, 2004), pp. 566-567.

Staff formally stated in August that a commando and or parachute assault on the canal would not be feasible until mid-September at the earliest.¹²⁹

Eden's enquiry might, of course, have been simply a question asked by a politician with little to no idea of the state of his country's military needing to formulate a response and asking a senior commander. However, when we examine the 1956 Statement on Defence we can see that in fact, an immediate military response was precisely what the armed forces were expected to be able to do. The document itself ran thus:

We must, in the military field, put the emphasis on forces which are flexible, mobile, well-trained, well-equipped and versatile. They must be ready for immediate action; we can no longer rely on meeting our needs for men or munitions by mobilising reserves of untrained manpower or of industrial capacity...The forces required to support our present strategy have, therefore, four roles to fulfil...(iii) They must be capable of dealing with outbreaks of limited war should they occur.¹³⁰

It can be argued that the Statement on Defence is primarily a political document that reflects more the desired capabilities of the armed forces than their actual capabilities. But as it is an official paper it represents government policy and therefore the roles expected of the service branches. Eden's enquiry to Mountbatten suggests that the

¹²⁹ TNA CAB 134/1217, E.C. (56) 5 'Action Against Egypt –Outline Plan: Memorandum by the Chiefs of Staff' (16 Aug., 1956), p. 4.

¹³⁰ Cmnd. 9691, 'Statement on Defence 1956' (Feb., 1956), pp. 4-5.

government expected the Army, Navy and RAF to be able to quickly try to retake the Canal. Moreover, there is the added, diplomatic dimension. In purely military terms the British armed forces were more than capable of retaking the canal. The relative ease with which the Egyptian Navy and Air Force were neutralised, and the performance of the landing force in the limited time it was engaged, suggest that the Egyptian military would not have been strong enough to prevent British reoccupation.¹³¹ Whether or not it would have been feasible to hold onto the canal indefinitely is another matter, and not within the purview of this study. What is relevant is that the requirement was not simply to retake the canal, but to do so quickly. The balance of international opinion at the start of the crisis was favourable to Britain and France.¹³² However, as time went on and Egypt was able to increasingly demonstrate that its pilots were capable of running the canal with no threat to international freedom of passage, world opinion began to change.¹³³ It was this requirement for speed that the armed forces were unable to meet.

¹³¹ R. Fullick & G. Powell, *Suez* (2006), pp. 109-166; Major P.L. Nemy, 'Operation Musketeer- The End of Empire: A Study of Organizational Failure in Combined Operations', *School of Advanced Military Studies: United States Army Command and General Staff College* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 1991), p. 2.

¹³² FRUS, 1955-1957 Volume XVI, Doc. 72 'Memorandum of Discussion at the 292nd Meeting of the National Security Council' (9 Aug., 1956).

¹³³ M.H. Coles, 'Suez 1956: A Successful Naval Operation Compromised by Inept Political Leadership', *Naval War College Review*, Vol. 59, No. 4 (Autumn, 2006), p. 107.

Why Could This Not Be Accomplished?

The reason that the Armed Forces were unable to retake the Canal quickly was because their state of readiness in no way reflected that detailed in the 1956 Statement on Defence. At the onset of the Crisis Britain had more than 770,000 men and women in uniform, and the defence budget in 1956 was more than double that of only eight years before, a legacy of the rearmament programme launched in response to the outbreak of the Korean War.¹³⁴ The British contribution to the Anglo-French taskforce included 45,000 troops, 31 RAF and 13 Fleet Air Arm squadrons, and more than 200 naval vessels including five aircraft carriers.¹³⁵ It took several months for that force to be built up and there was no question of an attack on the Canal Zone before mid-September. There are two reasons for this: Military doctrine beyond the control of the government, and the state of the services in terms of training and equipment which were. As regards military doctrine, British planners had learned certain lessons from the experiences of the Second World War. The first was that lightly armed assault troops could not hold ground when opposed by numerically superior opponents in possession of armour. This was a direct legacy not only of Operation Market Garden (the Allies' attempt to punch through German lines at Arnhem), but also of the German airborne invasion of Crete in 1941.¹³⁶ The German

¹³⁴ Cmnd. 9691, 'Statement on Defence 1956' (Feb., 1956), p. 12; Cmd. 7327, 'Statement Relating to Defence 1948' (Feb., 1948), p. 4.

¹³⁵ TNA CAB 134/1217, E.C. (56) 5 'Action Against Egypt – Outline Plan: Memorandum by the Chiefs of Staff' (5 Aug., 1956), Appendix A.

¹³⁶ R. Fullick & G. Powell, *Suez* (2006), p. 20.

parachute assault was successful but sustained such heavy casualties that the Wehrmacht refused to use them in such a manner again. The British First Airborne Division was trapped in Arnhem by German Panzer units and forced to break out having taken heavy casualties.¹³⁷ The second important lesson taken from the two World Wars was that a successful naval invasion required a massive build-up of forces including air and naval power deployed in support of the land forces. The raid on Dieppe in 1940 and the Gallipoli Campaign of the First World War, both disasters, had made this clear, as had the successful invasion of Normandy in June 1944.

The second reason for the inability of the armed forces to retake immediately the Canal and for the long period of build-up is their general state of readiness in the summer of 1956. The 1956 Statement had this to say on the expected roles of the Army and the Royal Navy:

The Army will be primarily organised so that it can bring force to bear quickly in cold or limited war...Strategic reserves must be maintained and must be capable of rapid transportation to the scene of trouble for cold or limited war tasks...In limited war we plan to make immediately available in any part of the world a force of aircraft carriers equipped with modern aircraft and supplemented by cruisers and escorts.¹³⁸

The 1955 Statement on Defence contained this statement:

¹³⁷ S. Badsey, *Arnhem 1944: Operation Market Garden* (London, 1993).

¹³⁸ Cmnd. 9691, 'Statement on Defence 1956' (Feb., 1956), pp. 7-9.

Our reduced commitments in Trieste, Korea and the Middle East now make it possible to rebuild a strategic reserve of land forces in this country. Coupled with the mobility of the Navy and increasing use of air transport, this will greatly increase our ability to exercise our world-wide responsibilities effectively and economically.¹³⁹

Despite the sentiments in the two Statements the services were not in the position to immediately support a land force engaged in a limited war. Leaving aside for a moment the whole British land contingent for Musketeer and focussing instead on the much smaller initial assault force envisaged by Eden and Mountbatten, the Royal Navy Amphibious Squadron had only the capacity to move part of the Commando Brigade.¹⁴⁰ Moreover, there was no available hospital ship to treat any wounded, and the RAF was in a similar position to the Navy in that it had only enough transport aircraft to move a fraction of the Parachute Brigade.¹⁴¹ Beyond transportation there were further impediments to a fast attack to retake the Canal. A large proportion of the Army's frontline units were in Germany as part of the British Army of the Rhine (BAOR), and the elite assault forces, the Royal Marine Commandos, and the

¹³⁹ Cmd. 9391 'Statement on Defence 1955' (Feb., 1955), p. 6.

¹⁴⁰ TNA WO 288/79, 'Report by the Commander 2 (BR) Corps on Operation "Musketeer": Annex 'B' Lessons and Recommendations' (1 Feb., 1957), p. 4.

¹⁴¹ R. Fullick & G. Powell, *Suez* (2006), p. 35.

Parachute Brigade were being used in Cyprus as auxiliary infantry,¹⁴² with the latter in the position of not having done any parachute training in around eleven months.¹⁴³

To return to the issue of the overall force for Operation Musketeer, Britain's wartime experiences mandated the build up of a force large enough to make the initial landing, establish and hold a beachhead, and break out towards the overall objective, while supported by naval vessels and aircraft for air superiority and ground attack. It took the Services several months to put together the force designated for Operation Musketeer. The problems faced by the planners, apart from political interference,¹⁴⁴ were similar to those that precluded the commando-and-parachute raid desired by Eden; inadequate training, lack of transportation, and the distances involved. We have already noted the fact that the Royal Navy Amphibious Squadron could not move the entire Commando Brigade at once, but the problem went much further than that. There was no headquarters ship that could service a formation larger than a Brigade,¹⁴⁴ and even when the entire fleet of Bustard Landing Ship Tanks (LSTs) were mobilised, it was necessary to requisition 24 private liners and 50 merchant

¹⁴² Major P.L. Nemy, 'Operation Musketeer- The End of Empire: A Study of Organizational Failure in Combined Operations', *School of Advanced Military Studies: United States Army Command and General Staff College* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 1991), p. 104.

¹⁴³ M.H. Coles, 'Suez 1956: A Successful Naval Operation Compromised by Inept Political Leadership', *Naval War College Review*, Vol. 59, No. 4 (Autumn, 2006), p. 102.

¹⁴⁴ TNA WO 288/79 'Report by the Commander 2 (BR) Corps on Operation "Musketeer": Annex 'B' Lessons and Recommendations' (1 Feb., 1957), p. 4.

ships.¹⁴⁵ The RAF was in a similar position and the Joint Planning Staff recommended that civilian BOAC and other charter aircraft be requisitioned.¹⁴⁶

The lack of transportation was one particularly acute problem. The other was the question of where the taskforce should be gathered and from where it should set off to the Canal Zone. The nearest British facilities were on Cyprus but neither the airfields nor the ports had the capacity for a taskforce the size of Operation Musketeer. Bases in Libya and Jordan were ruled out on the grounds that the respective states would not allow British forces to strike another Arab country from their territory. Therefore the nearest base big enough to accommodate the forces was Malta, which was nearly 1200 nautical miles from Port Said. RAF units could use airfields on Cyprus but they would have been operating at their maximum range reducing their effectiveness in an air superiority or ground-attack role.¹⁴⁷ The only recourse for adequate air cover was therefore the build up of a large carrier force and at the onset of the crisis the Navy only had one carrier battle group, based on HMS *Eagle*, in the Mediterranean. It was therefore necessary to reinforce *Eagle* with four of its older and smaller contemporaries HMS *Bulwark*, HMS *Albion*, HMS *Theseus*, and HMS *Ocean*, the latter two being of World War Two vintage and converted to troop

¹⁴⁵ TNA CAB 134/1217, 'E.C. (56) 4 'Minutes Cabinet Egypt Committee 4th Meeting' (30 Jul., 1956), p. 2; CAB 134/1217, E.C. (56) 12 'Minutes Cabinet Egypt Committee 12th Meeting' (9 Aug., 1956), pp. 2-3.

¹⁴⁶ R. Fullick & G. Powell, *Suez* (2006), p. 35.

¹⁴⁷ M.H. Coles, 'Suez 1956: A Successful Naval Operation Compromised by Inept Political Leadership', *Naval War College Review*, Vol. 59, No. 4 (Autumn, 2006), p. 104.

carrying.¹⁴⁸ In any case it was August before *Theseus* and *Ocean* were able to set sail for the Mediterranean.

It is worth reiterating before we continue to an examination of why there were such discrepancies between the Statements on Defence and the actual state of the armed forces in July 1956, the necessity for Britain of being able to retake the canal quickly. The statements made by Anglo-American observers and by participants such as Macmillan,¹⁴⁹ attest to the intention of Eden's government to use force rather than diplomacy, as does the collusion at Sèvres. The deal reached on October 24th was intended to provide a pretext for attacking Egypt.¹⁵⁰

Why Were the Armed Forces in this State?

At the conclusion of the Second World War Britain had approximately five million men and women under arms with another four million in supply and production.¹⁵¹ In financial terms, the budget for the Armed Forces in 1946 was approximately £1,667,000,000.¹⁵² These figures represented the peak of the wartime economy and were unsustainable once the war had ended. The Labour Government of Clement

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, pp. 104-105.

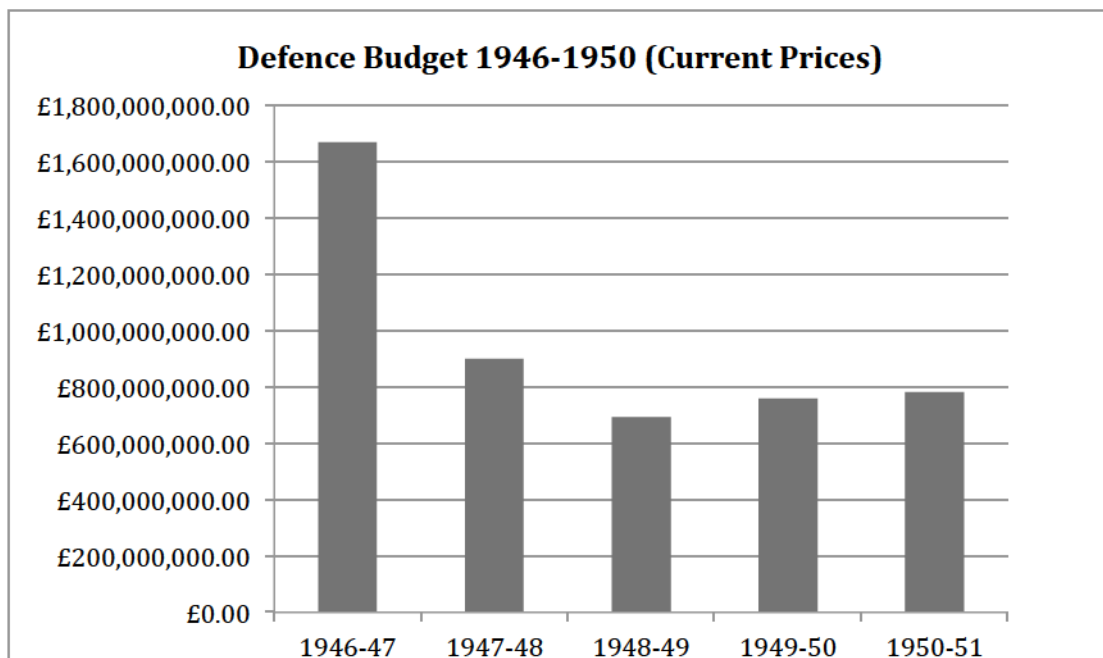
¹⁴⁹ HMD vol. I (30 Jul., 1956), pp. 579-580.

¹⁵⁰ A. Shlaim, 'The Protocol of Sèvres, 1956: Anatomy of a War Plot', *International Affairs*, Vol. 73, No. 3 (Jul., 1997), p. 511.

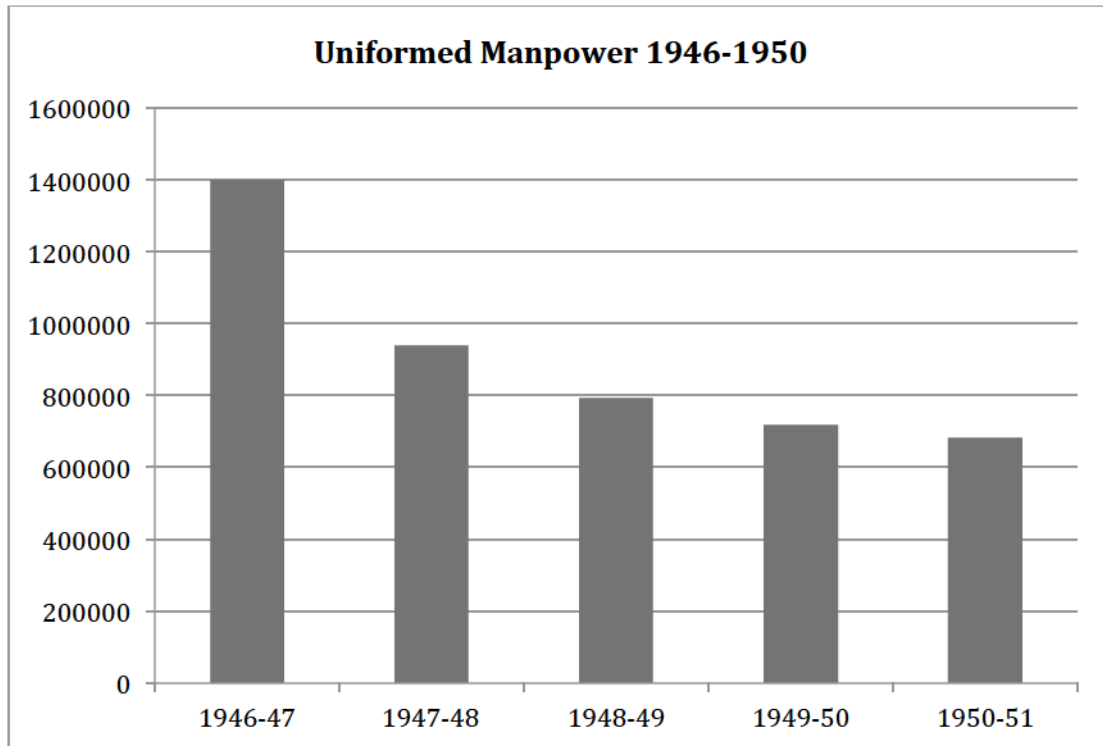
¹⁵¹ Cmd. 6832, 'Strength and Casualties of the Armed Forces and Auxiliary Services of the United Kingdom 1939-1945 (Strength and Casualties) (June., 1946), pp. 4-5.

¹⁵² Cmd. 6743, 'Statement Relating to Defence 1946' (Feb., 1946), p. 7.

Attlee that took office in July 1945 had an ambitious social program that made high levels of defence spending (18.8% of the national income) impossible, and Britain was, in any case, virtually bankrupt and dependent on financial aid from the United States.¹⁵³ Between 1946 and 1950 the size and cost of the Armed Services were gradually reduced.



¹⁵³ H. Mackenzie, 'Justice Denied: The Anglo-American Loan Negotiations of 1945,' *Canadian Review of American Studies*, Vol. 26 No. 1 (Winter 1996), pp. 79-110; R. Owendale, *British Defence Policy Since 1945* (Manchester, 1994), p. 18.



As the two graphs indicate, both the defence budget and the uniformed manpower numbers were roughly halved between January 1947 when they were at £1600 Million¹⁵⁴ and 1.4 Million¹⁵⁵ respectively, and April 1950 when they were approximately £781 Million¹⁵⁶ and 720,000.¹⁵⁷ While the manpower (uniformed) went down consistently in this period, the budget in fact reached its lowest point in 1948 and gradually increased each year thereafter. There were several reasons for this, the most prominent of which was an increased focus on equipment and research after 1949, particularly in 1950/1951.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁴ Cmd. 6743, 'Statement Relating to Defence 1946' (Feb., 1946), p. 7.

¹⁵⁵ Cmd. 7042, 'Statement Relating to Defence 1947' (Feb., 1947), p. 6.

¹⁵⁶ Cmd. 7895, 'Statement on Defence 1950' (Mar., 1950), p. 3.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, Annex II.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 3.

The outbreak of the Korean War on 25 June 1950 saw an end to the period of defence reductions. The 1951 Statement on Defence announced a three-year rearmament program projected to cost as much as £4700 Million.¹⁵⁹ The same document stressed that almost half of the projected expenditure would be on production, and included the following.

As regards equipment, the Forces have, for the last five years lived largely on their stocks; and there is now urgent need of an increased production programme concentrated mainly on increasing their fighting strength...We shall introduce new types of equipment as rapidly as possible...Combat vehicles of new design will be introduced, and there will be notable improvements in the supply of new anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons and equipment...We shall also see that the Services have the stores, clothing and equipment required to enable them to be ready for operations immediately upon mobilisation.¹⁶⁰

The statements above stand in marked contrast to the situation in which the Services found themselves in the summer and autumn of 1956. The post-crisis report written by the commander of the 2nd Corps devoted considerable time to the lack of operational readiness on the part of the units involved in Operation Musketeer, and

¹⁵⁹ Cmd. 8146, 'Defence Programme: Statement Made By the Prime Minister in the House of Commons on Monday, 29 January, 1951' (Jan., 1951), p. 6.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 5.

made particular reference to the Battalion Anti Tank gun.¹⁶¹ The apparent reason for this is to be found in the 1952 Statement which asserted, 'since the programme was started the economic position has seriously deteriorated and severe measures have had to be taken in the civil sector of the economy...It also means the programme must take more than three years to achieve.'¹⁶² The documents for 1953 and 1954 referred back to this, stating that even though in 1952 the government had concluded that the rearmament programme would have to be extended by one year to completion in March 1955, further study throughout 1952/1953 had demonstrated that even this was beyond the resources of the country, and that the programme would have to be spread over an even longer period.¹⁶³

The references to the economy are concerned with Britain's balance of payments deficit and the level of gold reserves. Butler as Chancellor of the Exchequer after 1951 reduced public spending and scaled back the rearmament programme launched by the Labour Government in 1950 on the grounds that it was too expensive.¹⁶⁴ The

¹⁶¹ TNA WO 288/79, 'Report by Commander 2 (BR) Corps on Operation "Musketeer": Annex 'B' Lessons and Recommendations' (Feb., 1957), p. 3.

¹⁶² Cmnd. 8475, 'Statement on Defence 1952' (Feb., 1952), p. 9.

¹⁶³ Cmd. 8768, 'Statement on Defence 1953' (Feb., 1953), p. 4; Cmd. 9075, 'Statement on Defence 1954' (Feb., 1954), p. 4.

¹⁶⁴ A. Cairncross, 'Economic Policy and Performance, 1945-1964', in R. Floud & D. McCloskey (eds), *The Economic History of Britain Since 1700: Volume III 1939-1992* (2nd Edition) (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 32-66; P. Burnham, 'Britain's External Economic Policy in the Early 1950s: The Historical Significance of Operation Robot', *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (2000), pp. 379-408; S. Kelly, 'Ministers Matter: Gaitskell and Butler at Odds Over Convertibility, 1950-52', *Contemporary British History*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (Winter, 2000), pp. 27-53.

1954 Statement contained a further paragraph of relevance and significance here, particularly with regard to the equipment in use during the Suez Crisis:

No substantial addition will be made to mobilisation equipment and war reserve stocks of stores and ammunition but the balance of items within existing stocks will be improved.¹⁶⁵

An additional factor in the lack of transportation equipment was the decision of the government throughout 1955 and 1956 to sell or loan naval equipment to Commonwealth and European allies.¹⁶⁶ In July 1955 the Majestic Class Aircraft Carrier HMS *Majestic* was sold to Australia, several others in that class and others were sold to other NATO or Commonwealth allies, and in February 1956 an agreement was reached whereby five destroyers were sold to Pakistan for between £1 Million to £1.5 Million. The statement made by the First Lord of the Admiralty concerning the Destroyers deal with Pakistan is particularly illuminating in this respect:

¹⁶⁵ Cmd. 9075, 'Statement on Defence 1954' (Feb., 1954), p. 15.

¹⁶⁶ TNA, CAB 131/16, D.C. (55) 2 'The Loan of a Cruiser (H.M.S. Royalist) to the Royal New Zealand Navy: Memorandum by the First Lord of the Admiralty' (16 Apr., 1955); CAB 131/16, D.C. (55) 23 'Third Destroyer for Egypt: Memorandum by the First Lord of the Admiralty' (21 Jul., 1955); CAB 131/16, D.C. (55) 27 'Aircraft Carrier for the Indian Navy: Memorandum by the First Lord of the Admiralty' (26 Jul., 1955), pp. 1-2; CAB 131/16, D.O. (55) 11 'The Loan of H.M.S. Chivalrous to the Royal Pakistan Navy' (19 Oct., 1955), p. 10; CAB 131/16, D.O. (55) 14 'Submarines on Loan to the French' (29 Sep., 1955), p. 5; CAB 131/17, D.O. (56) 4 'Loan of Ships to NATO Countries' (2 Mar., 1956), pp. 2-3.

The Pakistan Government had now asked for two destroyers which had already been modernised to avoid the delay in waiting for the older destroyers to be refitted. Two modernised destroyers...could be made available but their transfer would reduce the number of ships in the Royal Navy's operational reserve.¹⁶⁷

Despite the risk to the size of the fleet's operational reserve the Cabinet decided that the proposed sale should go ahead.¹⁶⁸ It would be ahistorical to accuse the government of a mistake based solely on hindsight, yet it is undeniable that one of the biggest obstacles to the quick retaking of the Canal by Anglo-French forces was the lack of transport capacity. Both destroyers and aircraft carriers could be and were used for troop carrying; HMS *Theseus* and HMS *Ocean* were so utilised during the Crisis, and it does raise the question of how events might have gone had several weeks and months not had to be spent requisitioning private liners for use by the Navy.

Conclusion

Earlier in this chapter the question was posed whether Britain's defeat at Suez was the result of diplomatic opposition preventing the successful conclusion of a military operation, or whether the inability of the armed forces to quickly retake the canal allowed time for the marshalling of sufficient diplomatic opposition. This author would conclude that it was a combination of both. Eden's government reached a very quick decision to pursue military rather than diplomatic options to regain control of the Suez Canal, motivated, in part, by its desire to depose Nasser and demonstrate that

¹⁶⁷ TNA, CAB 131/17, D.O. (56) 2 'Warships for Pakistan' (3 Feb., 1956), pp. 11-12.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

Britain was still a power of the first rank. It made little attempt to hide this from its principal ally, the United States, and seemed to misinterpret US policy and the actions of Eisenhower and Dulles, neither of whom were enamoured of the Egyptian dictator, but both of whom opposed a war in the Middle East.

British success therefore depended on two things: either the diplomatic acquiescence, if not active support, of the US for military action, or, retaking the Canal and possibly toppling Nasser before US opposition could become so effective that it forced Britain to halt. Neither of these conditions was realised and when we delve more deeply into Britain's diplomatic and military position in the summer of 1956 it is clear why the Suez Crisis was an example of perception not matching objective reality. British defence policy had reduced the Armed Forces to the point where their capabilities bore little resemblance to what was expected and needed of them in Egypt. Furthermore, Britain's diplomatic aims were rendered ineffective by the fact that it did not possess the influence in Washington that it believed. The Empire and Commonwealth provided little in the way of counterbalance, while European opinion was not seen as particularly important in Westminster and Whitehall. Eisenhower's words to his aides about Britain's value as an ally if it behaved in a certain way are one such indicator but there were numerous instances between 1945 and 1956 that suggested British influence over US policy was illusory at best.

Chapter III: The Suez Crisis and British Policy Towards the European Communities: Problems of Reappraisal

Introduction

The preceding chapter began to establish the case for the Suez Crisis being an instance of the phenomenon whereby perception lags behind objective reality. These gaps are important, because they shape subsequent actions. In the words of Kristen Renwick, ‘our perception of ourselves in relation to others effectively delineates and sets the domain of options we find available.’¹ The policy of Eden’s government in the summer and autumn of 1956 was based on erroneous perceptions, specifically that the armed forces could retake the Suez Canal before Egypt demonstrated that there was no cause for international concern at its seizure of control, and that if Britain attacked Egypt in an attempt to regain control of the canal, its influence over the United States and the Commonwealth would be sufficient to ensure that it could present it as a *fait accompli*. Unfortunately for this design the US, incensed (as was much of the Commonwealth),² at Britain’s duplicitous behaviour with France and

¹ K. Renwick, ‘Paradigm Shift: From Rational Choice to Perspective’, *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Apr., 2001), p. 151.

² TNA PREM 11/1096, ‘Suhrawardy to Eden’ (4 Nov., 1956), p. 69; PREM 11/1096, ‘High Commissioner in Pakistan to C.R.O.’ (7 Nov., 1956), pp. 73-74.

Israel, the lack of consultation before Britain went to war, and with President Eisenhower seeking re-election to the Presidency, refused to support Eden and brought diplomatic and economic opposition to bear against Britain, forcing it to withdraw from Egypt in disgrace.³

In the introduction to this thesis we drew attention to one of the existing historiographical arguments regarding the Suez Crisis and British policy revaluations towards the European Communities; that Suez revealed weaknesses in Britain's position that forced the government to undertake a fundamental re-examination or reappraisal of that position, that led, in turn to the decision to seek closer ties with Europe.⁴ The other argument highlighted was that Suez was a coincidence and of little or no significance and relevance to Britain's European policy, on the grounds that it either occurred too close to it for its ramifications to be fully understood, or that the important events were ongoing prior to the start of the crisis.⁵ This thesis takes the

³ D.B. Kunz, 'When Money Counts and Doesn't: Economic Power and Diplomatic Objectives', *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (Oct., 1994), pp. 451-462.

⁴ S. George, *An Awkward Partner: Britain in the European Community*, 3rd Edition (Oxford, 1998); S. George, *Britain and European Integration since 1945* (Oxford, 1991); S. Bulmer, 'Britain and European Integration: Of Sovereignty, Slow Adaptation, and Semi-Detachment,' in S. George (Editor), *Britain and the European Community: The Politics of Semi-Detachment* (Oxford, 1992); P. Hansen, 'European Integration, European Identity and the Colonial Connection', *European Journal of Social Theory*, Vol. 5 (Nov., 2002), pp. 483-498.

⁵ H. Young, *This Blessed Plot: Britain and Europe from Churchill to Blair* (Basingstoke, 1999), p. 109; A. Gorst & L. Johnman, *The Suez Crisis* (Abingdon, 1997), p. xi; R. Ovendale, *British Defence Policy since 1945* (Manchester, 1994), p. 133; K. Kyle, *Suez: Britain's End of Empire in the Middle East* (London, 1991); S.C. Smith, *Reassessing Suez: New Perspectives on the Crisis and its Aftermath*

view that neither interpretation is adequate to explain the significance of Suez to Anglo-European relations. Dealing with the arguments of those who have diminished the influence of Suez, the formation and subsequent success of the European Economic Community was certainly one of the reasons behind the British decision to apply for membership of it a scant five years after rejecting such an option, and it is true that the negotiations that resulted in its creation were ongoing before Nasser nationalised the Suez Canal Company. However, they were simply negotiations and, as will be demonstrated in Chapter Five, they hung in the balance when the crisis ended.⁶

Moreover, as will be examined in Chapter Four and Chapter Six, Suez was a significant factor in the rise of Harold Macmillan and Edward Heath. Macmillan was of course the Prime Minister, who made the first, and unsuccessful, EEC entry bid in 1961,⁷ and who appointed to lead it his *protégé* Edward Heath, the man who took Britain into Europe in 1973.⁸ Chapter Five will consider Suez in a French context and will demonstrate that without the crisis it can be doubted that there would be a European Union on early twenty-first century lines at all. Moreover, through its impact on the Algerian Uprising and subsequent return to power of General de Gaulle, and the development of the French nuclear deterrent, Suez played a further and, in the context of Macmillan's entry bid, a decisive role in Britain's relationship with Europe.

(Aldershot, 2008); A. Low & B. Lapping, 'Did Suez Hasten the End of Empire?' *Contemporary Record*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1987), pp. 31-33.

⁶ See Chapter Five.

⁷ See Chapter Four.

⁸ See Chapter Six.

It is therefore simply not a realistic argument to contend that Suez had no impact on Anglo-European relations.

This being the case, there is still the matter of the arguments already put forward that Suez caused a review of British policy after 1957. The late Alan Milward saw Suez as influencing the British government's decision to adopt Plan G in November 1956 and described Lord Salisbury, Lord President of the Council, as being convinced by the crisis that the Imperial and Commonwealth links were not as strong as previously believed.⁹ David Gowland, Arthur Turner and Alex Wright, who also linked Suez to the adoption of Plan G, noted a memorandum written by Anthony Eden in the last days of his Premiership in which he speculated that closer ties with Europe might be a consequence of Suez, and stated that the Foreign Office made an unsuccessful attempt to turn British policy in a European direction.¹⁰ Apart from this, there has been no documentary evidence put forward for the claim that Suez caused a reappraisal that in turn led to closer British ties with Europe. Neither Stephen George, nor Stephen Bulmer provided any supporting evidence and the reader is left to assume that such a link should be taken as read.

It is, therefore, the purpose of this chapter to examine the case for Suez having provided such a shock to British policymakers that they embarked upon a period of review and re-appraisal and decided to take a more active role in the European movement. In order to do this, three research questions will be asked and examined:

⁹ A. Milward, *The United Kingdom and the European Community Volume I* (2002), pp. 252-262.

¹⁰ D. Gowland, A. Turner, & A. Wright, *Britain and European Integration Since 1945: On the Sidelines* (London, 2010), pp. 48-49.

1. Did the crisis make clear to British policy makers the relative weakness of the country's world position?
2. Did the British government undertake a re-appraisal subsequent to this?
3. Is there any evidence to support the assertion that the Suez Crisis influenced the evolution of British policy towards membership of the European Communities?

Our examination of the first of these questions will analyse the discussions and memoranda generated by the government in the aftermath of the Suez Crisis. The previous chapter established that Suez could be seen as instance where perceptions were flawed and events so demonstrated. The aim with this question is to see what evidence there is that ministers and officials were aware of the scale of the reverse that Britain had suffered at Suez, and, if so, in which context.

Looking at the second question will allow us to progress to the issue of whether or not the government, having realised the damage wrought by Suez, then embarked upon a re-appraisal of Britain's diplomatic and military position. It will examine the 1957 'Defence Outline of Future Policy',¹¹ the 1960 'Study of Future Policy for 1960-1970',¹² and two foreign policy studies, 'The Effect of Anglo-American Interdependence on the Long-Term Interests of the United Kingdom',¹³ and

¹¹ Cmnd. 124, 'Defence Outline of Future Policy' (Apr., 1957).

¹² TNA CAB 129/100, C. (60) 35 'Future Policy Study, 1960-1970' (29 Feb., 1960).

¹³ TNA CAB 129/92, C. (58) 77 'The Effects of Anglo-American Interdependence on the Long-Term Interests of the United Kingdom' (10 Apr., 1958).

the 1958 'Position of the United Kingdom in World Affairs'.¹⁴ Both of the latter two documents were included as part of the larger study on future policy, but as they were published in 1958, and so precede the greater work into which they were incorporated, they will be considered separately. Furthermore, as the concept of interdependence will feature in a later part of this chapter when considering the development of Britain's policy on Europe, the relevant study should be considered on its own merits.

The answers to the third, and most significant, question will focus on any conclusions that may have been drawn in the short-term and the longer-term. More specifically, it will analyse the proposed re-appraisal for evidence that closer ties with Europe occupied a more prominent position in policy terms. Furthermore, it will seek to distinguish between the idea of closer ties with Europe as an alternative to the existing links with the United States and the Commonwealth, the Atlantic and Imperial circles of British foreign policy, and closer European links as part of an overall, broader approach to British policy, particularly with regard to Macmillan's policy of Anglo-American interdependence. It is important to make this particular distinction, as it has been a tendency on the part of many authors who have considered Suez and 'Europe', and diminished any link between the two, to cite Macmillan's desire to repair and then strengthen the Anglo-American alliance as evidence that Suez did not result in closer European ties.¹⁵ Such an interpretation is, in this author's opinion, based on a flawed understanding of Macmillan's policies and on British

¹⁴ TNA CAB 130/39, 'The Position of the United Kingdom in World Affairs: Report by Officials' (1 May., 1958).

¹⁵ D. Gowland et al, *Britain and European Integration* (2010), p. 49.

foreign policy in general. Neither was intended to be a zero-sum game, and this chapter will demonstrate that in fact it was the desire to strengthen ties with Washington that led to the change in British policy on European integration.

Did the crisis make clear to British policy makers the weakness of the country's world position?

At first glance this question would appear to have an obvious answer: yes. How can there be a re-appraisal and a change in policy based on that if the Suez Crisis had not made clear to British policy makers the country's relatively weak position? However, a more detailed analysis is required. It bears mentioning here that there is also the question of degrees when it comes to awareness. It does not necessarily follow that because the British government was aware of the impact of Suez in a general sense, it was aware of all the consequences and the true extent of them. Similarly, a government can be aware that an event such as Suez can have negatively impacted relations with another power, but not yet appreciate the ramifications beyond that relationship, or in fact how it had happened in the first place. For these reasons it does bear asking the question and seeking an analytical answer to it.

The wider world certainly considered Suez to have been a disaster, and that Britain had been humiliated. There is more than sufficient evidence available from the papers in the National Archives to support an assertion that Suez did in fact make clear to British policy makers the relative weakness of the country's position. The first such indicator is found, appropriately enough, at the conclusion of the Suez Crisis itself. The Chancellor, Macmillan, made clear to the Cabinet in November 1956 that,

in the face of American opposition, continuing with the Suez operation was economically unviable.¹⁶ Macmillan's actions here have been a source of controversy. He was one of the more hawkish members of the Cabinet when it came to planning and executing Operation Musketeer,¹⁷ but, his statement to the Cabinet about a run on Sterling, the reason given for halting the operation, saw him described by Harold Wilson as 'first in, first out'.¹⁸ Brendan Bracken was even more scathing, describing him as 'the leader of the bolters'.¹⁹ It has even been suggested that Macmillan's whole posture at Suez, and more pertinently, his actions in urging military action, and then withdrawal, were a Machiavellian attempt to depose Eden,²⁰ a charge that will be examined further in Chapter Four. However, and irrespective of whether or not Macmillan was being entirely straightforward and honest when he made the economic case for withdrawal to the Cabinet, it is still reasonable to conclude that in economic terms Britain could not continue Operation Musketeer in the face of American opposition. The Cabinet accepted his assertions and the decision to abandon the invasion is evidence enough that it was aware of the precariousness of Britain's position.²¹

¹⁶ TNA CAB 134/4108, C.M. (56) 90 'Minutes of Cabinet Meeting' (28 Nov., 1956), p. 3.

¹⁷ TNA CAB 134/1217, E.C. (56) 9 'Action Against Egypt', Note by the Chancellor of the Exchequer (7 Aug., 1956), pp. 27-29; L. James, *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire* (London, 2005), p. 579.

¹⁸ D.R. Thorpe, *Supermac: The Life of Harold Macmillan* (London, 2011), p. 364.

¹⁹ A. Horne, *Macmillan 1891-1956: Volume I of the Official Biography* (Basingstoke, 1988), pp. 440-441.

²⁰ D. Carlton, *Britain and the Suez Crisis* (London, 1988), p. 43.

²¹ TNA CAB 134/4108, C.M. (56) 90 'Minutes of Cabinet Meeting' (28 Nov., 1956), p. 3.

A second indicator of decision makers' changing views is to be found in the memorandum that Eden circulated in his last days as Prime Minister. He stated forthrightly that Britain had to learn the lessons of Suez and re-examine its areas of influence. Economic and scientific issues were cited, as were doubts about the value of bases in Tripoli, and the continuing military commitments in Malaya and Ceylon (Sri Lanka).²² It is, however, the following phrase that is of most relevance and significance here:

The conclusion of all this is surely that we must review our world position and our domestic capacity more searchingly in the light of the Suez experience, which has not so much changed fortunes as revealed realities.²³

In practical terms, Eden's political career was over at the point he wrote his memorandum, yet he was formally still the Prime Minister, and, despite the damage done to his reputation, his voice was still an influential one. His words are unambiguous in their assertion that Suez was a point of realisation and that lessons needed to be learned from the whole episode.

It might be relevant to ask at this point why it took Suez to demonstrate to Eden that Britain was not as strong as it had once been. The answer to this question is that it was not this crisis alone that made Britain's vulnerability apparent. Eden's actions in the summer of 1956 were governed by two overlapping ideas directly related to just that sense of weakness: an acute awareness of just how precarious

²² TNA PREM 11/1138, 'Thoughts on the General Position After Suez (28 Dec., 1956), pp. 1-5.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

Britain's economic position was; and an overestimation of his and his government's ability to overcome this. He knew that the longer Egypt held onto the Suez Canal the harder it would be for Britain to regain it, particularly if Egypt was able to demonstrate that its formal control did not threaten either free usage of the canal, or its efficient running. His initial reaction was to request a fast attack on the Canal Zone by commando and parachute units, but having been advised that this was not possible for two months, Eden was compelled to engage in diplomatic negotiations until France and Israel offered him an alternative. Britain was not as strong as it had been fifty years earlier, a fact Eden was aware of, and yet that did not prevent him from acting as he did at Suez.²⁴ While Foreign Secretary in 1952 he implied a similar approach, aware of all Britain's weaknesses, in his paper 'British Overseas Obligations', which began thus:

The object of this paper is to consider the tasks to which the United Kingdom is committed overseas and to examine where if anywhere our responsibilities can be reduced so as to bring them more into line with our available resources.²⁵

Eden's failure, and that of his government, was not in believing that Britain could behave as a nineteenth century gunboat power with impunity: it was overestimating Britain's ability to compensate for the fact that it could not, and use the influence it felt it retained to achieve its goals.

²⁴ A. Eden, 'Britain in World Strategy', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (Apr., 1951), p. 342.

²⁵ TNA CAB 129/53, C (52) 202, 'British Overseas Obligations: Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs' (18 Jun., 1952), p. 1.

Before the focus shifts to the second research question, ‘did the British government undertake a reappraisal?’ there is the Cabinet discussion on 8 January 1957 to consider. Under discussion was Selwyn Lloyd’s ‘Grand Design’,²⁶ which will be discussed in this chapter when considering the third research question. The relevance here is not that Cabinet rejected the specifics of Lloyd’s proposals,²⁷ nor that its reasoning was the potential damage to relations with the United States, but that it showed how aware the Foreign Office was of the fact that Suez had already caused a rupture in the special relationship. Salisbury, Lord President of the Council, remarked that the government’s ‘main aim at the present time should be to repair the breach which had been made in Anglo-American relations by the Suez dispute’.²⁸

In each of the three instances highlighted here, it is clear that the British government was aware that Suez had damaged Britain’s position. Even so, opinions differed as to how to react. While Eden was of the view that more general lessons needed to be learned, the Cabinet in January 1957 felt that the damage to the Anglo-American special relationship was the most serious problem to have arisen from the crisis and one that needed to be rectified as soon as possible.

²⁶ TNA CAB 129/84, C.P. (57) 6 ‘“The Grand Design” Co-operation With Western Europe: Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs’. (4 Jan., 1957), pp. 1-6.

²⁷ TNA, CAB 195/16, C.M. (57) 3, ‘Minutes of Cabinet Meeting’ (8 Jan., 1957), pp. 2-4.

²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 3.

Did the British government undertake a review subsequent to this?

The second issue to be addressed is whether or not the realisation that Suez had caused significant damage to Britain was followed by a period of re-examination and re-appraisal. It should be noted that governments periodically review aspects of policy in a variety of areas,²⁹ and assuming that because a review takes place after an event, it must have been caused by it, risks the logical fallacy that is *post hoc ergo propter hoc*. That being said, it certainly does not follow that an event such as Suez would not influenced any subsequent review, be it the nature, content, or conclusions. In the four years following the Suez Crisis there is substantial evidence to support the assertion that the British government embarked upon a period of re-examination, focussing on Britain's world role and its defence capabilities. The task here to examine this evidence so as to establish how far, if at all, the crisis was either a direct cause, or if it influenced the review and its conclusions in any way.

The most notable such reviews were the 1957 Defence Review,³⁰ and the 'Study of Future Policy for 1960-1970'.³¹ The more general economic reviews will not be examined, as they were, foreign policy crises notwithstanding, a yearly

²⁹ Cm 7948, '*Securing Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The Strategic Defence and Security Review*' (October, 2010), pp. 1-75; Cm 8122, '*Higher Education: Students at the Heart of the System*' (June, 2011), pp. 1-83.

³⁰ Cmnd. 124, 'Defence Outline of Future Policy' (Apr., 1957), pp. 1-14; Cmnd. 230, 'Future Organization of the Army' (Jul., 1957), pp. 1-9.

³¹ TNA CAB 129/100, C. (60) 35, 'Future Policy Study, 1960-1970' (29 Feb., 1960), pp. 1-58.

occurrence and not an economic equivalent to the Defence Review or Future Policy Studies. In addition to the future policy study, there are two other studies that are of significance; the 1958 Foreign Policy Review,³² and the study on Interdependence.³³ Although they can be treated as separate documents, and will be examined as such, this author considers them to be constituent parts of the wider future policy study. The first meeting of the committee, tasked with the creation of the future policy study, called for ‘a review by the Foreign Office, Commonwealth Relations Office, and Colonial Office of our aims region by region, and the resources required, and now devoted to achieving them.’³⁴ The fifth meeting, held on May 6th 1958, presented the Foreign Office paper and considered its content and implications.³⁵ The Defence Review predated the creation of the Future Policy Committee and so cannot be seen in the same vein, and thus is treated as an entirely separate instance of government review.

1957 Defence Outline of Future Policy

The first instance of a government review after Suez is the 1957 ‘Defence Outline of Future Policy’, delivered to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Defence, Duncan Sandys, in April 1957. Defence reviews are not a particularly frequent occurrence: the

³² TNA CAB 130/39, ‘The Position of the United Kingdom in World Affairs: Report by Officials’ (1 May., 1958).

³³ TNA CAB 129/92, C. (58) 77 ‘The Effects of Anglo-American Interdependence on the Long-Term Interests of the United Kingdom’ (10 Apr., 1958).

³⁴ TNA CAB 130/39, ‘GEN 624/1’ (6 Dec., 1957), p. 1.

³⁵ TNA CAB 130/39 ‘GEN 624/5’ (6 May., 1958), pp. 1-7.

2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review, for instance, was the first since 1998. They tend to be commissioned when an incoming government is seeking to change certain aspects of government policy, usually public spending, or in response to events that greatly alter the diplomatic and strategic landscape, such as the end of the Cold War. Sandys' paper came a year after the 1956 Defence White Paper,³⁶ and began by stating that the shape of the armed forces was a product of the Korean War, and the re-armament program it precipitated. It did not mention Suez specifically, instead referring to the 'changing nature of the Communist threat' as the cause.³⁷ This would suggest that Suez had no influence or impact on the study itself. The prevailing historiography on the Defence Review, summated for instance in Ovendale's work on British defence since 1945, places this in the context of the move from expensive conventional forces, to the cheaper nuclear deterrent.³⁸

However, the fact that Suez is not mentioned by name in the final document does not rule out it having any influence at all. For many years after the crisis, the very name Suez became a taboo term in official British circles³⁹ and it more common to find the term 'recent events' in documents where the subject is either raised, or is of relevance. Moreover, there are two indicators that this author believes indicate the influence of Suez. The first is the following paragraph:

³⁶ Cmd. 9691, 'Statement on Defence 1956' (Feb., 1956), pp. 1-32 .

³⁷ Cmnd. 124, 'Defence Outline of Future Policy' (Apr., 1957), p. 5.

³⁸ R. Ovendale, *British Defence Policy since 1945* (Manchester, 1994).

³⁹ K. Kyle, *Suez: Britain's End of Empire in the Middle East* (London, 1991), p. 3.

Britain's influence in the world depends first and foremost on the health of her internal economy and the success of her export trade. Without these, military power cannot in the long run be supported.⁴⁰

While it is important to avoid a *post hoc ergo propter hoc* argument, it is reasonable to conclude that Suez was a factor here. Although ongoing operations in Malaya and the recent Korean War meant that Suez was not Britain's only military commitment in the 1950s, it was, nonetheless, the only one where economic difficulties necessitated its abandonment. The Cabinet decided to call a halt to Operation Musketeer when presented with Macmillan's stark assessment that it was economically unviable.⁴¹ Furthermore, a report by the Chiefs of Staff, dated 16th January 1957, cites 'recent events in the Middle East' to stress the importance of the region to Britain economically, and the need to maintain Britain's ability to protect Aden.⁴² The importance of a sound economy and the references to it in the Defence White Paper have already been highlighted, Britain's responsibilities in the region, particular in respect to Aden, feature in it also.⁴³ The various branches of the armed forces also conducted their own reviews in a manner that is relevant here, and which contributed to the Defence White Paper: Suez is a feature in many of them. The review of the air transport force cited recent events as having emphasised importance of speed of

⁴⁰ Cmnd. 124, 'Defence Outline of Future Policy' (Apr., 1957), p. 5.

⁴¹ TNA CAB 134/4108, C.M. (56) 90, 'Minutes of Cabinet Meeting 28 November 1956', p. 3.

⁴² TNA DO 35/7127, C.O.S. (57) 2G, 'Importance of the Arabian Peninsular: Note by the War Office' (16 Jan., 1957), p. 1.

⁴³ Cmnd. 124, 'Defence Outline of Future Policy' (Apr., 1957), p. 4.

movement in limited war,⁴⁴ and a study of operational requirements for limited war actually named Suez and the need to take advantage of lessons learned for future planning.⁴⁵

Further and more compelling evidence is to be found in the Cabinet discussions when the study was being formulated. At a Cabinet Meeting on 18th March 1957, the discussion of the White Paper turned to the proposal to withdraw two Territorial Army Divisions then used as a NATO reserve⁴⁶ and the following point was raised:

The extent to which Territorial Army formations should be available for emergency service overseas should perhaps be reconsidered in the light of experience during the Anglo-French operation against Egypt.⁴⁷

One of the many factors that bedevilled the planners of Operation Musketeer was the high ratio of national servicemen to regulars in certain Army formations.⁴⁸ They lacked the experience and quality of the front-line, regular units stationed in Germany and the White Paper's reference is a warning against relying on them again. Richard

⁴⁴ TNA DEFE 5/73, C.O.S. (57) 33, 'Long-term Defence Review: Air Transport Force' (5 Feb., 1957), p. 4.

⁴⁵ TNA DEFE 5/73, C.O.S. (57) 17, 'Operational Requirements For Emergencies or Limited War in the Ministry of Defence: Note by Major-General W.G. Stirling' (11 Jan., 1957).

⁴⁶ TNA CAB 129/86, C. (57) 69, 'Statement on Defence 1957: Draft' (15 Mar., 1957), p. 6.

⁴⁷ TNA CAB 128/31, C.C (57) 21st Conclusions, 'Conclusions of a Meeting of the Cabinet' (18 Mar., 1957), p. 5.

⁴⁸ R. Fullick & G. Powell, *Suez* (2006), pp. 31-32.

Vinen's recent book *National Service: A Generation in Uniform 1945-1963* devoted an entire chapter to Suez which included accounts by national servicemen of some of their attempts at rebellion (although he states that most soldiers had no particular opposition to the war) such as deliberately working slowly so as to impede Operation Musketeer. The subsequent chapter on ending national service cites the crisis as a medium term influence 'because it exposed some of the fantasies on which British pretensions to military grandeur had been based'. The same chapter cites the crisis' bringing Harold Macmillan and Duncan Sandys to the fore as further evidence of Suez' role in the end of national service.⁴⁹

The final piece of evidence comes from the 5th January edition of *The Economist*, which included the following passages:

In itself, it should be admitted, the Suez campaign proves nothing new. It has rather, with its consequences and its cost, served as a catalyst, allowing to form the widespread belief –to which Mr Macmillan's remarks at the last NATO meeting added shape- that this country has been carrying more than its fair share of the defence burden; that it has been spending too much too wastefully, on many objectives that were never practical anyway; and that it must spend less henceforward.⁵⁰

Although the final draft of the Defence White Paper does not contain a direct reference to Suez, the status of the crisis as a taboo term, the indirect influence in the

⁴⁹ R. Vinen, *National Service: A Generation in Uniform 1945-1963* (London, 2014), p. 366.

⁵⁰ 'The Way to Cut Defence', *The Economist* (5 Jan., 1957), p. 9.

economics of defence policy, the contemporary article in *The Economist* and the references in the Cabinet papers adds up to sufficient evidence for this author to conclude that the crisis played at least some role in most of these documents, as well as shaping key aspects of British defence policy after 1957.

Study of Future Policy for 1960-1970

The best indicator of a review or re-examination of Britain's position and policy after Suez is the 'Future Policy Study 1960-70', published in February 1960. It encompasses the 1958 foreign policy review; 'The Position of the United Kingdom in World Affairs'; and another 1958 study on Anglo-American relations that laid out the policy known as interdependence. The foreign policy review and Anglo-American study will be assessed here first before the wider Future Policy is analysed.

'The Position of the United Kingdom in World Affairs' contains numerous paragraphs and phrases from which the influence of Suez can be seen. The first paragraphs note Britain's reduced status compared to its imperial heyday in the nineteenth century, specifically the point that unlike the 19th Century, Britain could no longer impose its will abroad. Of particular significance is the following:

We must therefore be more ready to improvise, to adapt our tactics to changing situations and be quick to take advantage of fleeting opportunities to strengthen or improve our position almost anywhere in the world. We shall not maintain our

influence if we appear to be clinging obstinately to the shadow of our old Imperial power after its substance has gone.⁵¹

This was a shift in tone from previous statements. Ruane and Ellison, in their 2004 article ‘Managing the Americans: Anthony Eden, Harold Macmillan and the Pursuit of “Power by Proxy” in the 1950s’, detail three foreign policy reviews in 1952, 1956 and the 1958 review under discussion, and attribute the contrast between the 1958 review and its two predecessors to the ‘enervating economic legacy of the disaster of Suez’.⁵²

The study on interdependence, circulated to the Cabinet by Selwyn Lloyd in April 1958, is unambiguous where Suez is concerned. Section D, ‘The Implications of Interdependence’, asserts that the United Kingdom would benefit greatly from the policy and is stark in its assessment that Britain’s ability to have its way in the world depended on acting in conformity with US interests. ‘Against her opposition we can do very little (e.g., Suez)’, the document argued. Further, but less explicit, reference to Suez came with the statement that it was beneficial that there be an agreed Anglo-American policy in the Middle East, rather than both countries pursuing individual and perhaps opposing policies.⁵³ Suez was a watershed moment for Anglo-American relations, and these conclusions, along with the Cabinet deliberations in the aftermath

⁵¹ TNA CAB 130/139, ‘The Position of the United Kingdom in World Affairs’ (9 Jun., 1958), p. 1.

⁵² K. Ruane & J. Ellison, ‘Managing the Americans’, *Contemporary British History*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Autumn, 2004), p. 147.

⁵³ TNA CAB 129/92, C. (58) 77, ‘The Effects of Anglo-American Interdependence on the Long-Term Interests of the United Kingdom’ (9 Apr., 1958), p. 4.

of the crisis, highlight the extent to which the government considered the breach in the special relationship to be the most serious consequence of the crisis.⁵⁴

Turning now to the wider Future Policy Study, Suez is, as with the Defence Review, not mentioned specifically. Aside from the crisis being considered something of a taboo subject in official circles, it should also be noted that three years had elapsed between it and the publication of the Future Policy Study. In this period, the Six had signed the Treaties of Rome establishing EURATOM and the EEC,⁵⁵ Britain had attempted and failed to create an all encompassing European Free Trade Area, and had, in 1960, joined with six of the non EEC European powers to found the European Free Trade Association (EFTA).⁵⁶ In the context of the Cold War, in 1957 the U.S.S.R successfully tested an Intercontinental Ballistic Missile⁵⁷ and subsequently launched Sputnik, the world's first artificial earth satellite.⁵⁸ Sputnik itself did very little that should have made the West nervous, but it represented a perceived inferiority on the part of western science and technology and sparked a

⁵⁴ TNA CAB 195/16, C.M. (57) 3, Minutes of Cabinet Meeting (8 Jan., 1957), p. 3.

⁵⁵ 'The Treaty of Rome' Signed 25 March 1957, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/emu_history/documents/treaties/rometreaty2.pdf, accessed 9 May 2013.

⁵⁶ Cmnd. 823, 'Stockholm Draft Plan for a European Free Trade Association'. (Jul., 1959), pp. 1-20; EFTA consisted of Austria, Denmark, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

⁵⁷ 'Russia Fires Test 'Super Rocket'', *The Times* (27 Aug., 1957), p. 8.

⁵⁸ 'Russia Launches Earth Satellite', *The Times* (5 Oct., 1957), p. 6.

brief frenzy of perceived inferiority known as the ‘Sputnik Syndrome’.⁵⁹ In 1958 Britain and the US signed the Mutual Defence Agreement,⁶⁰ and in 1959 the US successfully tested its own ICBM.⁶¹ It is not surprising therefore that Suez was not mentioned by name, given the events in the intervening years that could influence British policy.

This is not to say that there was no discernible Suez influence in the Future Policy Study. On the contrary, there were at least two areas in which such influence could be seen. Part II of the study focused on Britain’s economic resources and describes, in the context of the Sterling Area, the fact that Britain has the most vulnerable economy of all the major powers.⁶² The study went on to state that ‘experience in the last 10 years has shown how vulnerable sterling is and how damaging sterling crises are to the United Kingdom’s foreign policy and military position’.⁶³ This can only be a reference to Suez as there was no other event in the 1950s that precipitated a sterling crisis. Abadan in 1951 and the nationalisation of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company was a major crisis for Britain, but did not result in a

⁵⁹ Y. Mieczkowski, *Eisenhower’s Sputnik Moment: The Race for Space and World Prestige* (Cornell, 2013), p. 178.

⁶⁰ http://www.fco.gov.uk/resources/en/pdf/pdf7/fco_pdf_usmilitarydefenceagmt537 Accessed 14 November 2011.

⁶¹ J. Isaacs & T. Downing, *Cold War: an Illustrated History* (Boston, 1998), p. 155.

⁶² TNA CAB 129/100, C. (60) 35, ‘Study of Future Policy for 1960-1970’ (Feb., 1960), p. 11.

⁶³ *Ibid*, p. 12.

sterling crisis, and Britain's economy was not in such a parlous state that it was unable to despatch a sizeable contingent to the UN force in the Korean War.⁶⁴

Part III of the study details the objectives of Britain's foreign and strategic policy and has this to say:

Our ability to maintain the influence of the United Kingdom will depend increasingly upon the way in which the national effort in defence and economic aid is fitted in with those of our friends to further common objectives. We shall have less freedom of action to carry out exclusively national policies.⁶⁵

As with parts of the Defence Review, the link to Suez was indirect, and rested on Suez having been the only event in the 1950s where Britain tried to act in a manner reminiscent of its Victorian heyday, finding itself forced to accept this was no longer viable. More conclusive evidence is found in the sections on Britain's allies, and its spheres of influence. The alliance with the US is stressed as being of the utmost importance, but not 'a law of nature,'⁶⁶ and reference is made to sharp differences in the Middle East and over British colonialism, although the two powers' disagreements over Iraq in 1958 and 1959 cannot be ruled out as a cause for the statement.⁶⁷ The

⁶⁴ S. Onslow, 'Battlelines for Suez': The Abadan Crisis of 1951 and the Formation of the Suez Group', *Contemporary British History*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (2003), pp. 1-28.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 23-24.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, p. 24.

⁶⁷ N. Ashton, *Kennedy, Macmillan and the Cold War: The Irony of Interdependence* (Basingstoke, 2002), p. 90.

portrayal of the Commonwealth, its reliability, and British leadership⁶⁸, also seem to suggest the influence of Suez, which not only saw Britain unable to command the support it assumed its leadership would provide, but came close to destroying the organisation itself.⁶⁹

To conclude our examination of the second research question, it is clear that not only did the British government conduct a comprehensive re-examination of the country's role and position, but that there is equally compelling evidence for the claim that it was at least in part inspired by the Suez Crisis. The Defence Review of 1957, while not mentioning Suez explicitly, contained several references to economic and diplomatic issues that suggest its involvement, and further evidence of the influence of the crisis is found in the discussions and documents that led to the study's publication.⁷⁰ The Study for Future Policy, the more all-encompassing review, similarly made repeated reference that can only have been inspired by Suez. The Foreign Policy Review of 1958, and the study on interdependence, contain many of the same points, and, when the Cabinet discussions in the aftermath of the crisis are considered alongside the studies, the influence of Suez is clear to see. Suez may not have been the sole motivation, but to suggest it was irrelevant would certainly be wide of the mark.

⁶⁸ Ibid, pp. 26.

⁶⁹ TNA DO 35/7127, 'The Grand Design and the Commonwealth' (7 Jan., 1957), p. 5; L. Strongman, *The Booker Prize and the Legacy of Empire* (New York, 2002), p. 181.

⁷⁰ TNA CAB 128/31, C.C (57) 21st Conclusions, 'Conclusions of a Meeting of the Cabinet' (18 Mar., 1957), p. 5.

**Is there any evidence to support the assertion that the Suez
Crisis influenced the evolution of British Policy towards
membership of the European Communities?**

This third question is the most important of the three and is also the more complicated, as there are two elements to it. Is there evidence to support the view that Europe occupied a more significant position in and of itself? And is there evidence that other policy decisions and priorities caused by Suez included a European element that accorded it greater significance than before?

The first aspect to consider is the extent to which Europe was considered as an alternative to the special relationship or the links with the Commonwealth. An article in *The Economist* in January 1957 certainly detected some semblance of this and stated:

The cause of closer association with Europe has received many new recruits in recent months and one cannot escape the suspicion that too many of them regard it as an alternative, almost as a riposte against the alliance with the United States, Canada, and the rest of the world.⁷¹

⁷¹ 'The Year is 1957', *The Economist* (19 Jan., 1957), p. 180; A. Bevin, 'Britain and America at Loggerheads', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 36, No. 1 (Oct., 1957), p. 65, pp. 60-67; G. Crowther, 'Reconstruction of an Alliance', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (Jan., 1957), p. 178.

Documents from the Conservative Party Archive would seem to support this interpretation. A meeting of the parliamentary party's Foreign Affairs Committee on 14 November 1956 saw several Conservative MPs express dissatisfaction with the conduct of the US during the crisis. Peter Smithers, MP for Winchester and later Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Foreign Office, as well as Secretary General of the Council of Europe,⁷² made the following remarks:

Have never based my attitude to America on sentimental grounds, but had believed that American would never stand aside if this country's vital interests were at stake. Recent events have convinced me that this was no longer a valid assumption...As a result we must turn urgently to the consolidation of our relations with Europe; for example, through such initiatives as the creation of a free trade area in association with the Common Market. By moving closer to Europe, we stood the best chance of improving our relations with the United States.

A second MP, Bernard Braithe, agreed with Smithers' remarks, but stated that as far as the US was concerned, no initiatives should be expected and that Britain must take the lead in restoring relations.⁷³

⁷² R. Davenport-Hines, 'Smithers, Sir Peter Henry Berry Otway (1913-2006)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2010).

⁷³ CPA, CRD 2/34/2, 'Conservative Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee: Record of Meeting (14 Nov., 1956), p. 1.

As far as the Parliamentary Conservative Party was concerned there is evidence that supports the claims made in *The Economist*, showing that a turn towards Europe was in the minds of MPs as a result of the Suez Crisis. What then of the Government and the Cabinet? In late November, Macmillan presented the proposals for a Free Trade Area to the House of Commons. The French Ambassador observed his speech and commented to the French Foreign Secretary that he felt simple party politics was not the only motivating factor in what appeared to him to be a shift in British policy. He suggested that recent events, by which he meant Suez, were a factor as well.⁷⁴ This may have come from the speech made by Geoffrey Rippon, later Heath's chief negotiator in 1972, but then a new MP, who said:

One positive result of the Suez crisis is that it has given a new impetus to European co-operation. I think it is a fact of the highest significance that interruption of the flow of oil, which is a common threat, is being met by concerted action. Some years ago, President Auriol of France said: Europe must unite herself if she wishes to recover and live, and if she does not want American assistance to be a gesture without future or a humiliating charity. I think that recent events have given emphasis to his words.⁷⁵

The memorandum prepared and distributed by Anthony Eden, described earlier in the context of British awareness of the damage of Suez, concludes with a comment on the future directions that Britain could go in order to recover from the

⁷⁴ DDF 1956 Tome. III, 'Chauvel to Pineau' (29 Nov., 1956), pp. 426-427. Translated by Dan Whyman.

⁷⁵ H. of C. Debs, Vol. 561, Cols. 34-164, 'European Trade Policy' (26 Nov., 1956).

crisis. Until recently this memo had received little to no attention,⁷⁶ despite the following section:

The conclusion of all this is surely that we must review our world position and domestic capacity more searchingly in the light of the Suez experience, which has not so much changed our fortunes as revealed realities. While the consequences of this examination may be to determine us to work more closely with Europe, carrying with us, we hope, our closest friends in the Commonwealth in such development, here too we must be under no illusion. Europe will not welcome us simply because at the moment it may appear to suit us to look to them. The timing and conviction of our approach may be decisive in their influence on those with whom we wish to work.⁷⁷

Although he was in his last days as Prime Minister, Eden was still an influential figure, and the passage demonstrates that a turn towards Europe was certainly in the mind of senior members of the government. It should be noted though that, given the humiliation that Eden had suffered at the hands of President Eisenhower,⁷⁸ there may have been a certain degree of bitterness that may have prompted this particular statement. Nevertheless, Eden, while not as personally

⁷⁶ D. Gowland, A. Turner, & A. Wright, *Britain and European Integration* (2010), p. 49.

⁷⁷ TNA PREM 11/1138, 'Thoughts on the General Position After Suez' (28 Dec., 1956), p. 5.

⁷⁸ Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-1957: Volume XVI, Suez Crisis, July 26 – December 31, 1956, Document 538, 'Transcript of Telephone Conversation between President Eisenhower in Washington and Prime Minister Eden in London' (7 Nov., 1956); Doc., 'Memorandum for the Record by the President's Staff Secretary (Goodpaster) (7 Nov., 1956).

invested in the special relationship as Churchill or Macmillan, both of whom had American mothers and a familial affinity with the US, was similarly not positively inclined towards Britain participating in the European integration process. His 1952 study 'Britain's Overseas Obligations', did not even mention the Schuman Plan and the European Coal and Steel Community, let alone advocate a re-orientation of British policy in that direction.⁷⁹ Similarly, while Prime Minister, Eden seemed uninterested in the developments at Messina,⁸⁰ and declined the offer of Mollet for late entry to the talks and the offer of union with France.⁸¹

To return to the issue of a more 'European' policy being in the minds of senior government figures, on January 8th the Cabinet considered 'The Grand Design', a paper presented by the Foreign Secretary, Selwyn Lloyd. The paper did not mention Suez by name, although John Young and Nigel Ashton saw it as a direct result of the crisis.⁸² Moreover, 'The Grand Design' did say that in 1957:

⁷⁹ TNA CAB 129/53, C (52) 202, 'British Overseas Obligations: Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs' (18 Jun., 1952), pp. 1-7.

⁸⁰ J.W. Young, *Britain and European Unity 1945-1999* (2nd Edition) (Basingstoke, 2000), p. 51; A. Deighton, 'The Last Piece of the Jigsaw: Britain and the Creation of the Western European Union 1954', *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 7 No. 2 (Jul., 1998), p. 196.

⁸¹ TNA PREM 11/1352, 'Memorandum by Treasury' (22 Sep., 1956).

⁸² J.W. Young, *Britain and European Unity 1945-1999* (2nd Edition) (Basingstoke, 2000), p. 51; A. Deighton, 'The Last Piece of the Jigsaw: Britain and the Creation of the Western European Union 1954', *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 7 No. 2 (July 1998), p. 196.

An industrialised country with 50 million inhabitants is no longer large enough or powerful enough to produce and man the weapons required for modern war, nuclear or conventional. A country which wishes to play the role of a great Power must not only possess certain conventional forces. It must also make and have the power to use the whole range of thermo-nuclear weapons, including the megaton bomb... Britain cannot by herself go the whole distance. If we try to do so we shall bankrupt ourselves. The choice is therefore clear. We must stop short with an insufficient stockpile and inadequate means of delivery or we must seek to achieve our end by other means.⁸³

The other means that Lloyd refers to, and goes on to describe are the pooling of nuclear information between Britain and the Six. Combined, in his eyes, these seven nations would comprise more than 210 million people with considerable industrial capacity. Moreover, joint military association would also entail a closer political association, although Lloyd explicitly ruled out supranational machinery not responsible to the national governments.⁸⁴ The Cabinet discussed the paper on January 8th 1957 and although the specifics of the proposals were rejected, the Lord President of the Council, Defence Secretary and Commonwealth Secretary spoke of the potential harm to relations with the United States,⁸⁵ the minutes conclude that there was a consensus in favour of examining closer association with Europe. To quote the minutes themselves:

⁸³ TNA CAB 129/84, C.P. (57) 6 "'The Grand Design" Co-operation with Western Europe: Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs' (4 Jan., 1957), p. 1.

⁸⁴ Ibid, pp. 1-2.

⁸⁵ TNA CAB 128/30 C.M. (57) 3, 'Minutes of Cabinet Meeting 8 January 1957, pp. 2-3.

In discussion there was general agreement that a fresh initiative towards closer European co-operation should not be based on proposals for co-operation in development of nuclear weapons...On the other hand, strong support was expressed for the general concept of closer association between the United Kingdom and Western Europe...The Anglo-American alliance was vital to the security of the free world; but the Suez Crisis had made it plain that there must be some change in the basis of Anglo-American relations.⁸⁶

Gowland, Turner and Wright have referred to an attempt by the Foreign Office to turn British policy towards Europe, one rejected by Macmillan in favour of devoting time to repairing the US alliance.⁸⁷ 'The Grand Design' was part of this attempt and while the Cabinet discussion quoted above supports the view that closer association with Europe was a policy option, it was ultimately rejected on the grounds that it would risk the special relationship. Lord Salisbury cited the crisis, as evidence that moves in the direction of Anglo-European nuclear relations without consulting the US would finally undermine the alliance.⁸⁸

This is not, however, to be taken as evidence for the validity of counter-arguments that dismiss Suez as an event that influenced the Anglo-European relationship. It is fair to say that relations with the United States were given primacy, but to dismiss the influence Suez on this basis is flawed, and based on a

⁸⁶ Ibid, pp. 3-4.

⁸⁷ D. Gowland et al, *Britain and European Integration* (2010), p. 49.

⁸⁸ TNA CAB 128/30 C.M. (57) 3, 'Minutes of Cabinet Meeting' (8 Jan., 1957), p. 3.

misunderstanding of British policy under Macmillan, and, in point of fact, the basic tenets of the Three Circles Policy itself. At its most fundamental, the policy stressed that Britain was at the centre of three areas of geo-political influence. But for Britain to occupy this special position and to maintain it, was required to maintain a balance between them:

Our power and influence in the world depends, our own national strength apart, upon our position as the common link between the three systems; the Anglo-American, the Commonwealth and Western Europe. Whilst the aim of British policy must be to develop the strength of each association, it is essential, if we are to remain a pivot that we should keep all three in balance and not develop one to the detriment of others.⁸⁹

This was stated British policy, but it was Britain's views of the prospects for 'Europe' that gave rise at the time, and subsequently, to the perception that the Three Circles were a zero sum exercise, that when it came to Europe, British policymakers took the view that deepening ties would mean doing so at the expense of either the Atlantic, or more often the Commonwealth alliance.⁹⁰ Until the mid 1950s, Britain maintained a detached attitude towards European integration fearing that specific moves, be they nuclear collaboration of the sort advocated by Selwyn Lloyd, or joining the Six at Messina in the creation of a customs union, would fatally damage the special

⁸⁹ TNA CAB 21/3323 'British Policy on the Three Circles'.

⁹⁰ S. Lee, 'Staying in the Game? Coming into the Game? Macmillan and European Integration', in R. Aldous & S. Lee (Editors), *Harold Macmillan and Britain's World Role* (Basingstoke, 1996), p. 129.

relationship, or the Commonwealth.⁹¹ In this respect, portraying British policy towards the European circle as being of the least value is reasonable. But after 1957 this interpretation became less accurate, and it appears to this author as though the current literature has taken Macmillan's preference for close ties with the US to mean that nothing had really changed.⁹² It is this post-Suez interpretation that this author seeks to challenge.

What made the post-Suez period different was that Macmillan not only understood the central tenet of the Three Circles, he actively pursued policies that stressed the fact that they were intertwined. Anglo-American relations were his number one priority in foreign policy,⁹³ but Europe was his second, and, most importantly, he considered both areas, along with the Commonwealth, as part of an all encompassing western alliance, or Atlantic community, interdependent as it were.⁹⁴ It is here that we return to the Future Policy Study, and the study on Anglo-American interdependence. In the Cabinet meeting that rejected the specifics of his 'Grand Design', Selwyn Lloyd made the following point:

The Suez Crisis had made it plain that there must be some change in basis of Anglo-American relations. It was doubtful whether the United States would now

⁹¹ W. Goldstein, 'British Defence & Alliance Strategy: The Strategic Quandary of a Middle Power', *Polity*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (Winter, 1970), p. 148.

⁹² D. Gowland et al, *Britain and European Integration* (2010), p. 49.

⁹³ D.R. Thorpe, *Supermac: The Life of Harold Macmillan* (London, 2011), p. 514.

⁹⁴ TNA PREM 11/3325, 'Memorandum by the Prime Minister on Future UK Political and Economic Policy' (29 Dec., 1960 – 3 Jan., 1961), p. 3.

be willing to accord us alone the special position which we had held as their principal ally during the war. We might therefore be better able to influence them if we were part of an association of powers which had greater political, economic and military strength than we alone could command. We ought to be in a position to deal with the United States Government on equal terms; and if that position had now to be founded on economic strength and military power, we must seek it through a new association with other countries.⁹⁵

This point may not have carried the day for Lloyd's proposals, but they are a recurring theme in many of the documents that deal with British foreign policy after Suez. The policy of interdependence recognised many things that British policymakers had previously ignored, marginalised, or just not been fully aware of. Prior to Suez, the US wish that Britain engage fully with the moves towards European integration had been taken as evidence for one of the more bizarre instances of delusion on the part of the Foreign Office, and to an extent even Macmillan.⁹⁶ This was the idea that Britain could guide the US in its new role as leader of the Western *bloc*. The views of the United States on Europe were dismissed in this regard as proof that it did not fully appreciate Britain's global role and was set apart from its continental neighbours. By 1958 this had changed. Suez had demonstrated the danger

⁹⁵ TNA CAB 128/30 C.M. (57) 3, 'Minutes of Cabinet Meeting 8 January 1957, p. 4.

⁹⁶ A. Dobson, 'The Special Relationship and European Integration', *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (1992), p. 79; D.R. Thorpe, *Supermac: The Life of Harold Macmillan* (London, 2011), p. 170; P. Mangold, *The Almost Impossible Ally: Harold Macmillan and Charles de Gaulle* (London, 2006), p. 37.

to Britain in acting against US wishes,⁹⁷ and the interdependence document made the point that the US welcomed British moves into Europe, but wished that they were more numerous, and that they had accomplished more.⁹⁸ Furthermore, while recognising the dangers of appearing to be an American satellite, the document stressed that if Britain played its proper part in Europe, it would remain an invaluable ally to the United States. It also stressed that if Britain remained isolated from Europe's political leadership, its value would diminish and the US might bypass Britain and deal directly with Europe,⁹⁹ a point made in the 'Study for Future Policy' as well.¹⁰⁰

This last point was a prevalent theme, and it is certainly one reason for the British decision to seek membership of the Common Market in 1961/1962. The interdependence study was written during the abortive and unsuccessful Free Trade Area negotiations in 1958, and advocated that policy rather than EEC membership. Nevertheless, one aspect of Macmillan's decision to apply for the latter was a fear that Britain did not possess enough influence with the United States, a point made by his biographers, scholarly work on Anglo-European relations, and in Macmillan's own

⁹⁷ TNA CAB 129/92, C. (58) 77, 'The Effects of Anglo-American Interdependence on the Long-Term Interests of the United Kingdom' (10 Apr., 1958), p. 4.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 7.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 8.

¹⁰⁰ TNA CAB 129/100, C. (60) 35, 'Study of Future Policy for 1960-1970' (Feb., 1960), p. 3.

‘Grand Design’.¹⁰¹ 1960 was a bad year for Macmillan and for Britain. The failure of the Four Power (United States, U.S.S.R., UK, and France) summit in Paris in 1960, in which he had invested much time and political capital, depressed the Prime Minister, and forced him to conclude that the influence he felt he and his country possessed, counted for nothing in the face of superpower intransigence.¹⁰² It was this, more than anything else, that persuaded him of the necessity of seeking membership of the Common Market. However, as can be seen from the Cabinet discussions, the ‘Study of Future Policy’, and the idea of interdependence, it owed much to the experience of the Suez Crisis.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to examine the argument put forward by historians that the Suez Crisis acted as point of realisation, providing a shock to the system that prompted the British government to undertake a re-appraisal of the country’s world position, a re-appraisal that led to a change in British policy in Europe in favour of closer ties.¹⁰³ Accordingly it asked three questions: was there any evidence of

¹⁰¹ W. Kaiser, *Using Europe* (1999), p. 108; N.P. Ludlow, *Dealing with Britain: The Six and the First UK Application to the EEC* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 19; TNA PREM 11/3325, ‘Memorandum by the Prime Minister on Future UK Political and Economic Policy’ (29 Dec., 1960 – 3 Jan., 1961), p. 2.

¹⁰² R. Aldous, ‘A Family Affair: Macmillan and the Art of Personal Diplomacy’, in R. Aldous et al, *Harold Macmillan* (1996), pp. 21-26.

¹⁰³ S. George, *An Awkward Partner: Britain in the European Community*, 3rd Edition (Oxford, 1998); S. George, *Britain and European Integration since 1945* (Oxford, 1991); S. Bulmer, ‘Britain and European Integration: Of Sovereignty, Slow Adaptation, and Semi-Detachment,’ in S. George (Editor), *Britain and the European Community: The Politics of Semi-Detachment* (Oxford, 1992); P. Hansen,

awareness on the part of the government as to the disaster of Suez; was there any evidence of a re-appraisal of Britain's world position; was there any evidence that closer ties with Europe was an outcome?

It is clear from an examination of primary and secondary evidence, particularly that drawn from the National Archives at Kew, the Conservative Party Archive in Oxford, and the published volumes *Foreign Relations of the United States* and *Documents Diplomatiques Français*, that not only was the British government aware of the disaster that had befallen it, but that it very quickly embarked upon a process of fundamental review. Eden's January 1957 memo stated this in the clearest possible terms, and the Cabinet drew similar conclusions.¹⁰⁴ The articles cited from *The Economist* demonstrated that press and public were similarly aware of the implications of the Suez *debacle*, and it is unlikely that the Cabinet was unaware of them. The article by Gordon-Walker was after all, attached to a file from the PREM 11 series (the Prime Ministers papers for the Conservatives' years in power between 1951 and 1964).

It is similarly clear that Britain did embark upon a period of re-appraisal, and, moreover, that Suez was certainly a factor that contributed to it. The 1957 'Defence Outline of Future Policy' did not mention Suez in the final draft, but not only do certain sections suggest a Suez influence, the discussions in Cabinet refer to the crisis

'European Integration, European Identity and the Colonial Connection', *European Journal of Social Theory*, Vol. 5 (Nov., 2002), pp. 483-498.

¹⁰⁴ TNA PREM 11/1138, 'Thoughts on the General Position After Suez ' (28 Dec., 1956), pp. 2-5; CAB 195/16, C.M. (57) 3, Minutes of Cabinet Meeting (8 January 1957), pp. 2-4.

and link it to decisions affecting the deployment of Territorial Army units in Europe.¹⁰⁵ Further evidence can be found in the studies by the armed forces that contributed to the White Paper itself.¹⁰⁶ Beyond the realm of defence policy narrowly defined, the influence of Suez can be found in the ‘Study of Future Policy’,¹⁰⁷ and it was directly referred to in two foreign policy documents that were subsumed into it: ‘The Position of the United Kingdom in World Affairs’¹⁰⁸ and ‘The Effects of Anglo-American Interdependence on the Long-Term Interests of the United Kingdom’.¹⁰⁹

It was the extent to which Suez could be said to have prompted a shift in policy towards Europe that is the most important issue considered in this chapter: here the basic tenets of British foreign policy in the post-war period, and their interpretation by historians, assume great significance. If one accepts the premise that the Three Circles were essentially a zero sum game, where Europe was sacrificed so as to preserve the special relationship and Britain’s Commonwealth links, then a shift in European policy would have to have involved a conscious decision to use Europe as an alternative. Although precisely such a decision was advocated by Eden, and by

¹⁰⁵ TNA CAB 128/31, C.C (57) 21st Conclusions, ‘Conclusions of a Meeting of the Cabinet’ (18 Mar., 1957), p. 5.

¹⁰⁶ TNA DO 35/7127, C.O.S. (57) 2G, ‘Importance of the Arabian Peninsular: Note by the War Office’ (16 Jan., 1957), p. 1; DEFE 5/73, C.O.S. (57) 33, ‘Long-term Defence Review: Air Transport Force’ (5 Feb., 1957), p. 4.

¹⁰⁷ TNA CAB 129/100, C. (60) 35, ‘Study of Future Policy for 1960-1970’ (Feb., 1960), pp. 11-14.

¹⁰⁸ TNA CAB 130/139, ‘The Position of the United Kingdom in World Affairs’ (9 Jun., 1958), p. 1.

¹⁰⁹ TNA CAB 129/92, C. (58) 77, ‘The Effects of Anglo-American Interdependence on the Long-Term Interests of the United Kingdom’ (9 Apr., 1958), p. 4.

Selwyn Lloyd's 'Grand Design', the government rejected it fearing the effects on the special relationship. This, and Macmillan's preference for repairing and furthering the alliance with America, would seem to suggest that Ovendale and Young were correct in downplaying the influence of the Suez Crisis.

However, this is not the case. As has been established, while Britain's treatment of the European circle suggests some semblance of zero sum calculation prior to Suez, asserting that it continued to do so after the crisis is based on a flawed understanding of the Three Circles Policy, and the manner in which Macmillan conducted British foreign policy while Prime Minister. The Three Circles were at heart an exercise in balance and Macmillan, despite giving primacy to Anglo-American relations, was in his own words a firm believer in interdependence. He saw Europe as part of an all encompassing Atlantic Alliance, and his policy of interdependence, in part inspired by the experience of Suez, stressed the importance of closer ties with Europe. This was predominately based on accepting that US insistence on Britain playing its part in the integration process was not evidence that it did not grasp Britain's world, rather than European, role, and that if for no other reason, Britain risked losing its special relationship to the US if it remained apart from the EEC. It has also been noted that the Cabinet's rejection of Lloyd's 'Grand Design' was a rejection of the specifics of his proposals. In fact, the Cabinet accepted the general premise that Suez had made it clear that a European option was necessary in case US policy continued to be hostile to British interests.¹¹⁰ Finally, there is evidence that members of the Conservative Party responded to Suez with criticism of American

¹¹⁰ TNA CAB 128/30, C.M. (57) 3, 'Minutes of Cabinet Meeting' CAB 128/30 (8 Jan., 1957), p. 4.

policy and saw Europe as a potential alternative,¹¹¹ and the French Ambassador to the United Kingdom detected the spectre of Suez in the proposals for a Free Trade Area that Macmillan presented to Parliament in November 1956.¹¹²

To conclude, on balance there is more than enough evidence to support the assertion that the Suez Crisis prompted a re-appraisal of British policy that, *via* interdependence and the Anglo-American special relationship, eventually led to Macmillan's decision in 1961 to apply for membership of the EEC. This was by no means the only way in which Suez influenced the nature of Anglo-European relations: Macmillan's own emergence as Prime Minister, the rise of Edward Heath, and the influence of the crisis on French policy in Europe, were further instances of the impact of the crisis, and they will be the focus of subsequent chapters.

¹¹¹ CPA CRD 2/34/2, 'Conservative Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee: Record of Meeting (14 Nov., 1956), p. 1.

¹¹² DDF, 1956, Tome. III, 'Chauvel to Pineau' (29 Nov., 1956), pp. 426-427. Translated by Dan Whyman.

Chapter IV: The Suez Crisis and British Policy Towards Membership of the European Communities: Harold Macmillan

I have no doubt whatever that the crisis destroyed what chances Mr Butler had. This seems to me to be an indisputable fact. Mr Butler may have been unfairly treated, but Suez really destroyed him as surely as it destroyed Mr Anthony Eden.¹

Introduction

In the previous chapter we examined one of the existing arguments put forward by those historians who saw a role for the Suez Crisis in the evolution of British policy towards European integration. The chapter determined that an immediate consequence of Suez was a rise in anti-American sentiment that advocated orienting British policy towards Europe as an alternative. It also explored the actions taken by the British government in the immediate aftermath of the crisis and identified a distinct awareness of the damage that it had done to Britain's position in the world and extensive evidence of a period of reappraisal. While it is not realistic to conclude that Europe was seized upon as a policy alternative to existing links with the US and the Commonwealth, the short-term emphasis on repairing the damage done by Suez to the alliance with United States was to have a longer-term impact on British policy towards membership of the European Communities, through Macmillan's policy of interdependence. This chapter will now take this idea and examine how the fall of

¹ R. Rhodes James, 'Political Reactions,' in *Suez Ten Years After: Broadcasts from the BBC Third Programme* Ed. A. Moncrieff, (London, 1967), p. 114.

Anthony Eden and his replacement by Macmillan rather than Butler was of particular and long-lasting significance to British policy.

Macmillan's rise to power at the expense of Eden and Butler was one of the most immediate consequences of the Suez Crisis, particularly in the context of British policy on Europe. The reasoning behind this assertion is that while Macmillan was not a supporter of a 'federalist' or 'supranational' Europe, he has long enjoyed a qualified, but not unchallenged,² reputation as a broadly pro-European politician.³ He was a founding member of Churchill's United Europe Movement and a delegate at the 1948 Congress of Europe. In the early 1950s he, along with other Conservatives positively disposed towards Europe, lobbied Churchill and Eden, without success, to adopt a more positive approach to European integration than that displayed by the previous Labour Government.⁴ He was also considered by his contemporaries inside and outside of Britain to have been among the most pro-European members of the Conservative Party, and someone determined to take Britain into Europe.⁵

² D. Carlton, *Anthony Eden: A Biography* (London, 1981), p. 285.

³ N. Fisher, *Harold Macmillan: A Biography* (London, 1982), p. 306; A. Horne, *Macmillan: The Official Biography: Part I: 1894-1956* (20th Anniversary Edition) (Basingstoke, 2008), pp. 227-228; A. Sampson, *Macmillan: A Study in Ambiguity* (London, 1967), p. 101; J. Turner, *Macmillan* (Harlow, 1994), p. 83; D.R. Thorpe, *Supermac: The Life of Harold Macmillan* (London, 2011), p. 256; C. Williams, *Harold Macmillan* (London, 2010), p. 130.

⁴ J.W. Young, 'Churchill's 'No' to Europe: The 'Rejection' of European Union by Churchill's Post-War Government, 1951-1952,' *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Dec., 1985), p. 923.

⁵ Lord Butler, *The Art of Memory: Friends in Perspective* (London, 1982), p. 101.

In office as Prime Minister he fundamentally altered British policy towards membership of the European Communities. He moved it away from the scepticism and occasional hostility that had been the hallmarks of the Attlee, Churchill and Eden administrations to the point where a mere five years after Eden's government declined to participate at Messina, Macmillan's opened negotiations with the Six to determine on what terms Britain could join the EEC. Not all of Macmillan's actions and policies in Europe were designed to move Britain closer to the Six, in fact his early attempts to create a free trade area, and the creation of EFTA were designed in opposition to the new Common Market, but, in the summer of 1960 he came to the conclusion that membership was in Britain's interest. Accordingly he began a year-long process of trying to convince his Cabinet, the Conservative Party, and ultimately the House of Commons of that. In July 1960 he reshuffled his cabinet, a move interpreted widely as a precursor to an EEC bid, moving known pro-Europeans such as Heath into strategic positions.⁶ In January 1961 he circulated his 'Grand Design',⁷ a document that clearly demonstrated his view that Britain must seek membership of the EEC, and even though General de Gaulle vetoed his bid in January 1963, Macmillan had established Britain as a country destined to join the European Communities.⁸ Furthermore by promoting Heath and placing him in charge of the negotiations, Macmillan furthered

⁶ M. Camps, *Britain and the European Community 1955-1963* (London, 1964), pp. 314-315; G. Hutchinson, *The Last Edwardian at No. 10: An Impression of Harold Macmillan* (London, 1980), pp. 76-77.

⁷ TNA, PREM 11/3325, 'Memorandum by the Prime Minister' (29 Dec., 1960).

⁸ H. Parr, *Britain's Policy Towards the European Community: Harold Wilson and Britain's World Role, 1964-1967* (Abingdon, 2006), p. 5.

the career of the man who, as even de Gaulle predicted,⁹ would succeed where he himself had failed, and take Britain into the Common Market.

Counter-Factual History

It is this author's contention that Britain's relationship with and policy towards Europe would not have undergone the fundamental changes it did between 1957 and 1963 had Harold Macmillan not become Prime Minister. This assertion is to a certain extent a counterfactual argument, as we cannot know for certain how Eden or Butler would have acted after January 1957, yet that is not to say that there is no place for it. Counterfactual history has long been a contentious subject. Jeremy Black's first example of it in *Studying History* is Edward Gibbon's consideration of an Islamic victory at the Battle of Tours, although he credits the emergence in the 1960s of the American Cliometric School with counterfactuals becoming more widespread.¹⁰ Niall Ferguson in *Virtual History* asserted that counterfactuals tend to be found (sometimes even if only implicitly) in revisionist, anti-consensual works that seek to challenge the idea that history is deterministic in nature.¹¹ Ferguson differentiated between two types of counterfactual, those that are products of imagination and lack an empirical basis, and those that 'test hypotheses by (supposedly) empirical means'.¹² Martin Bunzl, writing five years after Ferguson, described two different kinds of

⁹ W. Rees-Mogg, 'Avec Heath a Leur Tete', *Sunday Times* (1 Aug., 1965), p. 8.

¹⁰ J. Black & D.M. MacRaid, *Studying History* (2nd Edition) (Basingstoke, 2000), pp. 124-127.

¹¹ N. Ferguson, *Virtual History: Counterfactuals and Alternatives* (London, 1997), p. 5.

¹² *Ibid*, pp. 17-18.

counterfactual history, the ‘good’ and ‘bad’, the difference being the presence or absence of an historical grounding.¹³

There are many authors who have taken a markedly different view. E.H Carr referred to counterfactuals as ‘parlour games’, E.P Thompson used the phrase ‘unhistorical shit’, and Randall Collins described ‘analytically particularistic turning points’ as demonstrating a ‘negative imagination’.¹⁴ More recently, Richard Evans in *Altered Pasts* considered the arguments of Ferguson and others who took a relatively positive view of counterfactuals, but concluded that they are essentially flawed on the very grounds that they claim validity. Specifically, that a counterfactual starts at a particular point and then presents a different scenario based on something different happening, but making a set of assumptions that only one path is possible:

This moment of decision is conceptualised as a moment contingency, when things might easily have gone in a different direction from the one they actually took...But this involves a huge range of assumptions about how history...operated. These assumptions necessarily eliminate contingency rather than underlining its importance and influence...’contingency cuts two ways’, for if we have contingency

¹³ M. Bunzl, ‘Counterfactual History: A Users Guide’, *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 109, No. 3 (Jun., 2004), p. 845.

¹⁴ E.H. Carr, *What Is History?* (2nd Edition) (London, 1987) Cited in M. Bunzl, ‘Counterfactual History: A Users Guide’, *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 109, No. 3 (Jun., 2004), p. 845; E.P. Thompson, *The Poverty of Theory and Other Essays* (London, 1978), p. 300. Cited in N. Ferguson, *Virtual History: Counterfactuals and Alternatives* (London, 1997), p. 5; R. Collins, ‘Turning Points, Bottlenecks, and the Fallacies of Counterfactual History’, *Sociological Forum*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (Sep., 2002), p. 250.

at the outset of a counterfactual speculation, then we must also have it in the early middle, the middle and the late stages, indeed all the through. Thus ‘contingency is not a train one can get on or off at will’.¹⁵

As we have noted, there is a certain degree of counterfactual reasoning implicit in the argument that Macmillan’s ascent to the premiership was a significant moment for Anglo-European relations. It is predicated on the belief that neither Eden, nor Butler, would have done so much to change British policy on Europe and so would seem to make certain assumptions regarding how either man would have behaved if events had gone differently. However, in line with Ferguson and Bunzl’s arguments about an empirical basis, it is submitted that in actual fact, and cognizant of there being no certainty, there is plenty of evidence to support the assertion that had Eden or Butler been Prime Minister between 1957 and 1963 the nature of Anglo-European relations would have been different. This is based on the known views on Europe held by both men, and in the case of Eden how he approached European integration and British participation therein when he was Foreign Secretary and then Prime Minister.

Anthony Eden was not necessarily hostile *per se* to European integration, but in opposition and in office he displayed little interest beyond cooperation at the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC). His 1957 memorandum with the prescient comment on moving closer to Europe being a potential consequence of Suez suggests a certain pragmatism,¹⁶ but bitterness against the US

¹⁵ R.J. Evans, *Altered Pasts: Counterfactuals in History* (London, 2014), p. 84.

¹⁶ TNA, PREM 11/1138 ‘Thoughts on the General Position After Suez’ (Jan., 1957) p. 5.

and much of the Commonwealth cannot be ruled out as contributing factors, and there is nothing else to suggest he would have altered British policy had he remained in office. Overall his views and policies are perhaps best understood as an example of Britain's overall posture in this period, benign detachment. Butler was an outright sceptic where European integration was concerned. Europe does not appear in his memoirs, nor do his biographers devote much time to it in the context of his career. He held a seat in an agricultural constituency and thus reflected the anti-Common Market views of his constituents in rural, hence agricultural, Essex. His most notable contributions to the issue were his dismissive comments about the Messina Conference.¹⁷

Macmillan's pro-European credentials, despite some scepticism on the part of biographers as to how genuine they were, and when combined with his political pragmatism, facilitated the change in British policy on European integration. However, without the Suez Crisis it is almost inconceivable that he would ever have been in a position to have the impact that he did. Anthony Eden had long been the heir-apparent to Churchill and at the time that the wartime leader finally retired, but Macmillan was not seen as a likely successor.¹⁸ His age was a factor against him, as was his lack of cabinet seniority. Once Eden became Prime Minister his chances of becoming leader seemed to have been just as remote. Macmillan was three years older

¹⁷ R. Lamb, *The Failure of the Eden Government* (London, 1987), p. 69.

¹⁸ D.R. Thorpe, *Eden: The Life and Times of Anthony Eden First Earl of Avon, 1897-1977* (London, 2004), p. 498.

than the Prime Minister and if Eden remained in office for at least four or five years, Butler was seen as the man likely to be the next Conservative leader.¹⁹

Suez was essential for Macmillan. The stress of the failed operation and the accusations of collusion and lying to Parliament made Eden's position untenable and he was unable to remain in office. Macmillan and his conduct during the crisis have been the source of considerable controversy, with accusations levelled at him that he manipulated the aftermath of the crisis firstly to ensure Eden's downfall, and then his own accession. His speech to the Conservative 1922 Committee likened accepting Nasser's occupation of the Canal as akin to the appeasement of Hitler and Mussolini in the 1930s. Butler had supported the appeasement policy in the 1930s and was also seen as weak over Suez. There were some existing doubts on the part of the Cabinet and the party about Butler irrespective of Suez; his support of appeasement in the 1930s was one factor, another was a perception that he was excellent at framing party policy, but not a suitable Prime Minister. His 1955 budget, that took sixpence in the pound off of income tax barely 3 months before the General Election was widely seen as political cynicism, and he received much criticism for it.²⁰ As a result, despite the press predicting that Butler would be the next Prime Minister, the overwhelming preference of both the Conservative backbench and the Cabinet was for Macmillan.²¹ Macmillan had been one of the most aggressive members of the Cabinet over Suez and had also played an instrumental role in the decision to withdraw. Yet he managed

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 631.

²⁰ J. Campbell, *Pistols at Dawn: Two Hundred Years of Political Rivalry from Pitt and Fox to Blair and Brown* (London, 2009), p. 260.

²¹ 'The Heir Too Apparent', *The Economist* (22 Dec., 1956), p. 1034.

to turn these positions, which should have alienated both wings of the party, into the support necessary to ensure that he, not Butler, succeeded Eden.

Macmillan the Suez Crisis

Macmillan became leader of the Conservative Party after the resignation of Eden in January 1957, yet, and remaining conscious of the risks we identified earlier in making counterfactual arguments, this alone does not tell us *how* significant Suez was. There are too many questions that would need to be answered for this issue to be explored fully within the bounds of this work so the discussion on the impact of Suez on the change of leadership in the Conservative Party will be reduced to the following three:

1. How likely was it that Macmillan, rather than Eden, would have replaced Churchill in April 1955?
2. Could he have become Prime Minister after Eden without Suez, or at least a crisis of a similar nature?
3. How did Suez remove Eden and help Macmillan defeat Butler?

The first question is relatively straightforward; Macmillan had little to no chance of succeeding Churchill instead of Eden. However, to state it was completely out of the question would be unwise, as it would involve ignoring the circumstances of Churchill's retirement and the state of the Conservative Party at that time. Biographers of both Eden and Macmillan have claimed that the latter harboured some ambitions to succeed Churchill in 1955. D.R Thorpe is one of these and although he recounted a conversation between Macmillan and Lord Beaverbrook, that appears in

Macmillan's diaries, he presents no other evidence to suggest any leadership ambitions (however faint) that Macmillan may have had.²² The conversation as reproduced in Macmillan's diary entry for 23 April 1953 ran thus:

When Churchill goes there will be a contest for the leadership of the Party. There will be an Eden section; there will be a Butler section. You may easily slip in, as Bonar Law did between Chamberlain and Walter Long.' 'Yes' I replied, 'but who is to be my Max Aitken'. He laughed at this. Quite an amusing and stimulating medicine, to be taken in very small DOSES, at two or three year intervals.²³

Max Aitken was the given name of Lord Beaverbrook and Macmillan's reference was to the role he apparently played in Bonar Law's accession in October 1922. The passage tells us very little regarding any leadership ambitions on the part of Macmillan. On the one hand the fact that Beaverbrook spoke as he did could be taken to suggest he at least felt that the idea had crossed Macmillan's mind, on the other, Macmillan's reference to amusement and that it should be taken in small doses could be referring to his opinion of Beaverbrook's suggestion. Thorpe claimed that later in life Macmillan regretted not having succeeded Churchill himself and felt that if he had, the Suez Crisis would have had a different outcome.²⁴

²² D.R. Thorpe, *Supermac* (2011), p. 296.

²³ HMD vol. I (23 Apr., 1953). Cited in P. Catterall, *The Macmillan Diaries Volume I: The Cabinet Years 1950-1957* (Basingstoke, 2003), pp. 225-226. All future diary references will be from this source unless otherwise stated and all following references will be HMD vol. I (Date of Entry), Page Numbers.

²⁴ D.R. Thorpe, *Supermac* (2011), p. 299.

Apart from the conversation with Beaverbrook which is of rather limited use, the body of evidence actually points towards Macmillan having no ambitions of any kind, and acting under the assumption that Eden would replace Churchill. He was intimately involved in the long and drawn out process of persuading Churchill to resign so that Eden could have time to establish an administration before a General Election.²⁵ His diary entries for 4 August 1953 and 6 April 1954 display an active assumption that Eden would be Prime Minister after Churchill.²⁶ On 24 August 1954 he spoke to Churchill about his repeated, and broken, undertakings to resign and hand over to Eden. His memoirs recount the meeting:

Churchill naturally did not like this, but as always treated what I said calmly and courteously. I had once observed to him that I could speak to him more frankly than some of his colleagues. He had long treated Eden as an eldest son and even if Eden were to break down in health, there were many senior to me. In the case of great estates, the eldest son can never speak to his father about the wisdom of handing over property; a younger son who has nothing to gain is the person who should undertake the task, however disagreeable.²⁷

Whether or not Macmillan held out any hope, however slim, of becoming Prime Minister after Churchill, he was aware that his chances were extremely limited. The

²⁵ G. Best, *Churchill: A Study in Greatness* (London, 2001), pp. 310-313; S. Haffner, *Churchill* (Translated by John Brownjohn) (London, 2001), pp. 140-150; R. Jenkins, *Churchill* (Basingstoke, 2001), pp. 870-900.

²⁶ HMD vol. I (4 Aug., 1953), pp. 249-251; HMD vol. I (6 Apr., 1954), p. 305.

²⁷ H. Macmillan, *Tides* (1969), pp. 540-541.

Daily Mirror ran a popularity poll in the summer of 1954 in which Macmillan received less than 2% of the vote compared to Eden's 52%.²⁸ As he said himself to Churchill there were other men than Eden more senior to him, and he was not considered among the first rank of the Conservative Party. He had never held one of the great offices of state and apart from his time as Minister of Housing and Local Government, his most significant role in government had been a short and frustrating tenure as Minister of Defence. This was frustrating because of Churchill's tendency to interfere continuously.²⁹

It is here that the first two questions begin to overlap and, rather than abandon Macmillan's leadership chances relative to Eden at Churchill's retirement and move onto his chances of succeeding Eden, we will consider them together. Thorpe has asserted that Macmillan in fact needed Eden to succeed Churchill if he were to seriously entertain any leadership ambitions of his own.³⁰ He also needed Eden to remain in charge long enough to establish himself as a leadership alternative, but not so long that his age disqualified him in the face of competition from younger men such as Butler or Lloyd.³¹

Could Macmillan have become Prime Minister without the Suez Crisis? As with any counterfactual this is rather complicated. Macmillan's chances depended on Eden succeeding Churchill then leaving office, voluntarily or by compulsion, before

²⁸ A. Sampson, *Macmillan* (1967), p. 98.

²⁹ HMD vol. I (29 Oct., 1954), p. 363; HMD Vol. I (11 Dec., 1954), pp. 369-370; HMD vol. I (26 Feb., 1955), p. 397; H. Macmillan, *Tides* (1969), p. 560.

³⁰ D.R. Thorpe, *Eden* (2004), p. 498.

³¹ E. Pearce, *The Lost Leaders: The Best Prime Ministers we Never Had* (London, 1997), p. 102.

Macmillan's age and the position of Butler rendering it impossible. Moreover, Macmillan was neither liked, nor trusted by Eden, who was well aware of his ambitions by the time he became Prime Minister. Churchill was reported to have spoken to Eden about this although,³² according to Peter Hennessy, Eden was already well aware of this anyway.³³ Macmillan always claimed that he achieved his life's ambition when he became Foreign Secretary in April 1955 yet, his actions in December 1955 suggested he considered Butler to be a rival and although he could have meant that in the context of advising the Prime Minister, it is more likely that this rivalry was for the Premiership itself. Eden had not wanted Macmillan as his Foreign Secretary. He considered foreign affairs to be his arena and had no intention of handing over control to someone who was strong enough to challenge him. Had his preferred candidate, Salisbury, not sat in the House of Lords, Eden would have preferred him as Foreign Secretary.³⁴ Having won a General Election, increased the government's majority and obtained a mandate for himself, Eden was able to act and sought to move Macmillan to the Treasury, replacing him with Selwyn Lloyd, an intelligent man but not remotely capable of challenging Eden on foreign policy.

Macmillan did not want to become Chancellor, particularly if Butler was to be Lord Privy Seal and Deputy Prime Minister. The latter was a position that was rarely dealt with and Macmillan feared that merely by holding the title, Butler's position as heir apparent would be solidified. He spent some time negotiating with Eden and although he was unable to persuade the Prime Minister to make Butler his *de facto*

³² D.R. Thorpe, *Supermac* (2011), p. 296.

³³ P. Hennessy, *Having it so Good: Britain in the Fifties* (London, 2006), p. 374.

³⁴ HMD vol. I (17 Jan., 1953), pp. 208-209.

deputy, he did obtain an assurance of rather dubious constitutionality that Butler did not formally outrank him.³⁵ If Macmillan entertained no leadership ambitions himself then a promotion to what is indisputably the second most powerful position in the British government should not have been a cause for concern. Nor should Butler holding an empty title. However, when we take into account what Macmillan knew about Eden's health, and the growing disquiet about aspects of Eden's leadership, Macmillan's concern with Cabinet pre-eminence becomes clearer.

Macmillan, to judge from his diaries, was more than aware that Eden's health was precarious,³⁶ and that there were many in the country, including Churchill and Robert Boothby,³⁷ who did not believe he was up to the job of being Prime Minister.³⁸ Butler commented that Eden was half mad Baronet and half beautiful woman but the best Prime Minister they had.³⁹ Macmillan later remarked that Eden was 'trained to win the Derby in 1938, but was not let out of the stalls until 1955'.⁴⁰ By the time Nasser seized the Suez Canal in July 1956, Eden's position was neither strong nor particularly secure. Macmillan, according to Thorpe, had a strong sense that he could

³⁵ HMD vol. I (7-13 Dec., 1955), pp. 513-517.

³⁶ HMD vol. I (13 Mar., 1952), p. 152; HMD vol. I (6 Apr., 1953), p. 221; HMD vol. I (1-7 Jun., 1953), pp. 235-236.

³⁷ D.R. Thorpe, *Eden* (2004), p. 514; C. Williams, *Macmillan* (2010), p. 150.

³⁸ 'A Time for Courage', *Times* (2 Jan., 1956), p. 9; *Daily Telegraph* (3 Jan., 1956), referred to in HMD vol. I (3 Jan., 1956), p. 523, and further articles referred to in HMD vol. I (12 Jan., 1956), pp. 523-527.

³⁹ P. Cosgrave, *R.A. Butler: An English Life* (London, 1981), p. 12; S. Lucas, *Britain and Suez: The Lion's Last Roar* (Manchester, 1996), p. 34; R.G. Hughes, *The Postwar Legacy of Appeasement: British Foreign Policy since 1945* (London, 2014), p. 46.

⁴⁰ P. Hennessy, *Having it So Good* (2006), p. 357.

be the next leader of the Conservative Party.⁴¹ He had secured his position within the Cabinet and by virtue of having been Foreign Secretary and now Chancellor of the Exchequer was now considered as leadership material. This was in contrast to the view in 1954 where it was noted that his good conduct as a member of the party made it unlikely that he would ever lead it.⁴² However, despite attacks in the press and ill-health, Eden was the leader of a government with a large majority in the House of Commons. He had led the party to a General Election victory that had resulted in this majority, and he had proved politically strong enough to make changes to his Cabinet that strengthened his own position. As events transpired it was Suez that forced him out of office and enabled Macmillan to succeed him. The issue to examine here is how that came about.

The crisis' first and most immediate impact on Macmillan was the role it played in the downfall of Eden. The strain of the crisis had, by mid November, taken its toll on his already fragile health and he was compelled to leave Britain and recuperate in Jamaica. He returned on December 14th but despite an initially bullish determination to continue,⁴³ it soon became clear that his position was untenable. Even while he was away Harold Wilson had called for him to either return or resign,⁴⁴ and, according to Thorpe, the Conservative Party was awash with speculation about

⁴¹ D.R. Thorpe, *Supermac* (2011), p. 299; Earl of Kilmuir, *Political Adventure: The Memoirs of the Earl of Kilmuir* (London, 1964), pp. 256-257.

⁴² N. Fisher, *Harold Macmillan* (1982), p. 147.

⁴³ 'Sir A. Eden Returns "Absolutely Fit to Resume Duties"', *The Times* (15 Dec., 1956), p. 6; R. Butler, *The Art of the Possible* (London, 1971), p. 195.

⁴⁴ 'Alternatives for Sir Anthony: "Return or Resign" *The Manchester Guardian* (1 Dec., 1956), p. 1.

his position.⁴⁵ Edward Heath, Chief Whip during the crisis, claimed in his autobiography that he was approached by a member of the Suez Group before a vote on November 8th, offering support to the government if Heath would undertake to remove Eden from office.⁴⁶ Even in the US there was a belief that Eden's time as Prime Minister was over. Winthrop Aldrich, US Ambassador to the United Kingdom, reported his suspicion that there seemed to be a concerted effort in the Cabinet to replace Eden.⁴⁷ A conversation in the White House between President Eisenhower, Herbert Hoover Jr (Undersecretary of State) and Colonel Goodpaster (one of Eisenhower's aides) included Hoover referring to reports of tensions within the British Government and Cabinet.⁴⁸ The source for these reports was presumably Aldrich and in fact the American record notes that he called President Eisenhower later on the 19th to report that his suspicions were correct,⁴⁹ as well as a further telegram reporting that Eden would go on holiday to recuperate and then retire. The telegram predicted Butler as Prime Minister but mentioned the possibility of it being Macmillan.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ D.R. Thorpe, *Eden* (2004), p. 631.

⁴⁶ T. Renton, *Chief Whip: People, Power and Patronage in Westminster* (London, 2004), pp. 284-285.

⁴⁷ FRUS, 1955-1957 Volume XVI, Suez Crisis, July 26 – December 31, 1956, Doc. 588, 'Telegram From the Embassy in the United Kingdom to the Department of State,' (19 Nov. 1956).

⁴⁸ FRUS, 1955-1957, Volume. XVI, Doc. 589, 'Memorandum of a Conference with the President, Washington (19 Nov., 1956).

⁴⁹ FRUS, 1955-1957, Volume. XVI, Doc. 592, 'Editorial Note'.

⁵⁰ FRUS, 1955-1957, Volume. XVI, Doc. 593, 'Telegram From the Embassy in the United Kingdom to the Department of State,' (19 Nov. 1956).

Eden's premiership, and his health, had been undone by the strain of the crisis itself and by the divisions it caused within his government. Britain had been forced to halt an operation that had barely even got underway when it became clear that the British economy could not bear the cost in the face of US opposition.⁵¹ Anthony Nutting and Edward Boyle resigned when they became aware of the details of Sèvres, and the Conservative Party was split between those who were opposed to the invasion itself, and those who abhorred the decision to withdraw. The Chief Whip was able to limit the extent of backbench rebellion and ensure that the government was not defeated on November 8th and December 6th, actions that brought him great credit.⁵² Nevertheless, accusations of collusion that Eden unwisely, although predictably, denied in the House, anger in Washington at British behaviour, the stress of months of planning, the diplomatic reversal and the possibility of the fall of the government took their toll and even though Eden returned on December 14th determined to continue, he was compelled to announce his resignation on January 9th 1957.⁵³

Suez brought about the resignation of Eden: but there is still the issue of how the crisis prevented Butler from succeeding him. Considered the most likely long-term successor to Eden and acting as Deputy Prime Minister in his absence in Jamaica, Butler would have expected to become Prime Minister when Eden resigned.⁵⁴ Indeed he retained that expectation even when Heath arrived to tell him

⁵¹ D.B. Kunz, *The Economic Diplomacy of the Suez Crisis* (North Carolina, 1991), p. 3.

⁵² See Chapter Six.

⁵³ TNA CAB 128/30, C.M. (57) 4 'Sir Anthony Eden: Resignation' (9 Jan., 1957).

⁵⁴ 'Great Britain: Driven Man', *Time* (19 Nov., 1956), p. 5; 'The Heir Too Apparent', *The Economist* (22 Dec., 1956), p. 1034.

that the Queen was sending for Macmillan instead. There were longstanding concerns amongst the Conservative Party about Butler as Prime Minister. He had been a notable supporter of the appeasement policy in the mid and late 1930s and so stood in marked contrast to Churchill, Eden and Macmillan. There was also a sense that despite his impressive record on domestic issues such as education, he was not viewed as someone decisive or capable enough to defend British interests abroad.⁵⁵ The Suez Crisis brought both of these concerns to the forefront and enabled Macmillan to outmanoeuvre Butler, who was in the unfortunate position of having been privy to the full details of the Protocols of Sèvres, had reservations about the entire operation and yet had done nothing to prevent it. To make matters worse, the influential Suez Group on the right of the party was angered by the opposition of the US and felt that the government's decision to halt *Musketeer* and then withdraw completely was a betrayal.⁵⁶ Butler in his capacity as acting head of the government was the one who had to announce this in the House of Commons.⁵⁷

Butler had been in the unfortunate position of having angered both wings of the Conservative Party: the left for not having prevented the attack on Egypt, and the right for the decision to withdraw.⁵⁸ This alone does not explain how Macmillan was

⁵⁵ K. Kyle, *Suez* (1991), p. 534.

⁵⁶ L. Epstein, 'British M.P.s and Their Parties: The Suez Cases,' *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 54, No. 2 (Jun., 1960), p. 376.

⁵⁷ E. Pearce, 'Part One: Richard Austen Butler' in E. Pearce, *The Lost Leaders* (London, 1997), p. 90.

⁵⁸ I. Gilmour, 'Butler, Richard Austen [Rab], Baron Butler of Saffron Walden (1902–1982)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; <http://www.oxforddnb.com.oxfordbrookes.idm.oclc.org/view/article/30886> accessed 30 May 2014.

able to take the leadership for, on the face of it, having been amongst the most aggressive, hawkish members of the Cabinet⁵⁹, and also the one who then ensured the retreat, he should also have been unpopular with both the left and right wings of the party. There have been several interpretations of the period and Macmillan's actions during it that might help us examine why Macmillan did not suffer this fate. Some sources have accused him of working deliberately to remove Eden from power. The historian W. Scott Lucas wrote that Eden's absence gave Macmillan free rein,⁶⁰ and the US Ambassador stated that in addition to his suspicions that there was a Cabinet plot to remove Eden, Macmillan had been desperately anxious to meet Eisenhower, portraying himself as Eden's deputy despite the fact that he was no such thing.⁶¹ Others such as Charles Williams and D.R Thorpe have taken the view that he merely took advantage of a poor speech given by Butler to the 1922 Committee and that there was nothing underhanded or Machiavellian about his conduct.⁶²

One key common feature in considerations of Macmillan's conduct and his accession to the Premiership is the speech he gave to the Conservative 1922 Committee. Macmillan was not actually entitled to speak to the committee and only did so with Butler's goodwill. While Butler gave a limp and uninspiring speech,

⁵⁹ TNA, CAB 134/1217 E.C. 56 (9) 'Action Against Egypt' Note by the Chancellor of the Exchequer (7 Aug., 1956), p. 7; C. Goldsmith, 'In the Know? Sir Gladwyn Jebb: Ambassador to France,' in S. Kelly & A. Gorst (eds), *Whitehall and the Suez Crisis* (Abingdon, 2000), p. 85.

⁶⁰ W. Scott Lucas, *Divided We Stand: Britain, the US and the Suez Crisis* (London, 1991), pp. 311-312.

⁶¹ FRUS, 1955-1957, Volume. XVI, Doc. 588, 'Telegram From the Embassy in the United Kingdom to the Department of State,' (19 Nov. 1956).

⁶² D.R. Thorpe, *Supermac* (2011), pp. 351-353; C. Williams, *Macmillan* (2010), p. 179.

Macmillan delivered a passionate defence of Britain and its interests, railing in particular against appeasement in a performance described by Enoch Powell as one of the most horrible things he experienced in politics.⁶³ Macmillan did not explicitly attack Butler in any way. He did not question his patriotism, his parliamentary record, or his beliefs. What he did do was to link the retreat from Suez to 1930s appeasement, an issue that was the source of considerable doubt about Butler on the part of many Conservatives. Ian Orr-Ewing, MP for Hendon North, stated that ‘a great number, I should think 90 percent of people as they went out of that room, would have supported Harold Macmillan’.⁶⁴ One of many Conservatives who reported back from his constituency the views of Conservative voters stated that many were denouncing the withdrawal from Suez and saw Butler as a villainous appeaser.⁶⁵

Macmillan was one of the few Conservatives to come out of the Suez Crisis with his reputation more or less intact. Despite criticisms from political opponents including Harold Wilson and Brendan Bracken, and the fact that he had aggressively pursued military action before reversing his position and insisting that the operation be halted, he was able to outmanoeuvre Butler and on January 7th became the new Prime Minister. He was able to do this because of the type of crisis that Suez was. It was a foreign policy disaster and as such made both Anthony Eden and Rab Butler vulnerable. Eden’s reputation was based on his foreign policy expertise. He had little interest in domestic policies and both the scale of the *debacle* and the accusations of collusion made his position untenable. Butler, for his part already seen as an appeaser

⁶³ A. Howard, *Rab: The Life of R.A. Butler* (London, 1987), p. 241.

⁶⁴ D.R. Thorpe, *Supermac* (2011), pp. 354-355.

⁶⁵ P. Ziegler, *Edward Heath* (2010), p. 104.

by much of the Conservative Party, aroused the anger of both the liberal and conservative wings by his refusal to try to prevent Operation Musketeer and his association with the decision to withdraw. Macmillan was able to present himself as someone who would defend British interests and was thus able to achieve the Premiership that was seen as beyond his reach a year before. Even Butler himself later commented that there was a sizeable anti-Butler faction but not an anti-Macmillan one.⁶⁶

Macmillan and British Policy on the EEC

The World Macmillan Faced 1960-1962

Macmillan's motivations have been examined ever since General de Gaulle vetoed his EEC bid. Miriam Camps and Wolfram Kaiser are two historians who have stressed geopolitical concerns, specifically that prolonged absence from the EEC would damage Britain's relationship with the United States.⁶⁷ Others have taken the view that he was primarily concerned with improving the British economy.⁶⁸ This author is of the opinion that neither explanation alone is sufficient, nor are the special relationship and the British economy the only factors that prompted the Prime Minister to decide to enter Europe. Firstly, trying to distinguish between geopolitical and economic considerations is superfluous as they are in fact interdependent. The 1957 'Defence Outline of Future Policy stated, 'Britain's influence in the world

⁶⁶ R. Butler, *The Art of the Possible* (London, 1971), p. 195.

⁶⁷ M. Camps, *Britain* (1964), p. 336; W. Kaiser, *Using Europe, Abusing the Europeans* (Basingstoke, 1996), pp. 122-123.

⁶⁸ A. Milward, *The United Kingdom and the European Community, Vol. 1; The Rise and Fall of a National Strategy 1945-1963* (London, 2002).

depends first and foremost on the health of her internal economy and the success of her export trade. Without these, military power cannot in the long run be supported.'⁶⁹ Macmillan's decision was based on his belief that Europe represented the only viable solution to the many problems that he perceived Britain to be facing in the summer of 1960.

In May 1960, when this author contends Macmillan made the decision that Britain should join the EEC, Britain was facing many problems both real and self-perceived, and his diaries are full of references to them. The British economy was in a strong position, growing steadily and enjoying almost full employment and increasing standards of living. In 1957 Macmillan had made his famous utterance that the British people had never had it so good, yet the perception in the late 1950s and early 1960s was of an economy (and a nation) in decline.⁷⁰ Part of this was because the economies of the Six, the United States, and Japan were growing at a faster rate than the British,⁷¹ although as Tomlinson described, this was to be expected given that the economies of Western Europe had started in 1950 from a lower position, and with new technologies and greater trade liberalisation were able to achieve higher rates of growth.⁷² Nevertheless, Macmillan's diaries demonstrate persistent fears within the

⁶⁹ Cmnd. 124, 'Defence Outline of Future Policy' (Apr., 1957), p. 1.

⁷⁰ J. Tomlinson, 'The Decline of the Empire and the Economic 'Decline' of Britain,' *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (2003), pp. 201-202; M. Abramovitz, 'Catching Up, Forging Ahead, and Falling Behind', *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (Jun., 1986), pp. 385-406.

⁷¹ C. Bean & N. Crafts, 'British Economic Growth since 1945: Relative Economic Decline...and Renaissance?' in N. Crafts & G. Toniolo (eds) *Economic Growth in Europe since 1945* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 132.

⁷² J. Tomlinson, *The Politics of Decline: Understanding Postwar Britain* (London, 2000), pp. 2-6.

cabinet that the economy was becoming a problem. In February 1960 he repeatedly referred to the Chancellor (Derick Heathcoat-Amory) expressing concerns about inflation,⁷³ and by June and July 1960 the diary was referring to the same problems.⁷⁴

The second issue confronting the British government by 1960 was the process of decolonization and the retreat from empire. This process had started long before, most notably in 1947 when India and Pakistan became independent, but British policy in the 1950s had been anything but consistent. An agreement with Egypt in 1954 over British withdrawal from the Suez Canal Zone suggested an acceptance that Britain's days of imperial glory were over.⁷⁵ However, the presence of British troops in the ongoing Malayan and Cyprus conflicts, and the somewhat colonial nature of the Suez Crisis, suggest a certain retrenchment. In February 1960 Macmillan delivered his famous 'Wind of Change' speech signalling a new willingness by the Conservative government to grant independence to Britain's African colonies.⁷⁶ It was not however a simple matter of saying to African territories that they were now independent. Several such territories had large populations of European settlers and they were no more eager for the indigenous population to assume power as their counterparts in French Algeria. The attempts of Macmillan's government to create a Central African

⁷³ HMD (7 Feb., 1960), Cited in P. Catterall, *The Macmillan Diaries: Volume II Prime Minister and After 1957-1966* (Basingstoke, 2011), p. 269. All future citations will read as HMD vol. II (Date of Entry); HMD vol. II (16 Feb., 1960), p. 270; HMD vol. II (26 Feb., 1960), p. 375; HMD vol. II (20 Mar., 1960), p. 280.

⁷⁴ HMD vol. II (30 Jul., 1960), pp. 315-317.

⁷⁵ C.B. Selak, Jr, 'The Suez Canal Base Agreement of 1954: Its Background and Implications,' *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 49, No. 4 (Oct., 1955), pp. 487-505.

⁷⁶ 'Wind of Change,' *Times* (4 Feb., 1960), p. 11.

Federation to include Northern and Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland had been ongoing since 1957 and are an excellent example of the difficulties Macmillan faced reconciling demands for independence with trying to ensure the position of white settlers.⁷⁷

Macmillan's diary entry for 4 February 1960 alluded to further problems between Roy Welensky (Prime Minister of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland) and Edgar Whitehead (Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia) including threats of secession.⁷⁸

The entry for 10 July stated:

In addition to other troubles, the Congo (which became independent only a few days ago) has fallen into chaos; murder, rape, inter-tribal warfare, mass flight of Europeans etc. The Belgian Govt doesn't quite know what to do. The Prime

⁷⁷ S. Ball, 'Banquo's Ghost: Lord Salisbury, Harold Macmillan and the High Politics of Decolonisation, 1957-1963,' *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (Mar., 2005), pp. 74-102; L.J. Butler, 'Britain, the United States, and the Decline of the Central African Federation, 1959-1963,' *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 28, No. 3 (Sep., 2000), pp. 131-151; L.J. Butler, 'Business and British Decolonisation: Sir Ronald Prain, the Mining Industry, and the Central African Federation,' *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 35, No. 3 (Sep., 2007), pp. 459-484; L. Butler & S. Stockwell (eds), *The Wind of Change: Harold Macmillan and British Decolonization* (Basingstoke, 2013); M. Hughes, 'Fighting for White Rule in Africa: The Central African Federation, Katanga, and the Congo Crisis, 1958-1965,' *The International History Review*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (Sep., 2003), pp. 592-615; A. James, 'Britain, the Cold War, and the Congo Crisis, 1960-63,' *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 28, No. 3 (Sep., 2000), pp. 152-168; P. Murphy, *Party Politics and Decolonization: The Conservative Party and British Colonial Policy in Tropical Africa, 1951-1964* (Oxford, 1995).

⁷⁸ HMD vol. II (4 Feb., 1960), p. 269.

Minister (Congolese)...is a Communist and probably a Russian agent; the Premier of Katanga (where the mineral wealth is) is a moderate, and wants to be independent. Sir Roy Welensky wants Katanga to be independent and would like to send in troops, by leave of U.K. Govt if we agree and without leave if we don't. I feel like Lord North.⁷⁹

Macmillan's problems went beyond this and even included the problems the Conservative Party felt were posed by a society becoming more and more liberal. In 1957 the use of the Death Penalty was limited to cases of murder by the Homicide Act and although capital punishment was not abolished until 1969, the issue was occupying more and more public attention. Macmillan bemoaned this in September 1961 noting that the press had 'excelled itself. Hardly a word about U.N. crisis, Congo crisis; Berlin crisis...whole front page of these papers is devoted to a murder case.'⁸⁰ British society and the British government were also preoccupied with calls to decriminalise homosexuality. On 30 June 1960 the House of Commons voted against decriminalisation, a vote that Macmillan thought 'should end the Parliamentary controversy for a time.'⁸¹ The changes to British society, particularly the increasingly liberal approach the electorate was beginning to take is a good example of one of the biggest problems Macmillan faced in the early 1960s; that of relevance. In 1959 the major powers of the West were led by himself, Eisenhower, de Gaulle and Adenauer, all relatively old men who were products of an era rapidly disappearing. The election of John F Kennedy in November 1960 brought not only an interesting comparison

⁷⁹ HMD vol. II (10 Jul., 1960), pp. 313-314.

⁸⁰ HMD vol. II (23 Sep., 1961), pp. 413-414.

⁸¹ HMD vol. II (30 Jun., 1960), p. 311.

between the leaders of Britain and the US but also illustrated their power relative to each other. Kennedy was young, energetic and seemed to represent the future in the same that his country did. Macmillan, although respected, was much older and his reputation for being unflappable was beginning to change to 'out of touch'.

Definitional 'Europeanism'

In the introduction to this thesis we examined briefly one of the problems that historians of British policy towards the European Communities face, namely the extent to which British political leaders were 'pro' or 'anti' European. It was noted that while in the case of Edward Heath, R.A. Butler and Hugh Gaitskell it was relatively accurate to portray them as one or the other, Churchill, Eden and especially Macmillan are much more complicated. The problem itself is that broad, general labels such as 'Europeanist', 'pro-Europe' and 'anti-Europe' are inadequate for the nuanced positions these men adopted at various points in their political careers. A 'Europeanist' is taken to be someone who supports the creation and existence of a supranational or federal Europe, an 'anti-European' being someone with an aversion to the idea and a preference for the retention of national sovereignty.⁸² The problem is that when we consider 'Europeanism' in the context of British and French policy re-evaluations towards EEC membership, we are actually asking three distinct questions:

1. Does the person believe that an integrated Europe is a good thing?
2. Should an integrated Europe be 'federal' in nature?
3. Should Britain/France be an active member?

⁸² <http://www.oed.com.oxfordbrookes.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/65100?redirectedFrom=Europeanism&>

Accessed 14 December 2015.

When we examine the views and policies of five Conservatives (Churchill, Eden, Macmillan, Butler and Heath), based on their statements, autobiographies and the views attributed to them by historians, and arrange the likely answers in a table we get the following:

	Churchill	Eden	Macmillan	Butler	Heath
Is an Integrated Europe a 'Good Thing'?	Yes	Yes	Yes	No easily discernable view	Yes
Should an integrated Europe be 'Federal' in nature?	Probably	No	No	No easily discernable view	Probably
Should Britain be an active member?	No	No	Yes	No	Yes

If, therefore, a 'Europeanist' is someone who believed that Britain should be an active member of an integrated and federal Europe than only Heath would qualify. It would also suggest that there was no difference between Eden and Macmillan, a suggestion that does the latter a great disservice. In order to fully demonstrate this and to explore this author's contention that Macmillan's more positive view of Europe than either Eden or Butler, was essential in the redevelopment of British policy after 1957, the views on Europe of all three will be examined below.

Anthony Eden

Anthony Eden has long been considered by historians to have been sceptical, or unenthusiastic according to one author,⁸³ of and about the idea of Britain as part of an

⁸³ G. Smith, Britain in the New Europe, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 71, No. 4 (Fall, 1992), p. 162.

integrated Europe.⁸⁴ He saw little merit in the creation of the United Europe Movement in 1947, and in the words of biographer David Carlton, ‘ostentatiously remained aloof’.⁸⁵ During the tenure of Atlee’s Labour government between 1945 and 1951, Eden found himself in broad agreement with policies of Labour’s Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin, and did not see any benefit in opposing policies with which he agreed purely on the grounds of partisan politics. To Eden, Britain’s pursuit of what he thought of as the “right” foreign policy was more important than scoring political points, and even commanded more of his loyalty than the Conservative Party.⁸⁶ In fact, although he ultimately submitted to pressure from Churchill and led the Conservative opposition in its call on the Labour Government to enter the discussions on the Schuman Plan,⁸⁷ he found the whole process distasteful and something that smacked of hypocrisy.⁸⁸ Immediately after leading the Opposition in the Schuman debate, Eden made a speech in which he stressed the importance of the Commonwealth, and its pre-eminence when it came to British foreign policy.⁸⁹

⁸⁴ V. Rothwell, *Anthony Eden: A Political Biography* (Manchester, 1992), p. 96; M. Wright, Brutus in Foreign Policy: The Memoirs of Sir Anthony Eden, *International Affairs*, Vol. 36, No. 3 (Jul., 1960), p. 307.

⁸⁵ D. Carlton, *Anthony Eden: A Biography* (London, 1981), p. 272.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, p. 285.

⁸⁷ H. of C. Debs, Vol. 476, Cols. 1907-2056, ‘The Schuman Plan’ (26 Jun., 1950).

⁸⁸ V. Rothwell, *Anthony Eden* (1992), p. 100.

⁸⁹ B. Vivekanandan, *The Shrinking Circle: The Commonwealth in British Foreign Policy, 1945-1974* (Bombay, 1983), p. 244.

When the Conservatives returned to office in 1951, Eden, as Foreign Secretary, ruled out any direct British involvement in supranational organisations. A year later, in 1952, he proposed moving all European organisations, including the ECSC and the proposed European Defence Community (EDC) under the authority of the Council of Europe.⁹⁰ He felt that this intergovernmental approach would enable Britain to enjoy the benefits of the integration process without having to assume the obligations inherent in supranational organisations.⁹¹ Harold Macmillan was reported, and claimed, to have submitted to Eden a paper urging a more positive stance on Anglo-European relations.⁹² Eden apparently read the paper but did not deign to

⁹⁰ Statement by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the United Kingdom at the Tenth Meeting of the Committee of Ministers (Paris, 19 March 1952), http://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/2003/10/31/5b2bfb47-d200-49e5-bdf7-25a4e16ad831/publishable_en.pdf ; Speech to be delivered by the Rt. Hon. Anthony Eden, M.C., M.P., Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, at the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe, Strasbourg: Monday, 15th Sept. 1952, http://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/2003/10/31/ecffd313-88ed-463b-a931-da44ca6a8f31/publishable_en.pdf ;The Eden Plan by Julian Amery, Conservative Member of the House of Commons. British Representative in the Council of Europe Consultative Assembly in 1951 and 1952, http://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/2003/3/31/7b96ba60-178b-4c19-b064-278443bcd5d/publishable_en.pdf .

⁹¹ A. Hovey Jr, Britain and the Unification of Europe, *International Organization*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (Aug., 1955), p. 326; A. Forster, *Euroscepticism in Contemporary British Politics: Opposition to Europe in the British Conservative and Labour Parties since 1945* (London, 2002), p. 12; R.J. Lieber, *British Politics and European Unity: Parties, Elites and Pressure Groups* (Berkley, 1970), p. 24.

⁹² J.W. Young, 'Churchill's 'No' to Europe: The 'Rejection' of European Union by Churchill's Post-War Government, 1951-1952', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Dec., 1985), p. 932; H. Macmillan, *Tides of Fortune 1954-1955* (London, 1969), pp. 468-470.

respond to it, and his 1952 Foreign Policy Review made no mention of Europe, save for it being a geographical area of interest as regarded British defence policy.⁹³

It was the European Defence Community,⁹⁴ and then the Messina Conference and Spaak Committee, that have provided the most evidence for the accusation that Eden was hostile to European integration. Eden was not favourably inclined towards supranational organisations, but he reluctantly accepted the EDC because he, like many others, feared a re-armed Germany; because the US was supportive of it, and because he knew that its supranational characteristics would make British participation impossible anyway.⁹⁵ It is worth noting the following points. Eden did not wreck the EDC: that task fell to the French Assembly, which rejected it in August 1954, and in fact Eden worked hard to come up with an alternative, the Western European Union, that was palatable to all concerned.⁹⁶ The Messina Conference in

⁹³ TNA CAB 129/53, C (52) 202, 'British Overseas Obligations: Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs' (18 Jun., 1952), pp. 1-7.

⁹⁴ For the EDC see: E. Fursdon, *The European Defence Community: A History* (London, 1980) ; S. Duke, *The Elusive Quest for European Security: From EDC to CFSP* (Basingstoke, 1999); V. Gavin, 'Power Through Europe? The Case of the European Defence Community in France (1950-1954)', *French History*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (Jan., 2009), pp. 69-87; K. Ruane, *The Rise and Fall of the European Defence Community: Anglo-American Relations and the Crisis of European Defence, 1950-55* (Basingstoke, 2000).

⁹⁵ A. Deighton, 'The Last Piece of the Jigsaw: Britain and the Creation of the Western European Union,' *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (July, 1998), p. 184.

⁹⁶ D. Dutton, *Anthony Eden* (London, 1997), p. 306; K. Ruane, 'Agonizing Reappraisals: Anthony Eden, John Foster Dulles and the Crisis of European Defence, 1953-54', *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (Dec., 2002), pp. 165-166.

1955 however does not contain much that can be used to question the interpretation of Eden as at least sceptical, if not hostile, where European integration was concerned. While Eden was by no means the only member of the government who was sceptical about the proposed Common Market,⁹⁷ he was the Prime Minister, and ultimately, where such questions of 'high' policy were concerned, ultimate decisions rested with him.

The traditional view of Eden as a man sceptical or hostile to European integration is not an unchallenged one. Eden was not in fact hostile to European integration *per se*, merely to supranationalism.⁹⁸ He felt that European co-operation was a good thing and in the best interests of the European powers. He did however believe, as did many others, that Britain was not in the same position as its continental neighbours. It had a world role and the responsibilities that came with it and these made participation in supranational or federalist institutions impractical if not impossible.⁹⁹ After he left office, when Britain sought to enter the EEC, Eden accepted that membership was now in Britain's best interests and publicly supported it. He never became a fanatic on the issue, but then he never had been. Eden supported the haltingly pro-European moves of successive governments, and was unrepentant when it came to his record on the issue when in office.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ See section on Macmillan.

⁹⁸ D. Carlton, *Anthony Eden* (1981), p. 285; K. Ruane, 'Agonizing Reappraisals: Anthony Eden, John Foster Dulles and the Crisis of European Defence, 1953-54', *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (Dec., 2002), p. 155.

⁹⁹ D.R. Thorpe, *Eden* (2004), pp. 537-538.

¹⁰⁰ D. Carlton, *Eden* (1981), pp. 476-477.

In addition there is the memorandum he wrote and circulated in January 1957 just before he resigned from office. This has already been quoted in Chapter Three and while it is not included here to suggest that Suez made Eden reverse his scepticism when it came to federalism, it was remarkably prescient when one considers the fate of the first and second entry bids, when Britain's sincerity was called into question. This author would cite it as evidence that Eden was above all a statesman and expert in foreign policy. He was by no means a pro-European in the way that Ted Heath was, but neither would he belong in such anti-European company as Lord Beaverbrook or Enoch Powell. It is impossible to state categorically whether or not he would have tried to take Britain into the EEC had he remained as Prime Minister after the Suez Crisis. The memorandum, and his public support in 1962, 1967 and 1972, might suggest that he would have been pragmatic enough to reverse his previous policy. On the other hand, he had a long history of opposing further integration in Europe, and one must take into account, where the memorandum is concerned, that it was written at a time of stress and when he felt betrayed by the United States, perhaps prompting or at least influencing the tone and content of his note.

R.A Butler

Whereas Eden's views on Europe were sufficiently nuanced to transcend general terms such as 'pro' or 'anti European', Butler's were rather more straightforward. One of his biographers, Patrick Cosgrave, does not mention Europe in his 1981 work on Butler,¹⁰¹ and he is similarly absent from many works on the history of European

¹⁰¹ P. Cosgrave, *R.A. Butler* (1981).

integration.¹⁰² Butler's memoirs do not mention the EEC, Schuman, Spaak or in any way deal with the Messina Conference. His second volume, *The Art of Memory*, contains only three references to the EEC.¹⁰³ In one respect this is not particularly surprising. Although Butler held all of the Great Offices of State (Foreign Secretary, Chancellor and Home Secretary), he was never Prime Minister, and, with the exception of the end of his time as Chancellor during the Messina discussions, his ministerial responsibilities had little to do with European integration. Indeed, he only became Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in October 1963, some nine months after de Gaulle vetoed the first EEC entry application. Between 1957 and July 1962, the period which saw the changes in British policy in Europe, he was Home Secretary and Europe was therefore not in his purview.

This is not to say that he had no opinion on Europe, nor that he played no role in British policy on European integration, general Cabinet roles notwithstanding. His reputation in this area is one of broad Euroscepticism that has been variously described as hostile,¹⁰⁴ or, in the case of Alan Milward, 'disinvolved distaste'.¹⁰⁵ Anthony Howard, author of the best-known biography of Butler, described his policy

¹⁰² S. George (Ed.), *Britain and the European Community: The Politics of Semi-Detachment* (Oxford, 1992); J.W. Young, *Britain and European Unity 1945-1999* (Basingstoke, 2000).

¹⁰³ R. Butler, *The Art of the Possible* (1971); R. Butler, *The Art of Memory: Friends in Perspective* (London, 1982).

¹⁰⁴ M.J. Dedman, *The Origins and Development of the European Union, 1945-95* (London, 1996), p. 67.

¹⁰⁵ A. Milward, *The United Kingdom and The European Community Volume I: The Rise and Fall of a National Strategy 1945-1963* (London, 2002), p. 229.

on European integration as predominately sceptical.¹⁰⁶ In addition to being the leader of the agricultural lobby within the Conservative Party,¹⁰⁷ he represented an agricultural constituency, Saffron Walden, in rural Essex, and was concerned that he risked losing his seat if he supported British participation in Europe.¹⁰⁸ Most of his constituents, and the National Farmers Union, opposed the agricultural provisions of the EEC, particularly the abolition of national subsidies in favour of a centralised system, fearing that with a smaller agricultural sector than most of the Six, British farmers would lose out if Britain joined.¹⁰⁹ Beyond the narrow confines of his constituency concerns, Butler also belonged to the Imperial-Commonwealth wing of the Conservative Party.¹¹⁰ There are two periods in the history of Anglo-European relations that are significant for this chapter's consideration of Butler's role. The first was during the latter part of his tenure as Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1955, and the second was in 1962 when Macmillan's government launched its ill-fated bid to enter the Common Market.

¹⁰⁶ A. Howard, *RAB: The Life of R.A. Butler* (London, 1987), p. 295.

¹⁰⁷ W. Kaiser, *Using Europe, Abusing the Europeans: Britain and European Integration, 1945-1963* (Basingstoke, 1996), p. 136.

¹⁰⁸ A. Howard, *RAB* (1987), pp. 295-296.

¹⁰⁹ R. Ackrill, *The Common Agricultural Policy* (Sheffield, 2000), pp. 26-33; J.K. Bowers, 'British Agricultural Policy Since the Second World War', *The Agricultural History Review*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (1985), pp. 66-76.

¹¹⁰ D. Gowland, A. Turner, & A. Wright, *Britain and European Integration Since 1945: On the Sidelines* (London, 2010), p. 46.

Butler was by no means the only member of the British government who expressed distinctly negative opinions when Britain was invited to join the discussions at the Messina Conference. In the two years prior to Messina, 1953 and 1954, Butler was very hostile to the idea of closer links with the ECSC, and admitted that he, like Eden, was bored by European issues.¹¹¹ As Chancellor, he felt that Britain could not viably join a Common Market, as it would threaten the Sterling Area, and although he may have been more dismissive of the proposed initiatives in terms of tone, his attitude in fact differed little from many of his contemporaries, including Eden and Macmillan. Macmillan felt that France would never join a Common Market,¹¹² and Eden did not want to encourage European integration if it could not be steered in a direction more acceptable to British interests.¹¹³

The second period of significance for Butler's European sentiments is the summer of 1962, when Britain was negotiating entry to the EEC. By this time, British policy towards Europe had changed. Having failed to prevent the emergence of the EEC, Britain had tried in a number of initiatives, unsuccessfully, to participate in the integration process while remaining outside the Common Market. France had vetoed the free trade area that was designed to subsume the Six, EFTA was not a viable alternative, and the Six had also refused to allow the kind of association arrangements that Macmillan had pressed for between 1959 and 1961. Broadly speaking a pro-European, Macmillan had accepted that EEC membership was the only remaining

¹¹¹ Ibid, p. 107; D.R. Thorpe, *Supermac* (2011), p. 311; M. Charlton, *The Price of Victory* (London, 1983), p. 195; R. Lamb, *The Failure of the Eden Government* (1987), p. 69.

¹¹² HMD vol. I (14 Dec., 1955), p. 517.

¹¹³ M.J. Dedman, *The Origins* (1996), p. 67.

course of action and had endeavoured to persuade his Cabinet, the House of Commons, and the Conservative Party of the necessity of the move. Butler, by contrast, had not altered his view on the subject in the intervening years. Macmillan appointed him to head the ministerial committee charged with the oversight of the EEC negotiations. Anthony Howard speculated that this was due to Butler's scepticism, and that the Prime Minister was trying to ensure that he could not raise significant or effective opposition to an undertaking the oversight of which he was charged.¹¹⁴

His appointment did little, initially, to change Butler's sceptical attitude to the EEC negotiations. He had never been an easy convert to the cause, and his aforementioned agricultural ties in his constituency made it a difficult issue for him. Nevertheless, when Macmillan met with him in the summer of 1962, he offered qualified support for the entry bid.¹¹⁵ He felt that the National Farmers' Union should be brought into the discussions, but that even if the Treaty of Rome had to be accepted in its entirety, it could be lived with.¹¹⁶ Ultimately, Butler made what he called a 'staunch' decision to back the negotiations, although as Howard points out, 'staunch' did not equate to 'enthusiastic'.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ A. Howard, *RAB* (1987), p. 295.

¹¹⁵ HMD (21 Aug., 1962), Cited in P. Catterall, *The Macmillan Diaries: Volume II Prime Minister and After 1957-1966* (Basingstoke, 2011) p. 492. All future citations will read as HMD vol. II (Date of Entry).

¹¹⁶ A. Milward, *The United Kingdom and the European Community* (2002), pp. 341-342.

¹¹⁷ A. Howard, *RAB* (1987), p. 296.

Harold Macmillan

Earlier we discussed the difficulty in using traditional definitions of ‘pro’ or ‘anti-European’ when examining men such as Harold Macmillan. His biographers have been unable to agree whether or not he deserves to be considered a ‘pro-European’ Prime Minister. Williams noted his membership of the United Europe movement,¹¹⁸ while Thorpe noted his urging of the Labour government in 1950 to adopt the Schuman Plan,¹¹⁹ and Fisher, Sampson, Turner and Young described his frustration with that government’s policies towards Europe and those of the Churchill government of which he was a member.¹²⁰ However, these authors do not consider him to have been an avowed pro-European and so have sought to qualify his Europeanism. Alistair Horne, his official biographer, stated of Macmillan in the context of 1950-1951:

Although there is no doubting Macmillan’s total commitment to Europe at this juncture, at the same time he was asking himself how much would the British electorate accept?...The determination...to get back into power, and stay there, was an overriding consideration and inevitably tempered Macmillan’s stance towards Europe at this point.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ C. Williams, *Macmillan* (2010), p. 130.

¹¹⁹ D.R. Thorpe, *Supermac* (2011), p. 256.

¹²⁰ N. Fisher, *Harold Macmillan* (1982), p. 306; A. Sampson, *Macmillan* (1967), p. 101; J. Turner, *Macmillan* (1994), p. 83; J.W. Young, ‘Churchill’s ‘No’ to Europe: The ‘Rejection’ of European Union by Churchill’s Post-War Government’, *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Dec., 1985), p. 923.

¹²¹ A. Horne, *Macmillan: The Official Biography: Part I: 1894-1956* (20th Anniversary Edition) (Basingstoke, 2008), pp. 227-228.

Horne suggested, as did Sampson and Turner, that political expediency was at the heart of his advocacy of the Schuman Plan.¹²² Horne's view appears to be based on a memorandum Macmillan sent to Churchill in 1950 about Schuman. His memoirs include a copy of it which says:

The situation created by M. Schuman may well be a major turning-point in European history. It is certainly a turning point in the fortunes of the Tory Party. This issue affords the last, and perhaps only, chance of regaining the initiative... 11. But whatever the Government may or may not do, we shall have to define our policy soon. The modern Conservative Party is tough and imaginative... 12. The Socialists have got, and look like keeping, the immense advantages of full employment and high pay-packets. So far, we have only *cost of living* and the *housing muddle* against these.¹²³

Other historians have placed Macmillan in the category of British politicians who were pro-European in opposition but who altered their views once in office. David Carlton, Eden's biographer, claimed Macmillan was no federalist visionary,¹²⁴ Nigel Ashton opined that he was at best a reluctant European,¹²⁵ while Richard Davenport-Hines went so far as to suggest that had Macmillan succeeding in taking Britain into the EEC in 1962 he would have been at best ambivalent, and at worst detrimental to

¹²² A. Sampson, *Macmillan* (1967), p. 91; J. Turner, *Macmillan* (1994), p. 88.

¹²³ H. Macmillan, *Tides* (1969), pp. 193-195.

¹²⁴ D. Carlton, *Anthony Eden* (1981), p. 285.

¹²⁵ N. Ashton, *Kennedy, Macmillan and the Cold War: The Irony of Interdependence* (Basingstoke, 2002), p. 127.

European developments.¹²⁶ Even the historians who have considered him broadly pro-European have referred to his distaste for federalism,¹²⁷ a preference for Britain's imperial and Commonwealth links,¹²⁸ and his desire that the EDC and Messina discussions end in failure.¹²⁹ Indeed, it is the Messina period that provides a great deal of evidence for the claim that Macmillan's Europeanism should be treated with a degree of scepticism. Richard Lamb asserted that by the time of the Messina discussions European integration had ceased to interest Macmillan,¹³⁰ while Hugo Young accused him of not seeing the danger of the Six reaching agreement without Britain that would leave it unable to influence future developments.¹³¹ Peter Catterall dismissed both Lamb and Young's claims but noted the absence of Messina from Macmillan's diaries and claims that he did not provide an alternative policy for the British government to follow.¹³²

This author takes the view that, despite the views of many of his biographers, Macmillan should be considered one of the British leaders most favourably disposed towards European integration and British participation in it. We will deal with the specific allegations made against Macmillan regarding Messina before considering the broader issue of Macmillan's Europeanism in the context of British policy re-

¹²⁶ R. Davenport-Hines, *The Macmillans* (London, 1993), p. 281.

¹²⁷ A. Horne, *Macmillan* (2008), pp. 227-228.

¹²⁸ A. Sampson, *Macmillan* (1967), p. 87.

¹²⁹ J. Turner, *Macmillan* (1994), pp. 87-88; D.R. Thorpe, *Supermac* (2011), p. 311.

¹³⁰ R. Lamb, 'Macmillan and Europe', in R. Aldous & S. Lee (eds), *Harold Macmillan: Aspects of a Political Life* (Basingstoke, 1999), p. 77.

¹³¹ H. Young, *This Blessed Plot: Britain and Europe from Churchill to Blair* (London, 1999), p. 114.

¹³² P. Catterall, 'Macmillan and Europe, 1950-1956: The Cold War, the American Context and the British Approach to European Integration', *Cercles*, Vol. 5 (2002), pp. 103-106.

evaluations of membership of the European communities. In the first instance Macmillan's diaries do not mention Messina much despite his having responsibility as Foreign Secretary for diplomatic affairs for several reasons. The first is that, as James Ellison and others have noted, it was the Treasury that assumed responsibility for British policy towards Europe on the grounds that the issue was deemed to be a financial one rather than a political or diplomatic one.¹³³ Secondly, an examination of Macmillan's diaries reveals that he was not short of issues and crises to deal with in his short tenure as Foreign Secretary. A railway strike,¹³⁴ the formation of West Germany as a sovereign state and its admission to NATO,¹³⁵ the creation of the Warsaw Pact,¹³⁶ and a major summit in Geneva on nuclear disarmament were all ongoing at the same time as Messina,¹³⁷ to say nothing of the proximity of the General Election, ongoing problems in Cyprus,¹³⁸ a pogrom in Istanbul against the Greek minority population¹³⁹ and the scandal that arose over the defections of Burgess and Maclean and the accusations against Kim Philby.¹⁴⁰

¹³³ J. Ellison, *Threatening Europe: Britain and the Creation of the European Community, 1955-1958* (Basingstoke, 2000); S. Burgess & G. Edwards, 'The Six Plus One: British Policymaking and the Question of European Economic Integration, 1955', *International Affairs*, Vol. 64, No. 3 (Summer, 1988), pp. 394-397.

¹³⁴ HMD vol. I (7-15 Jun., 1955), pp. 433-437.

¹³⁵ HMD vol. I (5 May., 1955), pp. 419-420.

¹³⁶ HMD vol. I (9 May., 1955), p. 424.

¹³⁷ HMD vol. I (17-23 Jul., 1955), pp. 450-454.

¹³⁸ HMD vol. I (16 Jul., 1955), pp. 449-450.

¹³⁹ HMD vol. I (7 Jun., 1955), pp. 433-434; HMD vol. I (6 Sep., 1955), pp. 470-471.

¹⁴⁰ HMD vol. I (19 Sep-31 Oct., 1955), pp. 478-501.

When Macmillan replaced Butler as Chancellor of the Exchequer and hence became the head of the department with responsibility for European policy, he immediately began to formulate an alternative to the proposals of the Six for the creation of a Customs Union.¹⁴¹ In the summer of 1956 he and Peter Thorneycroft, President of the Board of Trade, presented to the Cabinet a plan for the creation of a partial free trade area.¹⁴² It should also be noted that there were hardly any observers in Europe who felt in 1955 that the Six would be able to agree on further European integration. The European Defence Community (EDC) had been defeated in the French Assembly the previous August, and even Paul Henri Spaak, long and rightly considered one of the founding fathers of the European Communities and a noted federalist, remarked to Macmillan in February 1956 his despair of the Six reaching agreement.¹⁴³

To deal with the broader issue of Macmillan's sentiments towards Europe and how they fit into this thesis, this author would make three points to support his assertion that Macmillan was deeply committed to European integration and to taking Britain closer to the Six: Firstly we have to make a distinction between how Macmillan has been interpreted by historians since he left office and how he was

¹⁴¹ TNA T 234/183, 'Macmillan to Sir Leslie Rowan' (23 Jan., 1956); T 234/100, 'Macmillan to Sir Edward Bridges' (24 Feb., 1956); HMD vol. I (22 Feb., 1956), p. 538.

¹⁴² TNA Cab 129/82, C.P. (56) 172, 'Organisation for European Economic Co-operation and Tariffs: Memorandum by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the President of the Board of Trade' (9 Jul., 1956); E.I. (56) 14 (Final), 'United Kingdom Initiative in Europe: Plan G, Interim Report by Officials' (27 Jul., 1956); C.P. (56) 192, 'United Kingdom Commercial Policy: Memorandum by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the President of the Board of Trade' (28 Jul., 1956).

¹⁴³ HMD vol. I (28 Feb., 1956), pp. 539-540.

viewed by his contemporaries; secondly the difficulties we have already mentioned when we try to fit specific definitions to political leaders; and thirdly the way Macmillan approached Europe, how often he thought about it and how much of a priority it was for him. It is agreed that he was not a federalist, but then again he never claimed to be one and in a diary entry for November 1950 he described federalists as ‘absurd, conceited, and quote impossible to work with’.¹⁴⁴

Macmillan’s biographers may have taken a rather sceptical view of his Europeanism but his contemporaries considered him to among the most pro-European members of the Conservative Party. The minutes of a meeting of the Conservative Party on 19 July 1955 record that his re-appearance in the Assembly of the European Council was greeted with warmth and taken as a sign of British support for the Council of Europe.¹⁴⁵ In a meeting in Washington DC in January 1957 the French Foreign Minister Christian Pineau and his American counterpart John Foster Dulles agreed that Macmillan was the most pro-European Conservative and that the prospects for the Common Market would be enhanced if, as was expected at that point, he became Foreign Secretary again.¹⁴⁶ His rival for the Conservative leadership, R.A. Butler, remarked in his memoirs that he felt in January 1957 that Macmillan succeeding Eden instead of him would result in an attempt to bring Britain into Europe,¹⁴⁷ and even his opponent Harold Wilson stated in the debate on Plan G ‘the

¹⁴⁴ HMD vol. I (25 Nov., 1950), p. 31.

¹⁴⁵ CPA, CRD 2/34/1, Conservative Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee, ‘Report of a Meeting’ (19 Jul., 1955), p. 1.

¹⁴⁶ FRUS 1955-1957, Volume IV, Doc. 209 ‘Memorandum of a Conversation, Department of State, Washington’ (11 Jan., 1957).

¹⁴⁷ Lord Butler, *The Art of Memory* (1982), p. 101.

Chancellor of the Exchequer – I do not think anyone will doubt the sincerity of his desire to stimulate the progress of European unity- has strange ways of showing his devotion to the European idea.’¹⁴⁸ Lastly, the first issue of *The Economist* to be published after Macmillan became Prime Minister, listed him, along with Peter Thorneycroft and Sir David Eccles as ‘good Europeans’, and stated that Macmillan himself was committed to the reversal of the policy of standing aloof from Europe.¹⁴⁹

The difficulty in accurately describing Macmillan as either ‘pro’ or ‘anti-Europe’ based on existing definitions has already been dealt with earlier in this chapter and so it is not this author’s intention to cover it again in detail. What should be said here though is to refer back to the fact that any such consideration in fact means asking whether Macmillan thought European integration was a good thing, whether he supported a federal Europe, and whether he thought Britain should be an active participant in an integrated Europe. Macmillan definitely believed in the notion of a united Europe. He preferred a confederal approach to federalism but unlike either Eden or Churchill he believed that Britain could not adopt a ‘with but not of’ approach. If his views on federalism are the be all and end all of Europeanism then he would not qualify as a European politician. Then again, on that basis, neither would almost any British leader with the exception of Edward Heath. To consider Macmillan to not be a pro-European is to put him in the same category as Eden and Churchill both of whom felt that Britain could not participate in the integration process.

¹⁴⁸ H. of C. Debs., vol. 561, col. 56, ‘European Trade Policy’ (26 Nov., 1956).

¹⁴⁹ ‘The Year is 1957’, *The Economist* (19 Jan., 1957), p. 180.

The third reason for this author's views on Macmillan and Europeanism is the different way he approached the issue compared to his contemporaries. For Eden, Europe was an issue that had to be dealt with from time to time. However, when it was not a pressing concern, he was not inclined to devote much thought to it. It simply did not interest him when it did not directly impact upon his duties as Foreign Secretary. Macmillan passionately believed in a united Europe. Horne used the references to party-politics in Macmillan's memorandum to Churchill in 1950 to question the extent of his support for Europe. Yet, when we look at the entire document we can see much more than this:

It is now widely reported that the British Government will make an immense...effort to reopen negotiations....In that event it is *absolutely vital* that this should come about as the result of pressure from the Tory Party and from you. For this reason you must give the lead for which *Britain, the Empire, Europe and the world* have been waiting. Everyone looks to you. They feel entitled to look to you. They have, up to now, been disappointed and are getting a little restive at your inaction. They will soon get suspicious. It is said that...you are preparing a retreat from the whole concept of United Europe, now that practical decisions have to be made. 'Winston is selling out Europe' is the phrase being spread everywhere. This propaganda is causing much anxiety and darkening of counsel. You started United Europe. Without you, there would be no Council of Europe, no Committee of Ministers, no Consultative Assembly, no Strasbourg. This is the first and supreme test. You cannot let down all Europe.¹⁵⁰

¹⁵⁰ H. Macmillan, *Tides* (1969), p. 194.

Yes, party politics features again but what comes out of this text is the sense that Macmillan feared Churchill will draw back from his late 1940s enthusiasm for a united Europe, a fear that proved to be well-founded. He is trying to appeal to Churchill to act differently and his references to the political benefit to the Conservative Party should be interpreted as something that Macmillan felt might resonate with Churchill even if an appeal to the ideals of the whole project did not. Macmillan tried again in 1952 sending a paper to Anthony Eden,¹⁵¹ and in his memoirs he remarked that his ministerial responsibilities meant that he could only give occasional time to ‘other questions –defence, foreign affairs, and above all, European unity, to which I had devoted so much labour’.¹⁵² In many of his diary entries for March 1952 Macmillan’s sense of frustration at the policies being pursued by Churchill’s government are more than apparent. On the 12th he stated his view that Eden and the Foreign Office ‘clearly mean to destroy Strasbourg’,¹⁵³ while the 15th March entry reads as follows:

I have put the whole of the ‘Council of Europe’ papers in order. I am still not sure what best to do. Resignation is no good and wd delight those who are against us – at least so I feel. But Churchill must be pressed, and warned. I don’t believe he realises the sense of disappointment or even anger of those whom he led in 5 years work in the European Movement.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ Ibid, p. 468.

¹⁵² H. Macmillan, *Tides* (1969), p. 377.

¹⁵³ HMD vol. I (12 Mar., 1952), pp. 151-152.

¹⁵⁴ HMD vol. I (15 Mar., 1952), p. 152.

What were Macmillan's Views on Europe?

Macmillan approached Europe from the perspective of a man to whom great issues and problems appealed. He was a product of the Edwardian period and his love of literature and history had inculcated in him a belief that great issues required bold solutions, and that summit diplomacy by great men was the best way to achieve this.¹⁵⁵ In the context of Europe after the Second World War Macmillan held a fervent belief that the unification of the continent was the only way to avoid a repeat of the two world wars, prevent a resurgent Germany from seeking to dominate Europe again,¹⁵⁶ and ensure that the West could successfully prosecute the Cold War.¹⁵⁷ In this last respect he recognised that the active presence and support of the United States was essential, and that the US was more likely to commit itself to the defence of a continent that was actively trying to move beyond and resolve the problems of the recent past.

Macmillan was by no means alone in this conviction. Across Europe men such as Churchill, Jean Monnet, Robert Schuman, Paul-Henri Spaak and others had become convinced that Europe's future lay in a process of unification, the creation of a 'United States of Europe'. Where Macmillan differed from these men was the type or form that this united Europe should take, and in the case of Churchill the role that Britain should play. Churchill believed that Britain's interests outside of Europe made it impractical for it to be an active member of a unified Europe and so Britain's role

¹⁵⁵ TNA CAB 129/48, C. (51) 32, 'United Europe: A Note by the Prime Minister and Minister of Defence' (29 Nov., 1951), pp. 1-2.

¹⁵⁶ H. Macmillan, *Tides* (1969), p. 189.

¹⁵⁷ H. of C. Debs, Vol. 463, Cols. 375-429, 'Germany and Eastern Europe' (23 Mar., 1949).

should be that of a facilitator, a sponsor and close ally, with but not of.¹⁵⁸ By contrast, Macmillan felt that Britain must play an active role as a member otherwise it risked the leadership of Europe passing to another country, most likely Germany in the long run.¹⁵⁹ Where he differed from Federalists such as Spaak was that he did not believe Britain could join institutions that would limit its ability to conduct trade relations with the Commonwealth. Macmillan preferred a confederal approach whereby the nations of Europe would cooperate in matters of mutual interest such as tariff reduction, through the Council of Europe or the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC).¹⁶⁰

Macmillan's Impact on British Policy Towards the European Communities

Macmillan's sentiments on Europe are, of course, only one part of the issue that this work is attempting to deal with. The most significant part is the impact that the Suez Crisis had on British policy by bringing him to power instead of Butler. What we will do now is examine how British policy under Macmillan's leadership changed and evolved between 1957 and 1961. In keeping with the historiographical focus on the decision-making role of elected political leaders, the emphasis will be on Macmillan and the decisions he made, rather than on the advice he and his colleagues received from Whitehall. Furthermore, this section will also seek to determine the extent to

¹⁵⁸ M. Francis, 'Tears, Tantrums, and Bared Teeth: The Emotional Economy of Three Conservative Prime Ministers, 1951-1963', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (Jul., 2002), p. 380.

¹⁵⁹ H. Macmillan, *Tides* (1969), pp. 192-193.

¹⁶⁰ HMD vol. I (24 Aug., 1950), p. 13; HMD vol. I (26 Nov., 1953), pp. 275-276.

which his policies were shaped by his personal views on European integration. It should be made clear at this juncture that while in the long-term, British policy under Macmillan ended with the decision to seek membership of the EEC, this was not a long-term strategy of his. Macmillan did not enter office in January 1957 determined that Britain would join the Six in a customs union. On the contrary, his initial policies were aimed at shaping Europe in ways acceptable to British interests in the wider world. The EEC bid was the culmination or the end point of his policies, but it was not until the summer of 1960 that EEC membership itself became a policy aim.

EFTA

Macmillan's initial policy was a continuation of the pre-Suez ideas of Plan G, namely to prevent the creation of a customs union. When the Six signed the Treaties of Rome in March 1957 the focus shifted away from trying to prevent a customs union from being created, and towards trying to limit the damage it could do to Britain. Reginald Maudling, the Paymaster General, was tasked with conducting negotiations aimed at subsuming the new Common Market into a wider European free trade area,¹⁶¹ 'EFTA of the seventeen' in the words of Richard Lamb.¹⁶² This free trade area would include the EEC within it and would commit all seventeen members to liberalise trade with each other, while remaining free to conduct trade with regions outside of Europe in whatever way the nation concerned felt best. It is also an example of a policy pursued

¹⁶¹ Cmnd. 72 (57), 'A European Free Trade Area: United Kingdom Memorandum to the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation' (Feb., 1957); Cmnd. 648 (59), 'Negotiations for a European Free Trade Area: Report on the Course of Negotiations up to December, 1958' (Jan., 1959), p. 7.

¹⁶² R. Lamb, *The Macmillan Years 1957-1963: The Emerging Truth* (London, 1995), pp. 102-125.

by Macmillan that was very close to his own personal views on the form that Europe should take. It did not envisage supranational institutions that could overrule national parliaments, and it took into account Britain's trading links with the Commonwealth.

Despite some hopes that a free trade area would be created, there was little appetite for it within the Six. The German Finance Minister, Erhard, favoured it, but Adenauer did not, nor did the French government. Both felt that trying to create a wider free trade area would be unnecessarily complicated at a time when the EEC had only just been agreed, and in November 1958 de Gaulle ended the negotiations.¹⁶³ In response, the British government adopted a Swedish proposal and in the summer of 1959 joined six other European nations in signing the Stockholm Convention that created the European Free Trade Association.¹⁶⁴ This is where we see Macmillan's policies diverging away to an extent from his views on Europe. At the heart of his Europeanism was the fervent belief that Europe must be united, yet by helping to create EFTA Macmillan was acting in a manner completely at odds with his own views. His actions can be explained in reference to two aspects of his character that played a large role in the development of policies in Europe: a pragmatic willingness to adapt when necessary; and a more ruthless tendency to use confrontation as a negotiating tactic. EFTA was an excellent example of the latter. Macmillan had claimed in his diary on 12 June that in a meeting with the Danish Prime Minister, Hans Christian Hansen, that he regarded EFTA as a bridge between the Six and the

¹⁶³ P. Mangold, *The Almost Impossible Ally: Harold Macmillan and Charles de Gaulle* (London, 2006), pp. 112-114.

¹⁶⁴ Cmnd. 823 (59), 'Stockholm Draft Plan for a European Free Trade Association' (Jul., 1959).

rest of the OEEC.¹⁶⁵ However his diary entry for 7 July 1959 described the formation of EFTA and included the following:

The Chief item was the Anglo-Danish agreement. This is an essential preliminary to the Stockholm conference and the organisation of the 7 – a European Free Trade group in opposition to the 6 – Stockholm v Rome. The stakes in this affair are very high – no less than the industrial life and strength of Britain. For if we cannot successfully organise the opposition group...then we shall undoubtedly be eaten up, one by one by the 6...Already the Germans are beginning to talk in a very different way and even the French seem alarmed. I have every hope that if the Seven can make an agreement and get it ratified by the end of the year, the Six will be ready for a reasonable negotiation between the two groups.¹⁶⁶

EFTA was not designed, as far as Macmillan was concerned to be a bridge between the Six and the Seven. Undoubtedly he hoped that it might serve as one, but his intention was to force the Six to adopt policies that would not exclude Britain and the rest of Europe from the economic benefits that the Common Market would bring. He also hoped to use the threat of a divided Europe and US fears of protectionist measures by the Six to harness American influence. Unfortunately for Macmillan, the political elements of the EEC, which Britain disliked, were the chief attraction of it to the United States.¹⁶⁷ Both in Europe and in the US, opinion was critical of EFTA. The

¹⁶⁵ HMD vol. II (12 June., 1959), pp. 222-223.

¹⁶⁶ HMD vol. II (7 Jul., 1959), pp. 230-231.

¹⁶⁷ FRUS 1958-1960, Volume VII, Part I, Doc. 81, 'Memorandum of Conversation in London' (8 Dec., 1959).

US was not opposed to a wider free trade area *per se*,¹⁶⁸ and was actually concerned at the prospect of a protectionist Common Market discriminating against US trade. However, despite this the US saw EFTA as jeopardising the further integration of the EEC,¹⁶⁹ and a further and unnecessary division of Europe at a time when US policy was to promote a more unified continent. Christian Herter (US Secretary of State 1959-1961) warned President Eisenhower in November 1959 that emerging trade rivalries between the EEC and EFTA risked serious harm, and that the EEC was being challenged by the Seven, seen as being under UK leadership.¹⁷⁰ The European Commission and other European nations took a similar view to the US. Robert Marjolin, the Vice President of the Commission, stated his concern in a meeting in Washington that British fears about the Common Market could not be resolved unless the EEC denied its own purpose, and that the proliferation of regional schemes would lead to a fragmentation of world markets, concerns that the US shared.¹⁷¹ Both the French and the Dutch in separate discussions with US officials in 1959 raised concerns that Europe would drift apart as a result of any divergence between EFTA

¹⁶⁸ FRUS 1958-1960, Volume VII, Part I, Western European Integration and Security, Canada, Doc., 37, 'Northern European Chiefs of Mission Meet'. (29 Oct., 1958).

¹⁶⁹ FRUS 1958-1960, Volume VII, Part I, Doc. 67, 'Telegram from the Mission at the European Communities to the Department of State' (10 Sep., 1959).

¹⁷⁰ FRUS 1958-1960, Volume VII, Part I, Doc. 79, 'Herter to Eisenhower' (24 Nov., 1959).

¹⁷¹ FRUS 1958-1960, Volume VII, Part I, Doc. 71, 'Memorandum of Conversation between Robert Marjolin and Undersecretary of State Dillon' (30 Sep., 1959).

and the EEC, and that greater world issues could not be resolved cooperatively while Britain remained hostile to the Six.¹⁷²

The First EEC Bid

Macmillan's attempt to use EFTA to change the economic policies of the Six was a complete failure that had served only to divide Europe even more than the Cold War already had. This stood in marked contrast to his belief that peace and stability in Europe required the continent being united. It also represented the last time Macmillan's government attempted to deal with the EEC by trying to change it from the outside. EFTA had not and could not succeed in forcing the EEC to allow non-members such as Britain the benefits of membership without adherence to the Treaties of Rome. Within a year of EFTA's formation Macmillan had reached this conclusion and so his focus switched and in what can best be interpreted as an act of supreme pragmatism, he decided that Britain's interests could now only be served by joining the EEC and then changing the organisation from the inside. In one sense Macmillan had good reason to believe that this was possible. He had a longstanding association and working relationship with General de Gaulle and was aware that the French President shared much in common with Macmillan when it came to the form that an integrated Europe should take. His Grand Design, distributed to the Cabinet in January 1961 had this say on the subject:

¹⁷² FRUS 1958-1960, Volume VII, Part I, Doc. 70, 'Memorandum of US-Dutch Conversation' (29 Sep., 1959); FRUS 1958-1960, Volume VII, Part I, Doc. 72, 'Memorandum of US-French conversation' (5 Oct., 1959).

As difficult as de Gaulle is, his view of the proper political structure (Confederation not Federation) is really nearer to ours. If he wished us to join the political institutions it would be easier for us to do so if they took the form which he favours.¹⁷³

Macmillan was also aware that de Gaulle desired France have more say in the organisation of the western alliance and that it should develop a nuclear deterrent, two things that Macmillan believed he could use as bargaining chips to persuade the French to support British aims in Europe.¹⁷⁴

It is necessary to take a brief step back at this point and consider when and for what reasons Macmillan decided to see on what terms Britain could join the Common Market. Historians have debated this for some time and while it is not this author's intention to go over an existing historiographical debate, it is necessary to examine it if only because it provides a context for several of the moves Macmillan made between May 1960 and July 1961. Much of the debate has centred on whether Macmillan was motivated primarily by high political or low political concerns. Wolfram Kaiser and Miriam Camps stressed the need to maintain the Special Relationship with the US,¹⁷⁵ while Milward emphasised the economic

¹⁷³ TNA PREM 11/3325, 'Memorandum by the Prime Minister on Future UK Political and Economic Policy' (29 Dec., 1960 – 3 Jan., 1961), p. 8.

¹⁷⁴ HMD vol. II (29 Jan., 1961), p. 358; P. Mangold, *The Almost Impossible Ally* (2006), pp. 170-171; K. Steinnes, 'The European Challenge: Britain's EEC Application in 1961', *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (Mar., 1998), p. 68.

¹⁷⁵ M. Camps, *Britain* (1964), p. 336; W. Kaiser, *Using Europe, Abusing the Europeans* (Basingstoke, 1996), pp. 122-123.

considerations.¹⁷⁶ It is this author's opinion that any such disagreement is academic. The perceived high political threat to Britain's relationship with the United States was itself a reflection of the growing economic power of the EEC. Trying to separate economics and foreign policy serves no purpose as they are indelibly linked to each other.

What is of more interest and certainly more significance to this work is the debate over whether or not it was Macmillan himself who decided on EEC membership and precisely when he did so. The majority of authors contend that he was responsible for the decision and for persuading his government accordingly.¹⁷⁷ However, there is also a view that far from being decisive in May and June 1960, or even January 1961, Macmillan vacillated between a membership bid and further attempts at EEC/EFTA association.¹⁷⁸ This author takes the view that not only was Macmillan the driving force behind the bid, but that it was in the summer of 1960 that he made that particular decision. There are three reasons for this: the comments Macmillan made in his diaries and in his 'Grand Design'; the publication of Sir Frank Lee's report on association with the EEC; and the reshuffle of his Cabinet in July 1960.

¹⁷⁶ A. Milward, *The United Kingdom and the European Community, Vol. 1; The Rise and Fall of a National Strategy 1945-1963* (London, 2002).

¹⁷⁷ K. Steinnes, 'The European Challenge: Britain's EEC Application in 1961,' *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 7, Issue, 1 (Mar., 1998), p. 64; W. Kaiser, *Using Europe* (1996), pp. 115-116; R. Lamb, *The Macmillan Years* (1995), p. 139; R. Lamb, 'Macmillan and Europe,' in R. Aldous & S. Lee (Editors), *Harold Macmillan: Aspects of a Political Life* (Basingstoke, 1999), p. 84.

¹⁷⁸ D. Gowland, A. Turner & A. Wright, *Britain and European Integration* (2010), p. 53.

By the end of 1960 and the beginning of 1961 Macmillan was aware that any sort of EEC-EFTA association was almost impossible to achieve. His ‘Grand Design’ dated January 1961, includes the following:

(d) E.E.C. and E.F.T.A. (Sixes and Sevens)

It is now pretty clear that an accommodation could be reached – which would at any rate reduce, and perhaps altogether eliminate, the economic split in Western Europe. It is equally pretty clear that it will not be reached, as things are going now. There will be talk –pleasant phrases- but no action.¹⁷⁹

It was not until April 1961, though, that he was finally able to convince his colleagues in the Cabinet that Britain should undertake negotiations with a view to joining the Common Market. His diary entry for 26th April read: ‘An excellent discussion on Europe. I revealed to all the Cabinet ‘The Grand Design’. On the whole, approval – tho’ of course with reservation’.¹⁸⁰ Having convinced the Cabinet, including the deeply sceptical Rab Butler,¹⁸¹ the next task was to similarly convince the Conservative Parliamentary Party and then the country as a whole.¹⁸² This was

¹⁷⁹ TNA PREM 11/3325, ‘Memorandum by the Prime Minister on Future UK Political and Economic Policy’ (29 Dec., 1960 – 3 Jan., 1961), p. 8.

¹⁸⁰ HMD vol. II (26 Apr., 1961), p. 377.

¹⁸¹ HMD vol. II (17 May., 1961), p. 383.

¹⁸² HMD vol. II (19 May., 1961), p. 383; HMD vol. II (22 Jul., 1961), pp. 399-400; HMD vol. II (29 Jul., 1961), p. 401.

accomplished by the 5th August and from the autumn of 1961 Britain's negotiating team, led by Heath, attempted to take the country into the Common Market.¹⁸³

There is evidence to suggest that Macmillan's mind was not only made up before he came to write his 'Grand Design', but had probably been made up by July 1960. On 27 May 1960 he made the following remarks in a Cabinet meeting:

How far would anything short of full membership of the Common Market meet our indirect economic difficulties?...To "go into Europe fully" would at least be a positive and imaginative approach..."Near identification" had less attractions, and not appreciably less dangers.¹⁸⁴

Slightly more than a month later, on the 9th July 1960 he wrote the following in his diary:

Walked a bit – pondered a lot....Shall we be caught between a hostile (or at least less and less friendly) America and a boastful, powerful 'Empire of Charlemagne' - now under French but later bound to come under German control. Is this the real reason for 'joining the Common Market' (if we are acceptable) and for abandoning a) the Seven b) British agriculture c) the Commonwealth. It's a grim choice.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ HMD vol. II (5 Aug., 1961), pp. 401-405.

¹⁸⁴ TNA CAB 134/1819, 'E.Q. (60) 8th Meeting Minutes' (27 May 1960), pp. 1-2.

¹⁸⁵ HMD vol. II (9 Jul., 1960), p. 313.

At this point Macmillan had seen the report prepared by the Economic Steering Committee under the Chairmanship of Sir Frank Lee. The report advocated 'near identification' between the Six and the Seven but it is clear from Macmillan's diary that he knew 'near identification' would inevitably come to mean full membership. Lee's report has been given much credit by historians and biographers of Macmillan who saw it as perhaps the biggest single factor that decided the issue of membership for the Prime Minister. Thorpe, who seemed to be of the view that Macmillan's ultimate decision came later, nevertheless remarked that 'There were many staging points of Macmillan's Damascene journey towards conversion to the European idea, but the Lee memorandum was one of the most vital.'¹⁸⁶ Another, Jacqueline Tratt, described the report as 'the definitive document that was to set Britain on a new course, not only in terms of trade but also in terms of Britain's political role and outlook,'¹⁸⁷ Philipp de Zulueta, one of Macmillan's foreign policy advisors saw the failure of the Paris summit as prompting Macmillan to seize upon EEC membership. He is quoted in Peter Hennessy's work *Having it So Good: Britain in the Fifties*:

I think this led him to think very much again about what the British position was in the world. The colonial empire was, if not gone, rapidly going, the Commonwealth obviously not being really strong enough, coherent enough as an economic force. So what does Britain do? How does she play a part in the world? ... I don't think there was a day on which he suddenly decided, you know, Europe is the thing. But certainly he moved, from then onwards, really rather fast

¹⁸⁶ D.R. Thorpe, *Supermac* (2011), p. 468.

¹⁸⁷ J. Tratt, *The Macmillan Government and Europe: A Study in the Process of Policy Development* (Basingstoke, 1996), p. 95.

in the direction of feeling that this was the right road for Britain to follow, and that Europe was going to be united, and that without being a part of it Britain would neither be important on its own nor play a part in a wider grouping.¹⁸⁸

De Zulueta knew Macmillan very well and worked with him, as he had Anthony Eden. As such he was in a good position to know when Macmillan had reached a particular decision. His reference to Macmillan's desire that Europe be united is interesting and links us back to whether or not Macmillan was driven by his own views, or by more pragmatic considerations. Given that he had long opposed federalism in Europe and had spent the previous three years trying to ensure that Europe took a form amenable to Britain's global interests, it is more realistic to state that a pragmatic recognition that there were no viable alternatives to membership rather than personal conviction were behind the bid. However, part of Macmillan's support for 'Europe' was his belief that European unity was essential. In this case although the EEC represented a form of Europe he disliked, there was still enough of the broad view to make membership palatable to him.

The final evidence to support Macmillan having decided on EEC entry in the summer of 1960 comes from his Cabinet reshuffle. The July 1960 reshuffle has, as with most things Macmillan, generated some controversy and debate. Miriam Camps for instance cited it as evidence that Macmillan intended to enter.¹⁸⁹ George Hutchinson described the reshuffle as 'to fit the Europeans in his Cabinet – mere handful though they were – into spheres of delicate importance to the development of

¹⁸⁸ P. Hennessy, *Having it So Good* (2006), p. 613.

¹⁸⁹ M. Camps, *Britain* (1964), pp. 314-315.

the strategy which he was already contemplating'.¹⁹⁰ Nora Beloff has however disagreed, particularly when it came to appointment of Heath as Lord Privy Seal with special responsibility for Europe. She claimed that if Macmillan intended a turn to Europe he would have appointed one of the known Cabinet heavyweights such as Thorneycroft or Duncan Sandys.¹⁹¹ Macmillan's diaries do not give any firm indication as to how far, if at all, Europeanism was a factor in his reshuffle. However, the changes Macmillan made are evidence enough that Europe was a factor. Heath, appointed as number two in the Foreign Office was a noted Europeanist¹⁹² and Macmillan was aware of his sentiments as far back as 1950. Beyond Heath, Macmillan moved pro-Europeans into strategic departments. Christopher Soames was appointed Minister of Agriculture, Duncan Sandys as Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations,¹⁹³ and Lord Home became Foreign Secretary.¹⁹⁴ Agriculture and the reactions of the Commonwealth were two of the biggest obstacles to be overcome if Britain were to even attempt to enter the EEC, an issue noted by Macmillan in his diary entry for 14th May 1961.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁰ G. Hutchinson, *The Last Edwardian* (1980), pp. 76-77.

¹⁹¹ N. Beloff, *The General Says No* (London, 1963), p. 97.

¹⁹² See Chapter Six.

¹⁹³ HMD vol. II (5 Jul., 1960), p. 312.

¹⁹⁴ HMD vol. II (17 Jun., 1960), pp. 308-309.

¹⁹⁵ HMD vol. II (14 May., 1961), pp. 381-382.

Although the first attempt at British membership of the Common Market ended in complete failure and, along with the Christine Keeler affair,¹⁹⁶ probably ended Macmillan's premiership in practical terms, it was still an important moment in the development of Anglo-European relations. In the first instance, de Gaulle and France were roundly condemned for their obstructive attitude. The Italian Prime Minister described de Gaulle's speech vetoing British entry as exceeding Italy's worst expectations,¹⁹⁷ and a later State Department telegram referred to the solidarity of the other five members of the EEC in attempting to stand up to de Gaulle over his veto of the British application, suggesting that the breakdown of the negotiations was not being blamed on Macmillan or Britain.¹⁹⁸ In the second instance, Macmillan, despite the failure, had fundamentally changed British policy on European integration and had established British membership of the EEC as a viable prospect. It would need to wait for the departure of General de Gaulle from power in France, something that would take another six years, but British membership was now a matter of when, not if. Ironically, de Gaulle himself best demonstrated this when he described Heath in 1965 as the man who would take Britain into Europe.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁶ For the Profumo Affair see: R. Davenport-Hines, *An English Affair: Sex, Class and Power in the Age of Profumo* (London, 2013); A. Denning, *The Scandal of Christine Keeler and John Profumo: Lord Denning's Report, 1963* (London, 2003).

¹⁹⁷ FRUS 1958-1960, Volume VII, Part I, Doc. 58, 'Memorandum of Conversation US-Italy,' (16 Jan., 1963).

¹⁹⁸ FRUS 1958-1960, Volume VII, Part I, Doc. 67, 'Telegram from the Mission to the European Communities to the Department of State,' (2 Feb., 1963).

¹⁹⁹ W. Rees-Mogg, 'Avec Heath a leur tete', *Sunday Times* (1 Aug., 1965), p. 8.

Conclusions

This chapter has examined one of the most immediate and long-lasting effects of the Suez Crisis on British politics and on British policy re-evaluations towards membership of the European Communities. By removing Anthony Eden from power and providing Harold Macmillan with the means to overhaul R.A. Butler in the race to succeed the Prime Minister, Suez altered the nature of Britain's relationship with Europe. Anthony Eden should not be considered hostile to European integration. However, it was not a subject that interested him a great deal and so if it was not a pressing concern for his work as Foreign Secretary and later Prime Minister, he was not inclined to devote much time to it.²⁰⁰ Butler, by contrast, not only had no interest in Europe, he was actively hostile to British participation, seeing in European integration a threat to British agriculture, important to him from his constituency in rural Saffron Walden, and to Britain's longstanding but diminishing imperial trade links.²⁰¹

Without the Suez Crisis it is highly improbable that Macmillan would have become Prime Minister. Anthony Eden had been in office for barely a year when the crisis began and although the subject of press speculation and ill-health, had led the Conservatives to an increased majority at the General Election. Eden had waited for many years for Churchill to retire and hand the leadership of the party to him and he had no intention of resigning himself. Absent a collapse of health or a political catastrophe, it was assumed that Eden would lead the Conservatives at least up until the next General Election in 1959 or 1960, and perhaps beyond that. Even if he did

²⁰⁰ D. Carlton, *Anthony Eden: A Biography* (London, 1981), p. 272.

²⁰¹ A. Howard, *RAB* (1987), pp. 295-296.

not, R.A Butler was seen as the likely successor not Macmillan. The Suez Crisis however gave Macmillan an opportunity that he seized with both hands and held onto. His biographers have generally defended his conduct up until the speech he gave to the 1922 Committee, but stressed that he saw an opportunity to seize the leadership from Butler and took it, presenting himself as a defender of British interests and tarring Butler, once again, with the brush of appeasement.²⁰² However, the record of his discussions with the Eisenhower administration presents a compelling case for his having attempted to depose Eden and then out-manoeuvre Butler for the vacancy in Number Ten. He misrepresented his own position within the government to Winthrop Aldrich and the general tone of his meetings is of someone trying to appear as the logical successor to a discredited Prime Minister.²⁰³

Harold Macmillan was what this author considers a ‘European’ politician. He did not believe that Europe should be federal and preferred a cooperative approach through existing institutions such as the OEEC,²⁰⁴ but the sceptical note that many of his biographers have used when discussing his ‘Europeanism’ is based on modern understanding of terms such as ‘pro-European’ and as such does him a historical disservice.²⁰⁵ In fact, Macmillan was a fervent believer in the concept of a unified Europe. The idea appealed to the Edwardian aspects of his character. It was a grand

²⁰² A. Horne, *Macmillan* (2008), pp. 313-314.

²⁰³ FRUS, 1955-1957, Volume. XVI, Doc. 593, ‘Telegram From the Embassy in the United Kingdom to the Department of State,’ (19 Nov. 1956).

²⁰⁴ H. Macmillan, *Tides* (1969), pp. 185-228.

²⁰⁵ N. Ashton, *Kennedy, Macmillan and the Cold War: The Irony of Interdependence* (Basingstoke, 2002), p. 127.

scheme of high politics, suited to the nineteenth century practice of solving great and pressing issues through summit diplomacy involving the major powers. In the context of the world in the aftermath of the Second World War, Macmillan saw in Europe the only way to ensure that the events of the preceding thirty years were not repeated, that Germany could never again seek to dominate Europe, and to ensure that the west was strong enough and stable enough to fight Communism.²⁰⁶ Macmillan also believed, unlike Churchill for whom he worked in the United Europe Movement, that Britain had a role to play in a unified Europe. Churchill saw Britain's role as that of a sponsor, a facilitator. Macmillan thought that Britain must play an active role from the inside, either to maintain a position of leadership, and later to make sure that developments in the integration process were not detrimental to Britain's extra-European interests. These views were to play a role in the decisions Macmillan made before and after he came to power in January 1957 and were the basis for the views of his contemporaries who, unlike many of his biographers, considered him to be a 'European'.²⁰⁷

Macmillan himself as Prime Minister had a significant, although not always positive, impact on the evolution of British policy towards the European Communities. He initially persevered with pre-Suez attempts to prevent the formation of a customs union by the Six by presenting an alternative plan for the creation of a partial (industrial but not agricultural) free trade area.²⁰⁸ After the Six signed the

²⁰⁶ H. of C. Debs, Vol. 561, Cols. 36-38, 'European Trade Policy' (26 Nov., 1956).

²⁰⁷ 'The Year is 1957', *The Economist* (19 Jan., 1957), p. 180.

²⁰⁸ TNA CAB 129/83, C.P. (56) 208 'Plan G: Memorandum by the Chancellor of the Exchequer' (11 Sep., 1956), p. 3.

Treaties of Rome this was repackaged and Macmillan's government negotiated with the Six to try and create the free trade area to include the new Common Market.²⁰⁹ When further negotiations were ruled out by the French government in November 1958 Macmillan appeared to take a more combative line in Europe, helping create the European Free Trade Association, in an attempt to force the EEC to adopt more liberal policies with regard to the rest of western Europe.²¹⁰ This shift marked a change in tactics and seemingly motivation for Macmillan. Plan G and the proposed free trade area were in line with his personal views on Europe; the need for a united Europe but one based on cooperation rather than federal institutions. EFTA went against both of these elements and while an argument could be made that the policy was borne out of frustration and a certain degree of pragmatism, it is noticeable that the policy bore little relation to the Prime Minister's views on Europe.

Ultimately, in the summer of 1960 Macmillan realised that Britain had no choice but to try and join the Common Market. His Cabinet did not yet agree but Macmillan began a year-long conversion process. He reshuffled the Cabinet in July 1960, promoting known 'Europeans' to strategic positions, one of whom was Heath.²¹¹ Macmillan's bid was a failure but it did accomplish two things that were to be of lasting importance. The first was that he had established Britain as a future member of the European Communities; the second was that by promoting and giving responsibility for Europe to a man known then and now as a supporter of British

²⁰⁹ Cmnd. 72 (57), 'A European Free Trade Area: United Kingdom Memorandum to the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation' (Feb., 1957).

²¹⁰ HMD vol. II (7 Jul., 1959), pp. 230-231.

²¹¹ G. Hutchinson, *The Last Edwardian* (1980), pp. 76-77.

participation in Europe, Macmillan made it possible for Heath to succeed where he himself had failed.

Chapter V: Suez, Algeria, de Gaulle and French Policy Towards the European Communities

Introduction

This thesis has thus far focussed exclusively on the impact of the Suez Crisis from the British perspective. The purpose of this chapter is to examine how the crisis impacted upon French policy towards membership of the European Communities, and the subsequent effect on Britain's relations with them. This will, of course, also encompass British policy to a certain extent. An integral part of the developing relationship between Britain and Europe was the change in British policy on European integration, and this was in part caused by the French response to the Suez Crisis. Moreover, while a strict interpretation of the phrase 'Anglo-European relations' would suggest some focus on other European countries, particularly Germany, Italy and the Benelux nations, the nature of European diplomacy and politics in the late 1950s and early 1960s was such that in practical terms it is France that matters here. The papers of the British government in this period make clear that the most significant issue for Britain when it came to Europe was France, particularly after the return of General de Gaulle.¹ Accordingly this chapter will focus on three ways in which Suez influenced French policy, and in turn on the Anglo-European relationship.

The first area is how Suez changed French policy on European integration, particularly the discussions in 1956 on EURATOM and the Common Market. Despite

¹ TNA PREM 11/2985, 'Maudling to Macmillan' (3 Nov., 1959), p. 1.

being engaged fully in the discussions at Messina and the Spaak Committee in 1955 and 1956, France was not positively inclined towards further supranationalism, having rejected the European Defence Community in August 1954.² The chapter will demonstrate how the humiliation France suffered at Suez, combined with a sense of betrayal by Britain and the United States, convinced French leaders that for France to remain a great power, it must take the lead in developing a united Europe, the leadership of which would enable it to play the role that the shame of Suez had suggested it could play no longer.³

It was this sense of humiliation and betrayal that Guy Mollet, the French Premier between 1 February 1956 and 13 June 1957, was able to use to overcome the hostility of much of his government, the French civil service, and French public opinion, towards the Common Market, and in March 1957 France signed the Treaties of Rome.⁴ This had the effect of rendering obsolete the view on the part of the British government that French hostility to supranationalism would prevent the Common Market from being created.⁵ Britain was now faced with a European grouping from

² G. Bebr, 'The European Defence Community and the Western European Union: An Agonizing Dilemma', *Stanford Law Review*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (Mar., 1955), p. 173.

³ M. Vaïsse, 'Post-Suez France' in W.M. Roger Louis & R. Owen (eds), *Suez 1956: The Crisis and its Consequences* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 335-337.

⁴ R. Marjolin, *Architect of European Unity: Memoirs 1911-1986* (Translated by William Hall) (London, 1989), p. 297.

⁵ Harold Macmillan Diaries (14 Dec., 1955). Taken From, P. Catterall (Ed.), *The Macmillan Diaries: The Cabinet Years 1950-1955* (Basingstoke, 2003), p. 517. All future citations will read 'HMD vol. I (Date of Entry), page number. Citations for *Volume II: Prime Minister and After, 1957-1966* (Basingstoke, 2011) will read, HMD vol. II (Date of Entry), page number.

which it had chosen to exclude itself. Moreover, this was a European *bloc* with a common external tariff that meant Britain's exports could not enter the markets of the Six on the same terms that those of the Six could.⁶ This also confronted Britain with the prospect of losing what it considered to be the leadership of Europe to the new group, and more worryingly, the prospect of the EEC replacing Britain as America's European partner of choice.⁷

The second and third areas of focus in this chapter both concern General Charles de Gaulle. The first of these is the impact that Suez had on the ongoing crisis facing France in Algeria. France had seen the Suez Crisis as an intrinsic part of its struggle in Algeria, seeing the hand of Egyptian President Nasser in the encouragement and arming of the FLN rebels, and the crisis made France even more determined to retain control of its colony.⁸ The crisis in Algeria was the catalyst for the return to power of General de Gaulle in June 1958, as it created a state of political instability so serious that only his return to office prevented a *coup d'état* by the French Armed Forces.⁹ De Gaulle's return added a new element to the Anglo-European relationship. Although not an Anglophobe, de Gaulle had long held a degree of mistrust for Britain and the USA ('les Anglo-Saxons'), and despite having a similar view to Macmillan of federalism and the type of integrated Europe he wanted,

⁶ TNA CAB 129/91, C. (58) 27 'European Free Trade Area: Memorandum by the Paymaster-General' (30 Jan., 1958), p. 3.

⁷ TNA PREM 11/2985, 'Lloyd to Macmillan' (15 Dec., 1959), p. 1.

⁸ I.M. Wall, *France, the United States, and the Algerian War* (Los Angeles, 2001), p. 34.

⁹ B. Ledwidge, *De Gaulle* (London, 1982), p. 227.

his vision was of a Europe that was not dominated by the United States.¹⁰ The General saw Britain as having fundamentally different objectives, and felt that its links with the Commonwealth made it economically incompatible with EEC membership, as well as believing that its close ties with the US meant that its accession could only lead to undue US influence in Europe.¹¹ Above all, de Gaulle saw Europe as a vehicle for French leadership, and rightly felt that having Britain as a member of the EEC would threaten the position he felt should belong to France.¹²

The third and final area of focus here is the development of the French nuclear arsenal, La Force de Dissuasion (better known as the Force de Frappe). This was another manifestation of the sense of humiliation and betrayal that Suez provoked in France. In the same way that French policymakers responded to Suez by reversing their opposition to the Common Market, the crisis had a similar impact on French atomic policy. France had been, like Britain and Israel, the recipient of veiled threats of nuclear attack by the Soviet Union at the height of the crisis,¹³ and saw Suez as proof that, lacking nuclear weapons of its own, it would be vulnerable to nuclear blackmail.¹⁴ This was heightened by the belief that it could not rely on America to defend France and its interests, or to retaliate on its behalf if it were attacked by the

¹⁰ J. Newhouse, *De Gaulle and the Anglo-Saxons* (London, 1970), p. 36.

¹¹ H.S. Chopra, *De Gaulle and European Unity* (New Delhi, 1974), p. 176.

¹² A. Werth, *De Gaulle: A Political Biography* (New York, 1966), p. 312.

¹³ A. Gorst & L. Johnman, *The Suez Crisis* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 122-123.

¹⁴ L. Scheinman, *Atomic Energy Policy in France Under the Fourth Republic* (Princeton, 1965), pp. 105-106.

Soviet Union.¹⁵ After the crisis France accelerated its atomic energy research and in 1958 took the decision to develop nuclear weapons. This had significant consequences for Anglo-European relations.¹⁶ Initially it added a new dimension to the discussions between Britain and France on the free trade area proposals, and then the British bid to enter the EEC. Macmillan contemplated using assistance for the French nuclear programme as an exchange for French support of British desires in Europe.¹⁷ In the event this proved not to be feasible in the face of US opposition,¹⁸ and it was Britain's decision to purchase Polaris from the US under the terms of the Nassau Agreement that provided de Gaulle with the pretext to terminate the EEC negotiations, and in practical terms veto Britain's entry.¹⁹

Suez, France and the EEC

One of the ways in which the Suez Crisis had an impact on European integration was its role in altering French views on a Common Market and moving the country away

¹⁵ *Documents Diplomatiques Français, 1956 Vol. III, 24 Oct-31 Dec*, 'Conversation Between Adenauer and Mollet' (6 Nov., 1956), Translated by Dan Whyman.

¹⁶ H. Parr, 'Transformation and Tradition: Anglo-French Nuclear Cooperation and Britain's Policy Towards the European Community, 1960-1974', in M. Grant (Ed.), *The British Way in Cold Warfare: Intelligence, Diplomacy and the Bomb 1945-1975* (London, 2011), p. 89; H. Parr, "'The Nuclear Myth': Edward Heath, Europe, and the International Politics of Anglo-French Nuclear Co-Operation 1970-3', *The International History Review*, Vol. 35, No. 3 (2013), pp. 534-555.

¹⁷ P. Mangold, *The Almost Impossible Ally: Harold Macmillan and Charles De Gaulle* (London, 2006), pp. 170-171.

¹⁸ TNA PREM 11/3311, 'Kennedy to Macmillan' (8 May., 1961).

¹⁹ J. Fenby, *The General: Charles De Gaulle and the France He Saved* (London, 2010), p. 503.

from the opposition to supranationalism demonstrated by the rejection of the EDC, and towards the position where it signed the Treaties of Rome in March 1957. As with many, if not most aspects of the Suez Crisis, the idea that Suez made France more amenable to the Common Market has not gone unchallenged, and there appear to be two conflicting interpretations. German historian Hans Jurgen Küsters described the successful outcome of the EEC negotiations as an historical accident initiated by the Suez Crisis, as it was the failure of the Anglo-French expedition that tipped the balance and pushed French doubts about the Common Market into the background.²⁰

However, Clemens Wurm, another German historian who edited the work in which Küster's account appeared, cited French historian Pierre Guillen's assertion that Suez was the major catalyst for the French government's acceptance of the Rome treaties.²¹ Guillen himself made this case in Ennio Di Nolfo's 1992 volume on the origins of the EEC,²² and in a 1988 article in the French journal *Revue D'Histoire Diplomatique*.²³ Guillen is not the only French historian to make such a claim.

²⁰ H.J. Küsters, 'West Germany's Foreign Policy in Western Europe 1949-58: The Art of the Possible' in C. Wurm (Ed.), *Western Europe and Germany: The Beginnings of European Integration 1945-1960* (Oxford, 1995), pp. 68-69.

²¹ C. Wurm, 'Two Paths to Europe: Great Britain and France from a Comparative Perspective,' in C. Wurm (Ed.), *Western Europe and Germany* (1995), p. 179.

²² P. Guillen, 'Europe as a Cure of French Impotence? The Guy Mollet Government and Negotiation of the Treaties of Rome,' in E. Di Nolfo (Ed.), *Power in Europe? Volume II: Great Britain, France, Germany and Italy and the Origins of the EEC 1952-1957* (Berlin, 1992), pp. 505-516.

²³ P. Guillen, 'L'Europe remède a l'impuissance française? Le Gouvernement Guy Mollet et la négociation des traits de Rome 1955-1957', *Revue D'Histoire Diplomatique*, Vol. 102 (1988), pp. 319-335, Translated by Nick Saunders and Dan Whyman.

Maurice Vaisse, writing in Roger Louis and Robert Owen's edited volume on the crisis, made several assertions including one that Suez, via the international tension it caused, the disruption of oil supplies and the evident European weakness compared to the superpowers served as an accelerating factor in the further development of European Unity.²⁴ He cited the supposed statement of Adenauer to Mollet after the latter had been informed of the British decision to withdraw, that Europe would be his revenge, a statement also cited by Robert and Isobel Tombs in their work *That Sweet Enemy: Britain and France, The History of a Love-Hate Relationship*.²⁵ Vaisse and Guillen were two of the French historians who collaborated on *Histoire De La Diplomatie Francaise* (a 2005 volume that accompanies much of the released French diplomatic archive material), which includes the following editorial statement;

The crisis had major consequences: it was clear that France and Britain no longer had the means for an imperial policy, the Franco-British retreat and the political victory of Nasser definitely jeopardized the situation in Algeria, a considerable resentment against the United States...the pending European option was relaunched.²⁶

²⁴ M. Vaisse, 'Post-Suez France' in WM. Roger Louis & R. Owen (eds), *Suez 1956: The Crisis and its Consequences* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 335-337.

²⁵ R. Tombs & I. Tombs, *That Sweet Enemy: Britain and France, the History of a Love-Hate Relationship* (London, 2007), pp. 617-618.

²⁶ J.C. Allain, F. Autrand, L. Bely, P. Contamine, P. Guillen, T. Lents, G.H. Soutou, L. Thoïs, M. Vaisse, *Histoire De La Diplomatie Francaise* (Paris, 2005), p. 845 Translated by Nick Saunders.

Anglo-American revisionist authors, most notably political scientist Andrew Moravcsik, and the late British historian Alan Milward, have challenged this orthodox opinion. Their revisionist case dismisses Suez as playing a significant role in the French decision to sign the Treaties of Rome, claiming that the crisis was coincidental and that the decision had already been made in Paris prior to the Adenauer-Mollet meeting in early November 1956. Moravcsik, in *The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht* references Küster's assertion that the EEC was a Suez inspired historical accident²⁷ but then proceeds to dispute it. His position is that the orthodox views expressed earlier were based on dubious accounts from associates of Adenauer, and that the deciding factor was in fact Mollet's pro-European views.²⁸ Moravcsik concedes that Suez did supply the French government with an extra argument to use to shift opposition views in Parliament, but this is a somewhat grudging concession and is outweighed by the claim that every (unreferenced) oral history rejects a decisive link between Suez and Europe.²⁹ Adenauer and Mollet appeared to have reached an agreement before Eden's call came through, in a meeting that had been scheduled some months before for precisely this purpose.³⁰

Alan Milward, in the first volume of his account of the history of Britain and the European Communities, took a similar line to Moravcsik. Milward throughout this

²⁷ A. Moravcsik, *The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht* (London, 1999), p. 87.

²⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 120-121.

²⁹ *Ibid*, p. 120.

³⁰ *Ibid*, p. 119.

work takes an economic based revisionist position where European integration is concerned, and tends to reject geopolitical considerations in favour of economic ones. Where Suez, Britain and Europe are concerned he states that historians have two particular tendencies: dismissing Suez as a causal factor where British policy is concerned, and asserting that it prompted France to sign the Treaty of Rome. His opinion is that neither view is correct.³¹ Where Britain is concerned he links Suez to the adoption of Plan G and the attempts to create a European Free Trade Area, but in the case of France he rejects any impact of the crisis on French policy. Milward's position, as with Moravcsik, is that France had already decided to sign the Treaty of Rome at least as early as September 1956, and he cites Russell Bretherton's account of a French delegate informing him on 26 September that France would sign the Common Market treaty.³²

It is this author's contention that the revisionist arguments of Moravcsik and Milward are not borne out by the available evidence. It can be conceded that orthodox accounts that cite the Adenauer-Mollet conversation can be questioned on the basis that the French transcript of the meeting ends before Eden's telephone call to Mollet, and that the sole source for the statement 'Europe will be your revenge' appears to be Pineau, the French Foreign Minister, whose account (according to Moravcsik and Keith Kyle) is not to be entirely trusted.³³ The series *Documents Diplomatique*

³¹ A. Milward, *The United Kingdom and the European Community Volume I: The Rise and Fall of a National Strategy 1946-1963* (London, 2002), p. 252.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 261.

³³ A. Moravcsik, *The Choice for Europe* (1999), p. 119; K. Kyle, *Suez* (1991), p. 467.

*Francais*³⁴ provides nothing to corroborate Pineau's recollection, but then it does not dispute it either. There are, nevertheless, several problems with the revisionist interpretation. The first is that the case seems to be based on France having reached certain conclusions in the summer or autumn of 1956, thereby rendering any Suez link null. Assuming that the assertion as to timing is correct, that would seem to suggest that the *end* of the crisis had no impact, but this is not the same thing as the crisis itself being unimportant. Suez began in July 1956 and was ongoing at the point that Bretherton was told that France would sign the Common Market Treaty. Moreover, the statement made to Bretherton was not necessarily an accurate representation of France's position, nor could be taken as sufficient evidence even if it were accurate. In the first instance, by September 1956 the Spaak Committee discussions were ongoing and Bretherton was present as a British observer. At this point the Six were keen for British involvement, as was France, whose President offered a Franco-British union and was known to favour Britain as a member. It cannot be ruled out that the assertion was simply a negotiating tactic designed to play on British fears of a Common Market being created in their absence. Secondly, Mollet's government intending to sign the Common Market Treaty in September 1956 is not the same thing as the French state doing so. The French government in 1954 led by Pierre Mendès France agreed to the proposed European Defence Community, yet said EDC never came to fruition as it was rejected by the French Parliament. A French Premier intending to sign a treaty under the Fourth Republic was one thing; the treaty being accepted by the French parliament was another. Mollet's pro-European views were

³⁴ *Documents Diplomatiques Français, 1956 Vol. III, 24 Oct-31 Dec*, 'Conversation Between Adenauer and Mollet' (6 Nov., 1956), Translated by Dan Whyman.

known, and as even Moravcsik pointed out, Suez gave him additional arguments to use on parliamentary opponents.³⁵

The second issue that disputes Milward and Moravcsik's view is the nature of the Common Market negotiations, and the Adenauer-Mollet meeting and is based on contemporary, documentary evidence. Their argument rests on the meeting being scheduled to solve any remaining differences, and that France had already made the decision to sign the Treaty of Rome some months before. The contemporary evidence disputes this. In January 1957, an edition of *The Economist* ran an article on the Common Market negotiations, 'The Treaties of the Six: The Common Market Takes Shape', in which the correspondent wrote, 'only three months ago the basic concept of the Common Market –that the six countries (France, Germany, Italy and Benelux) should commit themselves in advance to remove internal tariffs...-seemed threatened by unacceptable French demands'.³⁶

Beyond a contemporary media account there are the US diplomatic cables which cast considerable doubt on the claims of Milward and Moravcsik, and at a meeting of the Conservative Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee in March 1956, The President of the Board of Trade (Peter Thorneycroft) opined that 'the chances of the Six getting Euratom (must be seen in the context of the Common Market) were negligible. France would sign anything but would balk at lower

³⁵ A. Moravcsik, *The Choice for Europe* (1999), p. 120.

³⁶ 'The Treaties of the Six: The Common Market Takes Shape', *The Economist* (19 Jan., 1957), p. 171.

tariffs'.³⁷ The US took a keen interest in and promoted European integration and was, as a consequence, very well informed. On October 25th the US representative to the European Coal and Steel Community cabled Washington to the effect that 'the outcome of the Paris meeting leaves EURATOM and Common Market hanging in the air...all held the view that it was make or break within the near future and another ministerial meeting terminating in failure would be the end'.³⁸ On October 30th the US Ambassador to Germany telegraphed Washington the account of a conversation he held with Adenauer in which the Chancellor made clear his willingness to make concessions on EURATOM, but that Germany could not meet certain French demands on the Common Market (France desired a greater level of protectionism in order to secure its agricultural sector, whereas Germany's high level of industrial exports saw it favour a more liberal, free trade approach).³⁹

What is clear from these accounts is that as late as the end of October 1956 the EURATOM and Common Market negotiations were still at a stage where a French decision to sign having already been made in September seems highly improbable. The October 25th telegram portrays the negotiations as being one bad meeting away from disaster, and the October 30th highlights the divergence between French and German policies on both major issues. The meeting scheduled for a week later may

³⁷ CPA, CRD 2/34/12, Conservative Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee, 'Report of a Meeting' (14 Mar., 1956), p. 1.

³⁸ *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-1957, Volume IV, Western European Security and Integration*, Document. 195, 'Telegram from the United States Representative to the European Coal and Steel Community (Butterworth) to the Department of State' (25 Oct., 1956).

³⁹ *FRUS 1955-1957, Volume. IV*, Doc. 197, 'Conant to the Department of State' (30 Oct., 1956).

have been designed to bridge these gaps, but even if that were the case, all this casts considerable doubt on the claim that France had already decided to sign the Common Market treaty as late as a month before. France was in the autumn of 1956 keen on EURATOM, a viewpoint that according to one US diplomatic observer had been heightened by the Suez Crisis and the accompanying threat to European oil supplies.⁴⁰ But France was not similarly enamoured of the Common Market towards which its attitude veered between hesitancy and hostility.⁴¹ Monnet urged Adenauer to agree to separate the two sets of discussions so as to ensure the signing of the EURATOM treaty, but the German Foreign Office rejected these urgings on the grounds that unless EURATOM and the Common Market were intrinsically linked, France would achieve the former, but Germany would not achieve the latter.⁴²

We have, therefore, two reasons to dispute the argument that Suez had little or nothing to do with the French decision to sign the Treaties of Rome. The contemporary record is clear that as late as the end of October 1956 an agreement between Germany and France was still some way off, certainly further than the Milward and Moravcsik accounts would suggest. The specific issue of the Common Market and the evidence that would support the orthodox position is similarly clear. Contemporary diplomatic cables from US officials in Europe, and most significantly

⁴⁰ *FRUS 1955-1957, Volume. IV*, Doc. 205, 'Letter from the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission (Strauss) to Undersecretary of State (Hoover) (19 Dec., 1956).

⁴¹ R. Marjolin, *Architect of European Unity: Memoirs 1911-1986* (Translated by William Hall) (London, 1989), p. 299.

⁴² H.J. Küsters, 'West Germany's Foreign Policy in Western Europe 1949-58: The Art of the Possible' in C. Wurm (Ed.), *Western Europe and Germany* (1995), p. 69.

the account of Robert Marjolin, the lead French negotiator for the Common Market discussions, demonstrate unequivocally the role that Suez played. On December 19th 1956 the US Ambassador to Belgium sent a telegram to the State Department that references the Belgian Chef du Cabinet (Robert Rothschild) and Paul Henry Spaak. The following passages from the telegram are unambiguous where Suez is concerned:

Spaak told me yesterday he is very optimistic on prospects of early signature and ratification of EURATOM and Common Market treaties after his conversation with other Foreign Ministers in Paris last week...He said he found French enthusiasm so keen that it amounted virtually to about-face and added this attributable to their Suez experience...Rothschild pointed up Spaak's remark about the effect of the Suez experience on the French attitude towards integration by remarking to the Embassy office that the French appear finally to see that they must work together with the rest of Europe if they are to have a significant role in world affairs...He said while French nationalistic feelings have not diminished, the outcome of the Egyptian venture had brought home to the French the extent to which their ability to act independently has dwindled.⁴³

Further evidence is to be found in the memoirs of Robert Marjolin, the lead French negotiator in the Common Market discussions in 1956. He had this to say:

The negotiation of what was to become the Treaty of Rome can be divided into two broad phases. The first of these was a period in which the partners were feeling their way and France's hesitations were preventing any decisive progress

⁴³ FRUS 1955-1957 Volume. IV, Doc. 206, 'Alger to Department of State,' (19 Dec., 1956).

from being made; it lasted roughly until August-September 1956. The nationalization of the Suez Canal on July 26th 1956, followed by the ill-fated Anglo-French expedition in November of the same year, marked the end of that phase. From that moment on, things moved forward rapidly. Guy Mollet, who had long been wedded to the idea of European integration, but who hesitated to defy the hostility of most of his ministers, virtually the whole of the central civil service and large segments of public opinion, felt that the only way to erase, or at least lessen, the humiliation that France had just suffered from the Suez affair was to conclude a European treaty quickly. He brought all his influence to bear and was able to tip the scales in the right direction.⁴⁴

It is this author's contention therefore that far from there being no contemporary evidence to support the assertion that Suez influenced the French decision to sign the Treaties of Rome, many of the available accounts in fact confirm such a link. The orthodox accounts of Tombs, Vaïsse and others do not provide contemporary evidence for the claim beyond the recollection of Christian Pineau, and so have been attacked by revisionist authors, yet, the balance of the documentary record, particularly the observations of Spaak (one of the founding fathers of the integration movement) and Marjolin, provide a compelling case for linking Suez intrinsically to the signing of the Treaties of Rome. What is necessary, now, is to explore how this impacted upon the nature and development of British policy towards the EEC.

⁴⁴ R. Marjolin, *Architect of European Unity* (1989), p. 297.

Impact of the EEC on British Policy Towards Membership of the European Communities

British policy on European integration in 1955 and 1956 was partly predicated on the belief that French opposition to supranationalism, as demonstrated by the rejection of the EDC, would prevent the creation of a European customs union.⁴⁵ British leaders such as Eden, Butler and Macmillan have all been the subject of criticism for their inability to predict the success of the Messina and Spaak talks, although Macmillan has also been credited with seeing the dangers before many of his colleagues of Britain doing nothing, or being seen to be the cause of the talks' collapse.⁴⁶ By the spring of 1957 the discussions had turned to how Britain should deal with the signing of the Treaties of Rome.⁴⁷ On March 30th a note by the Chairman of the Economic Policy stated that Britain must proceed in the expectation that the customs union would become an accomplished fact, and listed the problems this would cause Britain (increased export tariffs to the Six, and Britain and Commonwealth countries facing competition from other members of the Six in French overseas territories who were inside the common tariff).⁴⁸ The Cabinet meeting five days later (3rd April) raised similar points regarding the economic damage to Britain,⁴⁹ and Macmillan's diary

⁴⁵ See Chapter Four.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ TNA PREM 11/1844, WU 1072/156, Jebb to Lloyd 'The United Kingdom and the Western World' (27 Apr., 1957).

⁴⁸ TNA CAB 129/86, C. (57) 81 'European Customs and Economic Union: Memorandum by the Chairman of the Economic Policy Committee' (30 Mar., 1957), pp. 1-5.

⁴⁹ TNA CAB 128/31, C.C. (57) 29th Conclusions 'Conclusions of a Cabinet Meeting' (3 Apr., 1957), p. 5.

entry for 27th March spoke of the desire to attack the French for their handling of the last stages of the Common Market treaty, that they had had their way and that the inclusion of the French colonial empire made things very difficult for Britain.⁵⁰

Britain's chosen policy for dealing with the EEC was broadly similar to that pursued in the summer and autumn of 1956, to set up an industrial European Free Trade Area. The creation of the EEC meant that instead of an industrial free trade area designed to prevent the development of a customs union, this now represented an attempt to subsume the Six within a wider grouping. Reginald Maudling (Paymaster General and leader of the FTA negotiations) wrote in January 1958 of the dangers to Britain if the free trade area could not be created:

I have become more than ever impressed by the dangers of failing to reach an agreement. The European Economic Community has now been launched...If no Free Trade Area agreement is achieved, this new industrial giant will increasingly overshadow our trading future throughout the world. The centre of gravity in European economic affairs will shift inexorably to Bonn (or Paris). The smaller continental countries will have willy-nilly to come to terms with the Six. The attractions of the Continental market will grow in the eyes of the Commonwealth, and the power of the Six to compete with us in Commonwealth markets will steadily increase.⁵¹

⁵⁰ HMD vol. II (27 Mar., 1957), p. 25.

⁵¹ TNA CAB 129/91, C. (58) 27 'European Free Trade Area: Memorandum by the Paymaster-General' (30 Jan., 1958), p. 3.

By 1959, after the termination of the FTA discussions in November 1958, there appeared to be an evolution of the attitudes prevailing in the British government. The fear of the EEC and its potential impact on Britain economically and *vis-a-vis* the United States remained throughout, but the way in which the British government intended to deal with this changed. In the earlier part of the year the intention was to create an alternative European grouping,⁵² and Macmillan was candid in his intentions for EFTA to be a mechanism to force the Six into what he called a reasonable negotiation, having also referred to the Seven in opposition to the Six as ‘Stockholm v Rome’.⁵³ By October though, high-ranking figures within the government had reached the conclusion that ‘for better or worse, the Common Market looks like being here to stay at least for the foreseeable future...the question is how to live with the Common Market economically and turn its political effects into channels harmless to us.’⁵⁴ In December the Foreign Secretary, Selwyn Lloyd, was talking of the need to come to terms with the EEC, fearing that British opposition to the political integration of the Six would not prevent their moving closer together, but may in fact hasten such a process.⁵⁵ Sir Frederick Bishop (Macmillan’s Principal Private Secretary) opined that using EFTA to make the EEC more liberal was a pious hope rather than a realistic aim,⁵⁶ and the notes sent by Macmillan to several of his Cabinet colleagues indicate a reluctant willingness to consider associating Britain with the Six, in line with the sentiments De Zulueta, Macmillan’s Private Secretary, had expressed to him two

⁵² HMD vol. II (3 Apr., 1959), pp. 213-214; HMD vol. II (6 May., 1959), pp. 216-217.

⁵³ HMD vol. II (7 Jul., 1959), pp. 230-231.

⁵⁴ TNA PREM 11/2985, ‘De Zulueta to Macmillan’ (21 Oct., 1959).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, ‘Lloyd to Macmillan’ (13 Dec., 1959), p. 1.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, ‘Bishop to Macmillan’ (11 Dec., 1959), p. 2.

months before.⁵⁷ By April 1960 Bishop was writing of the need for ‘a fundamental rethinking of our attitude towards Europe’,⁵⁸ and the Economic Steering Committee chaired by Sir Frank Lee argued in its report that, among other things, that what had changed since 1956 when the government first rejected the EEC, was that the ‘Common Market is an established fact and is rapidly increasing in cohesion and economic strength’.⁵⁹

In July 1961 the government took the decision to begin negotiations with the Six to see on what terms Britain could join the EEC. It is not this author’s intention to go over the arguments that have been presented as to whether economic or geopolitical considerations prompted Macmillan and his Cabinet to reach this decision. Kristian Steinnes’ article provides an excellent summary of that particular historiographical debate,⁶⁰ and whether or not geopolitics or economics was the deciding factor, it was the existence and seeming success of the EEC that provided the overall impetus for the decision. This was certainly the view expressed by a sadly unknown author in a memorandum to the Quai D’Orsay in May 1961 which includes the following:

⁵⁷ Ibid, ‘Macmillan to Heathcoat-Amory’ (Dec., 1959), pp. 1-2; ‘Macmillan to Lloyd’ (Dec., 1959), pp. 1-2; ‘Macmillan to Watkinson’ (Dec., 1959), pp. 1-2.

⁵⁸ TNA PREM 11/3311, ‘Bishop to Macmillan’ (8 Apr., 1960), p. 3.

⁵⁹ TNA CAB 129/102, C. (60) 107 ‘Association with the European Economic Community: Note by the Secretary of the Cabinet’ (6 Jul., 1960), Annex G, p. 33.

⁶⁰ K. Steinnes, ‘The European Challenge: Britain’s EEC Application in 1961’, *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (Mar., 1998), pp. 62-64.

The patterns that caused Britain to modify its attitude are probably the following:

First, the success of the Common Market. It is undeniable that it has been successful so far, at least in regard to industrial products. Tariff reduction was faster than planned; the Common Market countries are experiencing financial stability and a more satisfactory rate of expansion than other European countries... Secondly, the Six preserved their cohesion, despite serious difficulties.⁶¹

The memorandum continues by listing the views of the United States as the third factor that prompted the modification of Britain's attitude. This refers to the new Kennedy administration's indication to Britain that it would not support any association solution, was hostile to any purely commercial solution, and that only British membership of the Common Market could be considered.⁶² This French interpretation of US policy is supported by a 12th April telegram from the State Department to various diplomatic missions in Europe. The US document stated that the development of the EEC had created problems for Britain and the other EFTA states, and that not only was a purely commercial form of association problematic for the US, but the only solution that would command American support was Britain joining the EEC and wholeheartedly accepting the accompanying political and

⁶¹ A.M.A.E, *20QO 1401*, 'Grande Bretagne et la Marche Commun' (13 May., 1961), p. 2, Translated by Nick Saunders.

⁶² *Ibid.*

institutional obligations.⁶³ It is worth recalling briefly here that the US had been sceptical or hostile to EFTA on the grounds that it further split Europe, and that US policy had been supportive of the EEC based on its political nature.⁶⁴ A significant factor regarding American views of the EEC was the fact that it was seen to be successful, and so the US had not only a geo-political reason to support it on the grounds that a united Europe would make a stronger Cold War ally, but also a reflection of its own success.

In both economic and diplomatic terms, the creation and successful development of the EEC forced Britain to adapt its policies, and while this initially took the form of attempting to subsume the EEC into a wider European grouping, then attempting to counter the threat by the formation of another European economic group, ultimately, the relative success of the EEC was the most important factor in the British decision to apply for membership in 1961. The Suez crisis played a significant role in the development of the EEC, fostering a sense in French government circles that faced with the prospect of not being able to rely on the US, Europe offered the best way for France to maintain a great power role. It gave Mollet the evidence he needed to overcome the hostility to the Common Market that Britain had used to justify its own sceptical attitude towards European integration in the mid 1950s.

⁶³ FRUS 1961-1963 Volume XIII, Western Europe and Canada, Doc. 3 'Circular Telegram from the Department of State to Certain Missions in Europe' (12 Apr., 1961).

⁶⁴ TNA CAB 129/99, C. (59) 188 'Europe: Situation After Mr Dillon's Visit: Memorandum by the Chancellor of the Exchequer' (14 Dec., 1959), p. 1.

Algeria and De Gaulle

The second way in which Suez played a role in the course of Anglo-French negotiations over the EEC was in the return to power of General Charles de Gaulle in June 1958. Although there was an eighteen-month gap between the crisis and the return of the General, it is submitted that Suez was a significant factor. The reason for this is that while it was the ongoing Algerian crisis that prompted de Gaulle's return, that crisis was heavily influenced by Suez. Bernard Ledwidge asserted that the humiliation of Suez and its consequences in Algeria produced the conditions in France that were necessary for and favourable to de Gaulle's return.⁶⁵ Maurice Vaisse made a similar point that the seeds of de Gaulle's return were sown in the failure of the Suez operation,⁶⁶ and Peter Mangold even credits Macmillan with the statement that 'some of the seeds of the General's return were sown by the failure of Suez'.⁶⁷

Algeria had been ruled by France since 1848 and was considered to be a French *département*, and thus part of the country itself, rather than merely a colony.⁶⁸ By 1958 there were more than one million European settlers, known as *pieds noirs*, living in Algeria and they held considerable power and influence, both locally and in mainland France.⁶⁹ Although Algerians had fought for France during the Great War,

⁶⁵ B. Ledwidge, *De Gaulle* (London, 1982), p. 227.

⁶⁶ M. Vaisse, 'Post-Suez France', in WM. Roger Louis & R. Owen (eds), *Suez* (Oxford, 1989), p. 335.

⁶⁷ P. Mangold, *The Almost Impossible Ally: Harold Macmillan and Charles De Gaulle* (London, 2006), p. 85.

⁶⁸ P.C. Naylor, *France and Algeria: A History of Decolonization and Transformation* (Tallahassee, 2000), p. 6.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, p. 14; A. Horne, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962* (Basingstoke, 1977), p. 30.

there had been a growing sense of nationalism since the 1920s and in November 1954, the attacks by the Front de Liberation Nationale (FLN) in what became known as *Toussaint Rouge* (Red All-Saints Day) began the Algerian uprising.⁷⁰ The response of the French government was to state its determination to hold onto Algeria. Mitterrand declared that the only negotiation is war, and that Algeria was France. Jacques Soustelle, who served as Governor General in Algeria, remarked that Algeria and all its inhabitants were an integral part of France, 'one and indivisible'.⁷¹ Perhaps Pierre Mendès-France made the most striking comments, as the then Prime Minister said:

One does not compromise when it comes to defending the internal peace of the nation, the unity and the integrity of the Republic. The Algerian departments are part of the French Republic. They have been French for a long time, and they are irrevocably French...Between them and Metropolitan France there can be no conceivable secession...Never will France –any French government or parliament, whatever may be their particularistic tendencies- yield on this fundamental principle.⁷²

The influence of the Suez Crisis in this conflict comes in two ways: the first is that French leaders saw the crisis as part of the ongoing Algerian uprising, and the second is how Suez influenced the later conduct of operations in Algeria. Dealing first of all

⁷⁰ 'Terrorism in Algeria', *The Times* (3 Nov., 1954), p. 4.

⁷¹ M. Evans, *Algeria: France's Undeclared War* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 111-112.

⁷² I. Lustick, *Unsettled States, Disputed Lands: Britain and Ireland, France and Algeria, Israel and the West Bank-Gaza* (Cornell, 1993), p. 111.

with Suez as part of the Algerian crisis,⁷³ French leaders were of the view that the Egyptian President, Colonel Nasser, was supporting and supplying the FLN rebels.⁷⁴ This view was not without some justification as Nasser himself claimed to Pineau that if France wished to negotiate a settlement with the FLN, then it could be arranged.⁷⁵ This may have been Nasser trying to discomfit his adversary and taking credit where it was not warranted, yet there were other reasons for the French view. The FLN was known to broadcast from Cairo,⁷⁶ and on 16th October 1956 an Egyptian cargo ship, the *Athos*, was discovered carrying weapons for the FLN.⁷⁷ French leaders already considered Suez to be simply another theatre of the Algerian war,⁷⁸ so the capture of the *Athos* simply gave a final and conclusive logic to Operation Musketeer, linking Nasser and Algeria in stark, unambiguous terms. Mitterrand, normally a fierce opponent of Guy Mollet, supported the Prime Minister's position and even spoke of

⁷³ I.M. Wall, *France, the United States, and the Algerian War* (Los Angeles, 2001), p. 34; I.M. Wall, 'The United States, Algeria, and the Fall of the Fourth French Republic', *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (Oct., 1994), p. 499.

⁷⁴ G. Warner, 'The United States and the Suez Crisis', *International Affairs*, Vol. 67, No. 2 (1991), p. 309.

⁷⁵ A. Horne, *A Savage War* (1977), p. 162.

⁷⁶ 'Terrorism in Algeria', *The Times* (3 Nov., 1954), p. 4.

⁷⁷ A. Horne, *A Savage War* (1977), p. 158.

⁷⁸ J. Talbot, *The War Without a Name: France in Algeria 1954-1962* (London, 1981), p. 70.

the need to liquidate Nasser.⁷⁹ Robert Lacoste made the famous quote that ‘one division in Egypt is worth four in Algeria’.⁸⁰

Thus far, the Suez and Algerian crises were linked by the French view that in order to defeat the FLN and retain control of Algeria, it was necessary to defeat Nasser in Egypt. Doing so would, in French eyes, remove the rebels’ principal source of support. In this way Algeria was an influence on the Suez crisis rather than the other way around. However, it is in the way the Egyptian crisis concluded that we find its impact in Algeria, and ultimately the return of de Gaulle. In some ways the French response to Suez in an Algerian context mirrored Britain’s response to Abadan. A significant portion of the Conservative Party saw the failure of the Labour Government to respond effectively to Mossadeq and the nationalisation of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company as evidence that a weak position on the Middle East would have disastrous consequences for Britain.⁸¹ Anthony Eden was one of a number of Conservatives who went from being initially cautious to calling for a more robust

⁷⁹ S. Baumann-Reynolds, *Francois Mitterrand: The Making of a Socialist Prince in Republican France* (Westport, 1995), p. 53; J.P. Morray, *Grand Disillusion: Francois Mitterrand and the French Left* (Westport, 1997), p. 20.

⁸⁰ M. Evans, *Algeria* (2012), p. 183.

⁸¹ S. Onslow, ‘Battlelines for Suez’: The Abadan Crisis of 1951 and the Formation of the Suez Group’, *Contemporary British History*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (2003), pp. 1-28; S. Onslow, ‘Unreconstructed Nationalists and a Minor Gunboat Operation: Julian Amery, Neil McLean and the Suez Crisis’, *Contemporary British History*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Mar., 2006), p. 75; P.J. Beck, ‘The Lessons of Abadan and Suez for British Policymakers in the 1960s’, *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (2006), pp. 535-547.

response, and at Suez five years later a diplomatic solution was not seen as credible in the face of what appeared to be a repeat of Abadan.⁸²

A large part of the French contribution to the Anglo-French taskforce for Operation Musketeer had seen recent service in Algeria. The troops from the French Parachute division shocked their British counterparts with their toughness and professionalism, a legacy of the fighting in North Africa and also in Indochina.⁸³ Their experiences in Asia, particularly the circumstances of their defeat, had ingrained in them a hatred of and determination to fight against Communism with which they associated neutralism, a by-product of colonial independence. Many in the French Army felt that Communist and Socialist politicians in France had betrayed them and there was little affection for the Fourth Republic among the military, particularly the elite units such as the paras.⁸⁴ Having successfully landed at Port Said and in the process of brushing aside Egyptian resistance, the French forces were dismayed by the ceasefire order. General Beaufre later claimed to have contemplated disobedience and continuing the advance, and the soldiers felt cheated by their government.⁸⁵ Suez had two particular impacts: it added to an already long list of grievances felt by the army against the Fourth Republic and its leaders, and it made it even more determined to win in Algeria.⁸⁶

⁸² FRUS 1955-1957, Vol. XVI Suez Crisis July 26-December 31 1956, Doc. 24 'Telegram from the Embassy in the United Kingdom to the Department of State' (29 Jul., 1956).

⁸³ R. Fullick & G. Powell, *Suez* (2006), p. 41.

⁸⁴ E. Behr, *The Algerian Problem* (London, 1961), pp. 137-140.

⁸⁵ A. Horne, *A Savage War* (1977), pp. 163-164.

⁸⁶ J. Talbot, *War* (1981), pp. 71-72; A. Horne, *A Savage War* (1977), p. 164.

By the spring of 1958 the economic and political situation in France and Algeria was deteriorating.⁸⁷ Although French military tactics had improved since 1955/1956 and were now specifically designed to combat a lightly armed opponent engaging in guerrilla tactics, there were more than 500,000 French soldiers in Algeria and the costs were prohibitive.⁸⁸ Mollet's government, the longest-lived of any in the Fourth Republic fell in May 1957 when the more conservative parties refused a tax increase to fund continued operations.⁸⁹ Maurice Bourgès-Maunoury between June and November 1957, Félix Gaillard (November 1957-May 1958) and Pierre Pflimlin (14 May-1 June 1958) led administrations that were incapable of dealing with Algeria.⁹⁰ The government had initially refused to recognise (publicly) that Algeria was anything other than a pacification issue, and as May 1958 arrived, elements in the army were becoming convinced that the government in Paris was contemplating a withdrawal.⁹¹ Lacoste had been vainly attempting to enact a policy of *Loi Cadre*, increasing Algerian autonomy and Muslim representation. Neither the European *pieds noirs*, nor the army in Algeria, supported these ideas and Lacoste's position, as Governor General, was almost untenable.⁹² At the same time, the United States had been taking an increased interest in the Algerian question, mainly out of concern at

⁸⁷ J. Fenby, *The General* (2010), p. 377.

⁸⁸ B. Crozier & G. Mansell, 'France and Algeria', *International Affairs*, Vol. 36, No. 3 (Jul., 1960), p. 311.

⁸⁹ J. Talbot, *War* (1961), p. 114.

⁹⁰ J. Fenby, *The General* (2010), p. 375.

⁹¹ A. Horne, *A Savage War* (1977), p. 268.

⁹² J. Fenby, *The General* (2010), p. 375.

the political instability of the French State. Irwin Wall claimed that Washington played a critical role in the fall of Félix Gaillard in May 1958,⁹³ and there were those in Algeria who feared that American influence would manifest in the surrender they were expecting from Paris.⁹⁴

On 13 May Pierre Pflimlin was sworn in as Prime Minister. The response in Algeria amounted to a *coup*. There were riots in Algiers and Generals Massu and Salan seized power from the civil authorities, refusing to recognise Pflimlin's government. The army gave tacit and in some cases active support to the demonstrations without which they could not have occurred.⁹⁵ A group of Gaullist officers were actively planning to seize power in Paris, which had lost complete control of Algeria, by way of Operation Resurrection, a combined parachute and tank assault on the capital designed to force the recall of de Gaulle.⁹⁶ In the event it was unnecessary and de Gaulle was called upon by the President René Coty to form a new government on 1 June.⁹⁷ The Algerian crisis was the catalyst for the General's resumption of power in France, but by hardening the attitude of the Army in Algeria, Suez had played an important role.

⁹³ I.M. Wall, 'The United States, Algeria, and the Fall of the Fourth French Republic', *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (Oct., 1994), p. 491.

⁹⁴ A. Home, *A Savage War* (1977), p. 269.

⁹⁵ E. Behr, *The Algerian Problem* (1961), p. 135.

⁹⁶ 'Background to the Algiers Insurrectionary Movement: Army Officers Oath at the Time of Dien Bien Phu Debacle', *The Times* (1 Jun., 1958), p. 8.

⁹⁷ P. Mangold, *The Almost Impossible Ally* (2006), p. 86.

De Gaulle and French Policy Towards Britain and the European Communities

The Suez Crisis took place while de Gaulle had putatively retired from public life. As such, it either does not feature at all in many biographies of the general,⁹⁸ or is given only the briefest passing mention in the context of Algeria, and thus de Gaulle's return to power.⁹⁹ Two notable exceptions are Jonathan Fenby's 2010 biography, and the 1970 work by John Newhouse, both of whom discuss, albeit briefly, de Gaulle's reaction to the crisis. Fenby wrote that de Gaulle saw Suez as further evidence of the weakness of the Fourth Republic, and the futility of relying on Britain as an ally.¹⁰⁰ Newhouse made much the same points but included the view that de Gaulle was well informed despite being in retirement and that the crisis aroused his passion for action.¹⁰¹ This is at the same time a plausible omission given the fact that de Gaulle was in retirement from public life, and yet a curious omission as well, as Suez was an integral part of the Algerian conflict which was itself responsible for the general's return to power in May 1958.¹⁰² By contrast, de Gaulle's views on European integration, and his relationships with Britain and the United States have received much more extensive scholarly attention. De Gaulle claimed that had he been in office

⁹⁸ J. Lacouture, *De Gaulle The Ruler: 1945-1970* (Translated by Alan Sheridan) (London, 1991); C. Williams, *The Last Great Frenchman: A Life of General de Gaulle* (London, 1993).

⁹⁹ B. Ledwidge, *De Gaulle* (London, 1982), pp. 227-228; A. Werth, *De Gaulle* (New York, 1965), p. 235.

¹⁰⁰ J. Fenby, *The General: Charles De Gaulle and the France He Saved* (London, 2010), p. 370.

¹⁰¹ J. Newhouse, *De Gaulle and the Anglo-Saxons* (London, 1970), pp. 8-9.

¹⁰² P. Mangold, *The Almost Impossible Ally: Harold Macmillan and Charles De Gaulle* (London, 2006), pp. 85-86.

in 1956 and 1957 he would not have signed the Treaties of Rome.¹⁰³ Yet, once back in power he made no attempt to remove France from the European organisations created by the treaties, recognising their potential economic and geo-political benefits.¹⁰⁴ According to Chopra, de Gaulle's thinking rejected the view of Monnet and Spaak that institutions could be an effective means for converting a sceptical European electorate to the benefits of supranationalism. De Gaulle saw supranationalism as unreal, fictitious and bound to fail, and stressed the role of the state as the expression of the political will.¹⁰⁵

The issue of de Gaulle's vision of a united Europe has, in keeping perhaps with the general's reputation, generated a degree of academic dispute and controversy. The traditional or orthodox interpretation is that de Gaulle viewed Europe through the lens of French national greatness and renewal. Geopolitics and diplomacy were at the heart of his policies in the late 1950s and 1960s, seeing Europe as the means by which France could maintain great power status, but also, develop an alternative power bloc, allied to, but not dominated by the United States.¹⁰⁶ In the same way that historiography of Macmillan's decision to apply for EEC membership has been the subject of intense debate,¹⁰⁷ de Gaulle and Europe has seen the

¹⁰³ This claim was referred to by Macmillan in his 'Grand Design' *PREM 11/3325*, 'The Grand Design: Memorandum by the Prime Minister' (Dec., 1960-Jan., 1961), p. 12.

¹⁰⁴ J. Newhouse, *De Gaulle and the Anglo-Saxons* (London, 1970), p. 54.

¹⁰⁵ H.S. Chopra, *De Gaulle and European Unity* (New Delhi, 1974), p. 175.

¹⁰⁶ TNA CAB 21/4414, 'Ramsbottom to Brook' (17 Apr., 1961).

¹⁰⁷ K. Steinnes, 'The European Challenge: Britain's EEC Application in 1961', *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (Mar., 1998), pp. 62-64.

presentation of a revisionist interpretation. Andrew Moravcsik decried the geopolitical argument and stressed the primacy of economic considerations in de Gaulle's thinking: 'the price of wheat, not the political grandeur and military security of France, was the national interest that drove De Gaulle's European policy'.¹⁰⁸ Jeffrey Vanke provided a rebuttal to Moravcsik's revisionist interpretation, questioning the basis for separating economic considerations from what Moravcsik called high politics, on the grounds that they were and are indivisible.¹⁰⁹ This particular point of Vanke's is significant as irrespective of whether or not an academic sees economic strength as an integral part of geopolitics, it was a link that was made by contemporaries of de Gaulle. Harold Macmillan in his 'Grand Design',¹¹⁰ and Anthony Eden in his 1952 foreign policy review,¹¹¹ explicitly linked economic

¹⁰⁸ A. Moravcsik, 'De Gaulle and European Integration: Historical Revision and Social Science Theory', *Center for European Studies Working Paper Series: Program for the Study of Germany and Europe: Working Paper Series 8.5* (May., 1998), p. 3; A. Moravcsik, *The Choice for Europe* (1998); A. Moravcsik, 'De Gaulle Between Grain and Grandeur: The Political Economy of French EC Policy, 1958-1970 Part 1', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Spring, 2000), pp. 3-43; A. Moravcsik, 'De Gaulle Between Grain and Grandeur: The Political Economy of French EC Policy, 1958-1970 (Part 2)', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (Fall, 2000), pp. 4-68.

¹⁰⁹ J. Vanke, 'Reconstructing De Gaulle', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (Fall, 2000), pp. 88-89.

¹¹⁰ TNA PREM 11/3325, 'Memorandum by the Prime Minister on Future UK Political and Economic Policy' (29 Dec., 1960 – 3 Jan., 1961), p. 2.

¹¹¹ TNA CAB 129/53, C (52) 202 'British Overseas Obligations: Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs' (18 Jun., 1952), p. 1.

strength to their country's diplomatic position, and stressed the importance of the former to the latter, as did the 1960 'Study for Future Policy'.¹¹²

General de Gaulle's return to power in May 1958 added a new and somewhat paradoxical element to the Anglo-European relationship. While it is true that Anglo-French relations were not as close after Suez as they were before and during the crisis,¹¹³ and that Anglo-French differences over Europe were too great to be easily bridged, the FTA negotiations were foundering before de Gaulle returned,¹¹⁴ none of the Fourth Republic governments between January 1957 and April 1958 were as actively hostile to Britain in Europe as was de Gaulle. Thereafter he dominated French foreign policy while he was in office, far more so than his predecessors had done.¹¹⁵

The paradox of de Gaulle and his views on Europe and Britain alike is that, despite being hostile to British membership of the EEC, his particular vision of a unified Europe had much in common with that of Britain. De Gaulle referred to '*Europe des Patries*' (Europe of nation-states), and stressed cooperation and decision-making by the national governments, disdaining institutions such as the Commission,

¹¹² TNA CAB 129/100, F.P. (60) 1 'Future Policy Study 1960-1970' (24 February 1960), pp. 1-47.

¹¹³ R. Tombs & I. Tombs, *That Sweet Enemy* (2007), p. 618; H. Thomas. *The Suez Affair* (London, 1967), p. 154; J. Newhouse, *De Gaulle* (1970), p. 9.

¹¹⁴ P. Mangold, *The Almost Impossible Ally*: (2006), p. 101.

¹¹⁵ C. Williams, *The Last Great Frenchman* (1993), pp. 410-411.

or the ideas of Hallstein¹¹⁶ to the point of withdrawing French representatives from the Community during the Empty Chair Crisis.¹¹⁷ Macmillan, somewhat acidly, stated in November 1961 that ‘he talks of Europe and means France’,¹¹⁸ an accurate description if the Empty Chair Crisis was any indicator. Macmillan’s remark leads us to the paradoxical element of de Gaulle and Britain’s EEC bid. In his 1961 ‘Grand Design’ Macmillan noted that:

As difficult as de Gaulle is, his view of the proper political structure (Confederation not Federation) is really nearer to ours. If he wished us to join the political institutions it would be easier for us to do so if they took the form which he favours.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ For Hallstein’s ideas on the development of the Community see: W. Hallstein, ‘The European Economic Community’, *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 78, No. 2 (Jun., 1963), pp. 161-178; W. Hallstein, ‘The EEC Commission: A New Factor in International Life’, *International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (Jul., 1965), pp. 727-741; J. Gillingham, *European Integration 1950-2003: Superstate Or New Market Economy?* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 8.

¹¹⁷ For the ‘Empty Chair Crisis’ see: N. Piers Ludlow, ‘Challenging French Leadership in Europe: Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and the Outbreak of the Empty Chair Crisis 1965-1966’, *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (Jul., 1999), pp. 231-248; N. Piers Ludlow, *The European Community and the Crises of the 1960s: Negotiating the Gaullist Challenge* (London, 2006).

¹¹⁸ A. Home, *Macmillan: The Official Biography: Twentieth Anniversary Edition* (London, 2008), p. 589.

¹¹⁹ TNA PREM 11/3325, ‘Memorandum by the Prime Minister on Future UK Political and Economic Policy’ (29 Dec., 1960 – 3 Jan., 1961), p. 8.

In his diaries Macmillan referred to the similarities between de Gaulle and Britain when it came to a confederal or a federal approach in Europe. His entry for 29 November 1961 talks in almost desperate tones, the problem that Macmillan and the British bid are facing:

The tragedy of it all is that we agree with de G about almost everything. We like the political Europe (*Union des patries or union d'Etats*) that de G likes. We are anti-federalists; so is he...We agree; but his pride, his inherited hatred of England...his bitter memories of the last war; above all, his intense 'vanity' for France...make him half welcome, half repel us, with a strange 'love-hate' complex.¹²⁰

Contained within that diary entry is the crux of the matter. Macmillan was wrong, or at least exaggerating, when he claimed de Gaulle possessed an inherited hatred of England. De Gaulle had a longstanding suspicion of Britain dating back to his childhood during the Fashoda incident,¹²¹ and exacerbated by some of his wartime experiences, particularly Churchill telling him 'each time we must choose between Europe and the open sea, we shall always choose the open sea. Each time I must choose between you and Roosevelt, I shall always choose Roosevelt'.¹²² This sentiment made a deep impression on the general who referred to it during his December 1962 meeting with Macmillan at Rambouillet, the meeting where he made

¹²⁰ HMD vol. II (29 Nov., 1961), pp. 429-431.

¹²¹ J. Fenby, *The General* (2010), p. 48.

¹²² C. Williams, *The Last Great Frenchman* (1993), p. 252.

clear his opposition to British membership of the Common Market.¹²³ Yet de Gaulle admired Britain and described it to Sir Pierson Dixon (UK Ambassador to France) as ‘a good neighbour he would always help me to put out a fire in my house’.¹²⁴ De Gaulle simply had an overwhelming desire to do what he thought was best for France.¹²⁵ His hostility to the British EEC bid was based on his belief that Britain was not sincere in its desire to play a full role in Europe, was applying as an American Trojan horse, and that due to its trading links with the Commonwealth Britain’s prior commitments were incompatible anyway with the agricultural provisions of the Common Market.¹²⁶

Where Macmillan was correct was his portrayal of the similarities between de Gaulle and Britain on European issues and his frustration at de Gaulle’s hesitancy and hostility. The timing of this entry is significant, as is the note of hope that de Gaulle might yield to pressure. A year later in December 1962 Macmillan reacted angrily to De Gaulle’s explanation regarding his opposition to the British bid, stating that he made what amounted to ‘a fundamental objection in principle to the British application. If this was really the French Government’s view, it should have been put forward at the very start’.¹²⁷ Macmillan’s anger can be explained by a sense of

¹²³ P. Mangold, *The Almost Impossible Ally* (2006), p. 32.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

¹²⁵ De Gaulle began his memoirs with the phrase ‘Toute ma vie, je me suis fait une certaine idée de la France.’ *C. De Gaulle, Memoirs de Guerre: Tome 1* (Paris, 1954).

¹²⁶ H.S. Chopra, *De Gaulle and European Unity* (New Delhi, 1974), p. 176; J. Newhouse, *De Gaulle* (1970), p. 36.

¹²⁷ P. Mangold, *The Almost Impossible Ally* (2006), p. 185.

surprise and outrage, although the general's decision cannot have come as a complete surprise as Macmillan was well aware as 1962 progressed that the negotiations were in trouble.¹²⁸ However, beyond the progress reports from Brussels, de Gaulle's decision should not have been so seemingly unexpected. Macmillan demonstrated in 1960, 1961 and 1962 that he was aware of the contradictory nature of de Gaulle's views, and crucially the reason for them.

What Macmillan failed to understand (until after the veto¹²⁹) was that de Gaulle's personal sentiments on federalism and the constitutional nature of Europe were of less importance to him than his awareness that Europe offered France a leadership role and great power status, and his feeling that Britain was a threat to that position. Britain's entry was incompatible with the principles of the EEC in de Gaulle's eyes and even if it was not, France was the weaker of the two countries in 1963. France had an opportunity (limited by time) to shape Europe in the way it wanted. Germany, despite its industrial and economic potential being greater than France, was still the weaker partner in the Franco-German partnership. With Britain in the Common Market France would not automatically occupy the leading position. De Gaulle had always had a principled objection to Britain coming into the EEC. The Nassau Agreement provided him with a convenient pretext but he had always intended to end the negotiations at one point or another. That he waited until 1962/63 to pull the plug is the same as his decision to terminate the FTA talks in November 1958. He was not in a strong enough position in either case to act much, if any, earlier. In 1958 he was preoccupied with Algeria and formulating a new constitution

¹²⁸ HMD vol. II (27 May., 1962), pp. 472-474.

¹²⁹ A. Horne, *Macmillan* (2008), p. 673.

for France and his attempts to develop a tripartite relationship with Britain and the US. In 1961-62 he was engaged in trying to end the Algerian crisis, and proposing the Fouchet Plan.

The French Nuclear Deterrent

The historiography of the French deterrent is extensive and encompasses several areas of particular focus. The first works emerged in the 1960s and 1970s and were dedicated to atomic energy policy under the Fourth and early Fifth Republics. French author Bertrand Goldschmidt, who had been intimately involved in the French contribution to the Manhattan Project, and American academic Lawrence Scheinman, published more general histories, while Scheinman's compatriot Wilfried Kohl considered the deterrent in the context of the NATO alliance, specifically its impact on Anglo-French-American discussions and military policy.¹³⁰ By the later 1980s and into the 1990s and 2000s more works appeared. Some such as that by Georges-Henri Soutou considered a wider time-period to include the French presidencies of

¹³⁰ B. Goldschmidt, *L'Aventure Atomique: ses Aspects Politiques et Techniques* (Paris, 1962); B. Goldschmidt, *Les Rivalités Atomiques: 1939-1966* (Paris, 1967); L. Scheinman, *Atomic Energy Policy in France Under the Fourth Republic* (Princeton, 1965); W. Kohl, 'The French Nuclear Deterrent', *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science*, Vol. 29, No. 2, 'The "Atlantic Community" Reappraised' (Nov., 1968), pp. 80-94; W. Kohl, *The French Nuclear Force and Alliance Diplomacy, 1958-1967* (Columbia University, 1968); W. Mendl, *Deterrence and Persuasion: French nuclear armament in the context of national policy, 1945-1969* (London, 1970).

Pompidou, Giscard D'Estaing and Mitterrand, while others, notably Collette Barbier, revisited the Fourth Republic.¹³¹

Beyond more general histories, there have been works that are more specialised. Gabrielle Hecht took a more technical approach in her examination of French nuclear policy under the Fourth Republic, looking more deeply at the power (scientific rather than geo-political) issues and reactor design than their impact on the wider world.¹³² Binyamin Pinkus looked at the role of France in the development of Israeli nuclear weapons, while authors including Matthew Kroenig have examined nuclear non-proliferation more generally.¹³³ Samaan and Gompert revisited the deterrent and NATO in the aftermath of the then President Sarkozy's 2007 decision to

¹³¹ G-H. Soutou, 'The French Military Program for Nuclear Energy, 1945-1981' (Translated by Preston Niblak), *Nuclear History Program: Occasional Paper 3* (University of Maryland, 1989); M. Duval & Y. Le Baut, *L'arme nucleaire francaise: Pourquoi et Comment?* (Paris, 1992); C. Barbier, 'The French Decision to Develop a Military Nuclear Programme in the 1950s', *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (1993), pp. 103-113; S. Sagan, 'Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons: Three Models in Search of a Bomb,' *International Security*, Vol. 21, No 3 (Winter, 1996/1997), pp. 54-86.

¹³² G. Hecht, 'Political Designs: Nuclear Reactors and National Policy in Postwar France', *Technology and Culture*, Vol. 35, No. 4 (Oct., 1994), pp. 657-685.

¹³³ B. Pinkus, 'Atomic Power to Israel's Rescue: French-Israeli Nuclear Cooperation, 1949-1957', *Israel Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (Spring., 2002), pp. 104-138; D. Fischer, *Stopping the Spread of Nuclear Weapons: The Past and the Prospects* (London, 1992); M. Kroenig, *Exporting the Bomb: Technology Transfer and the Spread of Nuclear Weapons* (Cornell, 2010); Group Captain Timothy Garden, *Can Deterrence Last? Peace Through a Nuclear Strategy* (London, 1984).

reintegrate the French military, reversing de Gaulle's famous 1966 withdrawal from that structure.¹³⁴

The third area, which admittedly encompasses many more sub-divisions than can realistically be considered here, includes works that have focussed on France and French history that include substantial sections on the nuclear deterrent, biographies of General de Gaulle, particularly that by H.S. Chopra,¹³⁵ and considerations of the General's foreign policy that have nuclear elements to them.¹³⁶

Although the French nuclear arsenal is perhaps best known historically for its development under General De Gaulle, France having exploded an atomic bomb in 1960,¹³⁷ formed operational Mirage squadrons in 1964, left NATO's integrated

¹³⁴ J-L. Samaan & D.C. Gompert, 'French Nuclear Weapons, Euro-Deterrence, and NATO,' *Contemporary Security Policy*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (2009), pp. 486-504.

¹³⁵ H.S. Chopra, *De Gaulle and European Unity* (New Delhi, 1974).

¹³⁶ F. Bozo, *Two Strategies for Europe: De Gaulle, the United States, and the Atlantic Alliance* (Maryland, 2001); J. Fenby, *The General: Charles De Gaulle and the France He Saved* (London, 2010); A. Grosser, 'General De Gaulle and the Foreign Policy of the Fifth Republic', *International Affairs*, Vol. 39, No. 2 (Apr., 1963), pp. 198-213; I. Wall, 'De Gaulle, the 'Anglo-Saxons', and the Algerian War', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (2002), pp. 118-137; P.H. Gordon, 'Charles De Gaulle and the Nuclear Revolution' in J. Gaddis, P.H. Gordon, E. May & J. Rosenberg (eds), *Cold War Statesmen Confront the Bomb: Nuclear Diplomacy Since 1945* (Oxford, 1999); K. Stoddart, 'Nuclear Weapons in Britain's Policy Towards France, 1960-1974', *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (2007), pp. 719-744.

¹³⁷ W. Granger, 'France Explodes Her First A-Bomb in a Sahara Test', *The New York Times* (13 Feb., 1960), p. 1; 'Cork Out of the Bottle', *The Times* (15 Feb., 1960), p. 11.

command structure in 1966,¹³⁸ and detonated a thermonuclear device (hydrogen bomb) in 1968,¹³⁹ all under the General's leadership, the Force De Dissuasion has its roots in the Fourth Republic, although again de Gaulle was the initial driving force. The directive of de Gaulle created the French Atomic Energy Commission (CEA) in October 1945¹⁴⁰ and it was the general's intention to modernize the French Armed Forces including the production of atomic weapons, an intention that was not shared by the politicians of the Republic and resulted in de Gaulle's resignation in January 1946.¹⁴¹ Despite the intentions of de Gaulle, the French atomic energy program in the late 1940s and early 1950s, under the initial leadership of the Communist Frederic Joliot-Curie, was concerned solely with peaceful applications and did not seriously envisage the development of atomic weapons.¹⁴² This was in part a political issue and was a reflection of the political divisions in the French government at that time,¹⁴³ but was also subject to a clear-eyed cost-benefit analysis. France, despite its role in the wartime Manhattan Project was, like Britain, prevented from sharing US advances

¹³⁸ C. Barbier, 'The French Decision to Develop a Military Nuclear Programme in the 1950s', *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (1993), p. 103.

¹³⁹ 'Protests Over French Hydrogen Bomb', *The Times* (26 Aug., 1968), p. 3.

¹⁴⁰ C. Barbier, 'The French Decision to Develop a Military Nuclear Programme in the 1950s', *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (1993), p. 104.

¹⁴¹ J. Fenby, *The General* (2010), pp. 306-310; W. Hitchcock, *France Restored: Cold War Diplomacy and the Quest for Leadership in Europe, 1944-1954* (Chapel Hill, 1998).

¹⁴² H.S. Chopra, *De Gaulle and European Unity* (1974), p. 222.

¹⁴³ G. Hecht, 'Political Designs: Nuclear Reactors and National Policy in Postwar France', *Technology and Culture*, Vol. 35, No. 4 (Oct., 1994), pp. 660-662.

under Section Ten of the 1946 Atomic Energy Act,¹⁴⁴ and French planners operated on the basis that France was under the protection of the US nuclear umbrella and so a French atomic bomb was both costly and superfluous.¹⁴⁵

The body of literature that has dealt with the French nuclear deterrent has identified the period 1954-1957 as the most significant,¹⁴⁶ specifically the period in which the French government altered its nuclear weapons policy and authorised a military dimension to the workings of the CEA.¹⁴⁷ It is here that we find the influence of the Suez Crisis as while the CEA and French government began to explore the development of atomic weapons before Suez, the crisis played a similar role in the field of nuclear deterrence that it did when it came to the Common Market, namely building on sentiments in France that the US was not a reliable ally where France's interests were concerned and so in order to maintain its ability to pursue those interests, France had to alter its policies. Colette Barbier emphasised 1954 as the critical year for French atomic energy policy and the role played by the war in Indochina. French distrust and anxiety about the US dates back to the Second World War, with the Levant (Middle East) being an area of particular tension. De Gaulle interpreted many Anglo-American actions in the region during and immediately after

¹⁴⁴ www.osti.gov/atomicenergyact.pdf Accessed 16 August 2014.

¹⁴⁵ L. Scheinman, *Atomic Energy Policy* (1965), pp. 98-99.

¹⁴⁶ C. Barbier, 'The French Decision to Develop a Military Nuclear Programme in the 1950s', *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (1993), p. 109.

¹⁴⁷ G. Hecht, 'Political Designs: Nuclear Reactors and National Policy in Postwar France', *Technology and Culture*, Vol. 35, No. 4 (Oct., 1994), pp. 662-663.

the war as evidence that the Anglo-Saxons were attempting to reduce or eliminate French control and influence.¹⁴⁸

It was Indochina though that brought home to French policymakers the dangers of relying on American support. Unlike in Lebanon where the view was that America sought to get France out of the region, or at least supplant it as the dominant western power, in Indochina the US was keen to keep France fighting against the Vietminh and opposed any sort of settlement that would leave a Communist regime in power. This view is not unchallenged. Kathryn Statler in 'Replacing France: The Origins of American Intervention in Vietnam' presents a case for America seeking to supplant France and help to set up a pro-western regime in South Vietnam.¹⁴⁹ Irrespective of which thesis is correct or more accurate, it was the battle of Dien Bien Phu that caused the greatest difficulty. France wanted, and in fact badly needed, active military support from the US for its garrison at Dien Bien Phu, assistance that created problems for Eisenhower's administration, which ultimately refused to use atomic weapons to support French troops.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ J. Fenby, *The General* (2010), p. 288; T. Smith, 'The French Colonial Consensus and People's War, 1946-1958', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (Oct., 1974), p. 223.

¹⁴⁹ K. Statler, *Replacing France: The Origins of American Intervention in Vietnam* (Lexington, 2007), pp. 1-6.

¹⁵⁰ G.C. Herring & R.H. Immerman, 'Eisenhower, Dulles and Dienbienphu: "The Day We Didn't Go to War" Revisited', *The Journal of American History*, Vo. 71, No. 2 (Sep., 1984), pp. 343-363; For the Franco-American and internal US discussions see *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954, Vols. XII & XIII, Indochina*.

France saw the US refusal to actively support the garrison at Dien Bien Phu as evidence that when French and American interests did not coincide, the US could not be relied upon. Throughout 1955 the government of Pierre Mendès France steps were taken to being the development of atomic weapons. In March 1955 a National Defence Committee memorandum concluded that the decision should be taken to launch programmes for the construction of nuclear weapons and nuclear powered submarines,¹⁵¹ and a substantial transfer of funds from the Armed Forces Ministry to the CEA was authorised.¹⁵² However, despite Mendès France and his officials leaning towards atomic weapons, no formal decision was actually made,¹⁵³ and when he became Prime Minister in February 1956 Mollet seemed to end any prospect of a French atomic weapons program. In April he told a colleague, ‘I waged a political campaign on three issues: peace in Algeria, tax reductions and nuclear disarmament. Today I am engaged in a war in Algeria, raising taxes to finance it, and now you want me to add an atom bomb.’¹⁵⁴ Mollet’s Socialist Party was opposed to nuclear weapons, and he agreed with Jean Monnet in January 1956 that the proposed European Atomic Energy Agency (EURATOM) should take over all European

¹⁵¹ C. Barbier, ‘The French Decision to Develop a Military Nuclear Programme in the 1950s’, *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (1993), p. 107.

¹⁵² G-H. Soutou, ‘The French Military Program for Nuclear Energy, 1945-1981’ (Translated by Preston Niblak), *Nuclear History Program: Occasional Paper 3* (University of Maryland, 1989), p. 3.

¹⁵³ M. Kroenig, *Exporting the Bomb* (2010), p. 101.

¹⁵⁴ B. Pinkus, ‘Atomic Power to Israel’s Rescue: French-Israeli Nuclear Cooperation, 1949-1957’, *Israel Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (Spring., 2002), p. 108.

nuclear programs, and that European states must discontinue production of atomic weapons.¹⁵⁵

Binyamin Pinkus stated that if 1955 was pivotal for laying the basis of French atomic weapons research, then 1956 was decisive for its continuation.¹⁵⁶ This author takes a similar view as regards 1956 though he would accord more significance to Suez than to Indochina two years before. While the defeat at Dien Bien Phu and the refusal of the US to provide active military assistance to France engendered feelings of mistrust and resentment on the part of France, the fact that there was no definitive decision to develop nuclear weapons in 1954 or 1955 would suggest that such sentiments had not reached a critical mass. French historian Georges-Henri Soutou wrote that in 1954 and 1955 French considerations and interest in acquiring nuclear weapons did not actually envisage a completely independent role for France. Rather, the mid-‘fifties’ desire for atomic weapons was seen in the context of Europe, and the wider Atlantic Alliance, with French policymakers desiring a position of influence within them, not a position separate from them.¹⁵⁷ It was Suez that changed this, even though French officials began the process of developing atomic arms, without a formal directive,

¹⁵⁵ G-H. Soutou, ‘The French Military Program for Nuclear Energy, 1945-1981’ (Translated by Preston Niblak), *Nuclear History Program: Occasional Paper 3* (University of Maryland, 1989), p. 3.

¹⁵⁶ B. Pinkus, ‘Atomic Power to Israel’s Rescue: French-Israeli Nuclear Cooperation, 1949-1957’, *Israel Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (Spring., 2002), p. 108.

¹⁵⁷ G-H. Soutou, ‘The French Military Program for Nuclear Energy, 1945-1981’ (Translated by Preston Niblak), *Nuclear History Program: Occasional Paper 3* (University of Maryland, 1989), p. 2.

after the defeat in Indochina, Suez added to these impressions and amplified them to the point where a deterrent was seen as a national necessity.¹⁵⁸

The reason that Suez is accorded more significance than Indochina by this author lies in one crucial difference between the two events. At Suez, as at Dien Bien Phu, France had been humiliated and developed feelings of mistrust towards and resentment of the United States for its lack of support. What made Suez so different was that instead of the US merely not seeming to support France on an issue of national importance, the crisis created the impression in France that it could not even rely on the US to defend France if it were attacked. At the height of the Suez Crisis, Khrushchev and Bulganin threatened rocket attacks on London, Paris and Tel Aviv if the attack on Egypt did not cease.¹⁵⁹ The threat was not credible, but while Eden was not alarmed by it,¹⁶⁰ Mollet was. During his 6 November meeting with Adenauer, Mollet discussed the Soviet letter and his belief that the US would not start a war if France and Britain were attacked.¹⁶¹ Adenauer agreed and went as far as to say that America was responsible for the Suez Crisis. What comes out of this discussion is the

¹⁵⁸ L. Scheinman, *Atomic Energy Policy* (1965), pp. 105-106; W. Kohl, 'The French Nuclear Deterrent', *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science*, Vol. 29, No. 2, 'The "Atlantic Community" Reappraised' (Nov., 1968), p. 81; E.R. Drachman & A. Shank, *Presidents and Foreign Policy: Countdown to 10 Controversial Decisions* (Albany, 1997), p. 80; M. Kroenig, *Exporting the Bomb* (2010), p. 102.

¹⁵⁹ A. Gorst & L. Johnman, *The Suez Crisis* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 122-123; R. Fullick & G. Powell, *Suez: The Double War* (Barnsley, 2006), p. 140.

¹⁶⁰ R. Fullick & G. Powell, *Suez: The Double War* (2006), p. 158.

¹⁶¹ *Documents Diplomatiques Français, 1956 Vol. III, 24 Oct-31 Dec*, 'Conversation Between Adenauer and Mollet' (6 Nov., 1956), Translated by Dan Whyman.

shared Franco-German belief that the US was not a reliable ally, and seemed to be willing to marginalise or ignore European concerns, even to the point of directly negotiating with the Soviet Union, a point made by Wolf Mendl in 1970.¹⁶²

The majority¹⁶³ of the works that have covered the French deterrent accord to Suez an influence in the development of official French policy on atomic weapons, although with a few notable exceptions this is very brief.¹⁶⁴ Scheinman, Chopra and Mendl go into more detail where the crisis is concerned. It is not this author's intention to repeat the points these authors made, but particular mention should be given to the evidence provided by Scheinman and Mendl in support of their claims as to the importance of Suez. Scheinman quotes articles in the French media such as *Carrefour* and *Juvenal* in late November 1956 with the former quoted thus:

The first lesson of Suez is that only possession of the atomic bomb confers power. If France again wishes to intervene in international competition in an

¹⁶² W. Mendl, *Deterrence and Persuasion: French nuclear armament in the context of national policy, 1945-1969* (London, 1970), p. 79.

¹⁶³ Bertrand Goldschmidt does not mention the crisis in *L'Aventure Atomiques* (Paris, 1962).

¹⁶⁴ J. Levitt, *Pearson and Canada's Role in Nuclear Disarmament and Arms Control Negotiations 1945-1957* (McGill, 1993), p. 245; E.R. Drachman & A. Shank, *Presidents and Foreign Policy* (1997), p. 80; D. Fischer, *Stopping the Spread of Nuclear Weapons* (1992), p. 76; B. Pinkus, 'Atomic Power to Israel's Rescue: French-Israeli Nuclear Cooperation, 1949-1957', *Israel Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (Spring., 2002), p. 109; G-H. Soutou, 'The French Military Program for Nuclear Energy, 1945-1981' (Translated by Preston Niblak), *Nuclear History Program: Occasional Paper 3* (University of Maryland, 1989), p. 3.

effective manner, her essential task is to establish her strategic and tactical nuclear potential so as to weigh in the balance of the destiny of the world.¹⁶⁵

Scheinman and Mendl quote senior French political and military figures such as Mouvement Républicain Populaire (MRP) Senator General Béthouart, Marshal Juin (former commander of Headquarters Allied Forces Central Europe), and Chief of Staff General Ely. Juin asked ‘what should we think of French security?’ and claimed that France must not remain subject to one NATO member for the manufacture and deployment of nuclear weapons.¹⁶⁶ On 30th November 1956 a protocol establishing an atomic military program was signed between the French Ministry of National Defence and the CEA.¹⁶⁷ Suez was not the only factor, but the crisis had played a significant role in convincing previously sceptical French leaders such as Mollet that nuclear weapons were now a national necessity.¹⁶⁸

Impact of the Deterrent on British Membership of the European Communities

It was not until de Gaulle returned to power in May 1958 that Anglo-French relations entered a period best characterised by the term ‘The Almost Impossible Ally’, the title

¹⁶⁵ L. Scheinman, *Atomic Energy Policy* (1965), p. 171.

¹⁶⁶ W. Mendl, *Deterrence and Persuasion: French nuclear armament in the context of national policy, 1945-1969* (London, 1970), p. 104.

¹⁶⁷ L. Scheinman, *Atomic Energy Policy* (1965), p. 173.

¹⁶⁸ D. Fischer, *Stopping the Spread of Nuclear Weapons* (1992), p. 76.

of Peter Mangold's work on the relationship between Macmillan and de Gaulle.¹⁶⁹ The role of de Gaulle has been examined already in this chapter from the perspective of the different views on British membership of the EEC. Nuclear weapons, particular the French desire to achieve parity with Britain, is the focus here. At the heart of de Gaulle's vision for France was its position at the centre of the western alliance, equal to Britain and given a voice alongside the Anglo-American alliance in the context of the Cold War.¹⁷⁰ A credible French nuclear deterrent was an integral part of this and while de Gaulle was willing and prepared for France to build a nuclear arsenal alone, he recognised that it would be easier and less expensive if France were to enjoy the technical and research cooperation of Britain and the US.¹⁷¹

Although de Gaulle and France's nuclear aspirations constituted a problem for NATO and for Britain, Macmillan saw them as an opportunity. Macmillan, despite his initial preoccupation with restoring the Special Relationship, saw British foreign policy as having a global dimension. He considered Britain's position within the same framework as the Three Circles Policy in so far as Britain was an essential component of the Anglo-American alliance, Europe, and the Commonwealth, but rather than consider them as separate, linked solely by Britain, he saw them as one all

¹⁶⁹ P. Mangold, *The Almost Impossible Ally: Harold Macmillan and Charles De Gaulle* (London, 2006).

¹⁷⁰ C.A. Pagedas, *Anglo-American Strategic Relations and the French Problem 1960-1963: A Troubled Partnership* (London, 2000), pp. 3-4.

¹⁷¹ HMD vol. II (13 Mar., 1960), pp. 277-280; J. Fenby, *The General* (2010), p. 455.

encompassing western or Atlantic Alliance.¹⁷² He recognised that France and de Gaulle would provide the biggest obstacle to Britain's policies in Europe, initially the Free Trade Area negotiations until 1958, but more significantly, the British bid to associate with or join the EEC.¹⁷³ Macmillan also saw de Gaulle's nuclear aspirations as something he could potentially use in this endeavour, contemplating the exchange of British assistance to the French nuclear weapons program for de Gaulle's assistance, or at least non-opposition, to Britain in Europe.¹⁷⁴ His 'Grand Design' of December 1960-January 1961 argued thus on de Gaulle, Europe and nuclear weapons:

His (De Gaulle's) determination – whatever the cost – that France should become a nuclear power. For it is France's exclusion from the nuclear club that is the measure of France's inferior status...Can what we want and what de Gaulle wants be brought into harmony? Is there a basis for a deal? Britain wants to join the European concern; France wants to join the Anglo-American concern. Can terms be arranged? Would de Gaulle be ready to withdraw the French veto which alone prevents the settlement of Europe's economic problem {EEC/EFTA division} in return for politico-military arrangements which he would accept as a

¹⁷² H. Parr, 'Transformation and Tradition: Anglo-French Nuclear Cooperation and Britain's Policy Towards the European Community, 1960-1974', in M. Grant (Ed.) *The British Way in Coldwarfare: Intelligence, Diplomacy and the Bomb 1945-1975* (London, 2011), p. 88.

¹⁷³ TNA PREM 11/3325, 'Memorandum by the Prime Minister on Future UK Political and Economic Policy' (29 Dec., 1960 – 3 Jan., 1961), p. 8.

¹⁷⁴ HMD vol. II (29 Jan., 1961), p. 358; P. Mangold, *The Almost Impossible Ally* (2006), pp. 170-171; K. Steinnes, 'The European Challenge: Britain's EEC Application in 1961', *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (Mar., 1998), p. 68.

recognition of France as a first-class world power? What he would want is something on tripartitism and something on the nuclear. Are there offers which we could afford to make? And could we persuade the Americans to agree?¹⁷⁵

Several of Macmillan's diary entries in 1961 and 1962 raise similar points. His entry for 29th January 1961 briefly asks the question of whether America can be persuaded to accept France's nuclear aspirations,¹⁷⁶ and on 11th June 1961 Macmillan expounded at length about his discussion with President Kennedy about the latter's talks with De Gaulle, noting both the American refusal to provide technical assistance or weapons to France, and the stark reality that offering such in exchange for French support in Europe, was a non-starter as de Gaulle would take but give nothing in return.¹⁷⁷ On 8th May President Kennedy had already written to the Prime Minister to the effect that the US could not assist the development of the French deterrent, fearing the impact this might have on Germany.¹⁷⁸ The files in the UK National Archives confirm that de Gaulle's nuclear ambitions and Europe was a subject of discussion on two occasions between the General and Macmillan in 1961¹⁷⁹ and 1962.¹⁸⁰ Moreover, the

¹⁷⁵ TNA PREM 11/3325, 'Memorandum by the Prime Minister on Future UK Political and Economic Policy' (29 Dec., 1960 – 3 Jan., 1961), p. 18.

¹⁷⁶ HMD vol. II (29 Jan., 1961), p. 358.

¹⁷⁷ HMD vol. II (11 Jun., 1961), pp. 389-392.

¹⁷⁸ TNA PREM 11/3311, 'Kennedy to Macmillan' (8 May., 1961).

¹⁷⁹ TNA PREM 11/3322, 'The Prime Ministers Visit to Rambouillet January 27-29 1961' (Feb., 1961), p. 9.

¹⁸⁰ C. Pagedas, 'Harold Macmillan and the 1962 Champs Meeting', *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (1998), pp. 224-242.

preparatory documents, notes and memoranda demonstrate the importance of the issue, and, given the difficulties presented by the terms of the 1958 Mutual Defence Agreement regarding Anglo-American nuclear collaboration, the need for Macmillan to tread a very careful line.¹⁸¹

In the event, American opposition to the idea of sharing nuclear secrets with France meant that Macmillan could not offer de Gaulle the sort of cooperation he wanted, and that Macmillan hoped would result in the French at least not preventing, if not actively supporting, British membership of the EEC.¹⁸² The fact that Britain's relationship with the US prevented it from coming to a satisfactory accord with France was not lost on de Gaulle. He already felt that Britain was more concerned with the Americans than with France and Europe and this was to have serious consequences for the EEC bid. In December 1962 Macmillan successfully persuaded President Kennedy to agree to sell the Polaris nuclear missile system to Britain.¹⁸³ While this was a victory for the Prime Minister, the agreement served only to reinforce de Gaulle's fears that Britain sought entry to the Common Market as an American Trojan Horse, and provided the pretext for his veto of the bid in January

¹⁸¹ TNA PREM 11/3322, 'Dixon to Foreign Office' (22 Jan., 1961); 'Home to Macmillan' (24 Jan., 1961); 'Macmillan to Home' (25 Jan., 1961).

¹⁸² FRUS 1961-1963, Vol. XIII, Western Europe and Canada, Doc. 227, 'State Department to Embassy in France' (5 May., 1961).

¹⁸³ FRUS 1961-1963, Vol. XIII, Docs. 403-410 (19 Dec., 1962-20 Dec., 1962); D.R. Thorpe, *Supermac: The Life of Harold Macmillan* (London, 2011), pp. 535-536.

1963.¹⁸⁴ De Gaulle cited Britain's relationship with the Commonwealth as providing too many difficulties for entry into the EEC, but historical and contemporary opinion has seen Nassau as a deciding factor, while recognising that de Gaulle was probably going to veto the bid anyway.¹⁸⁵ Moreover, on several occasions between 1963 and 1966 the General made repeated references to Nassau and Polaris. An article published in the *Times* on November 27th 1967, coincidentally the same day de Gaulle ended the Wilson bid, collated many of the General's comments about Britain including:

Macmillan had crossed the Atlantic to throw himself into the arms of Kennedy to whom he sold his birthright in exchange for a dish of Polaris...Let us always recall this obvious truth. The Common Market cannot remain the Common Market and at the same time absorb Great Britain and her clients. The British would only enter in order to break up the machine.¹⁸⁶

The Suez Crisis heightened French feelings of resentment and mistrust towards the United States, and provided the event that took the Fourth Republic from an intention to produce nuclear weapons but lacking the official decision to do so, to one that saw the possession of a nuclear weapon as the only way that France could maintain an

¹⁸⁴ P. Mangold, *The Almost Impossible Ally* (2006), p. 194; M. Gilbert, *European Integration: A Concise History* (Plymouth, 2012), pp. 73-74; J. Fenby, *The General* (2010), p. 503; C. Pagedas, *Anglo-American Strategic Relations and the French Problem 1960-1963: A Troubled Partnership* (London, 2000), p. 263; K. Stoddart, 'Nuclear Weapons in Britain's Policy Towards France, 1960-1974', *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (2007), p. 724.

¹⁸⁵ J. Fenby, *The General* (2010), p. 488.

¹⁸⁶ C. Hargrove, 'What de Gaulle has said of us islanders,' *Times* (27 Nov., 1967), p. 9.

independent role in the world. Lacking atomic weapons France would always be vulnerable to nuclear blackmail and so they became a national necessity. This had consequences for France and its relationships with Britain and the United States, and on Britain's relationship with Europe. Macmillan felt that a deal involving British and or American aid to the French nuclear programme could be offered to de Gaulle in exchange for French assistance on European matters such as the EEC bid. Ultimately, however, such a deal was not possible and the most significant impact of the French nuclear program was that Britain's decision to purchase an American missile system, rather than collaborate with France, gave de Gaulle the excuse he needed to end the negotiations and prevent Britain from joining the Common Market.

Conclusion

The Suez Crisis had as profound an impact on France as it did on the United Kingdom, and the way in which France responded to the events of November 1956 affected, in turn, the development of Anglo-European relations. This chapter has focused on three areas where Suez had a significant impact on France and on French policy: the Common Market, Algeria and the return of de Gaulle, and the development of the French nuclear deterrent. A common thread between the first and third areas considered here is the dual feelings of humiliation and betrayal on the part of France as a result of the crisis. Humiliated by having to withdraw and cede control of the Suez Canal, and feeling betrayed at the hands of the United States, and to a lesser extent Britain, it was these feelings that prompted French leaders to rethink their policy on the Common Market, going from a position of scepticism or outright hostility, to concluding that Europe offered France the best option for playing a leadership role. By leading Europe, France would maintain its status as a great power.

The French nuclear deterrent was similarly motivated. Although France had been developing atomic energy from the late 1940s, and had been strongly contemplating atomic weapons after the defeat at Dien Bien Phu, the Suez Crisis, particularly the threat of attack by Russia and the perception that America would not defend France, caused several French political and military figures to conclude that only by possessing a nuclear weapon could France ensure that it could defend its vital interests. It provided the final impetus needed to take a formal decision to develop an atomic bomb.

The French decision to sign the Treaties of Rome, and thus create what became the EEC, removed a basic British premise that had dominated its sceptical attitude towards the Messina Conference and Spaak Committee in 1955 and 1956, namely that the creation of a Common Market was unlikely due to French opposition to supranational integration. France had rejected the European Defence Community in August 1954 and British political leaders such as Harold Macmillan, Anthony Eden and Rab Butler assumed that the same French opposition to military supranationalism would extend to politics and economics and so destroy any prospect of the Six creating a customs union. By developing the Common Market, France forced Britain to confront the possibility of a European grouping coming into existence that Britain felt it could not join, but would threaten its economic and trading interests within and outside of Europe, and, perhaps more significantly, threaten its privileged position with the United States. British policy was initially hostile to the Common Market and moves were made to, if not destroy it, then subsume it within a wider industrial free trade area. By 1959/1960 this had evolved into a reluctant acceptance that Common Market would continue and so British policy was reoriented towards finding ways that

Britain could deal with the Six, leading ultimately to the first membership application in 1961/1962.

The Suez Crisis played a significant role in the Algerian uprising. France considered Suez to be part of this conflict with the FLN rebels and, as Nasser was seen to be encouraging the rebels, to say nothing of arming them, removing Nasser from power was an integral part of maintaining control of Algeria. The Franco-British operation in Egypt failed and in so doing made Nasser even more of a pan-Arab hero than he had been before, and increased resentment of France within its colony. In addition, the French army, which had been compelled to withdraw from a conflict it considered winnable, felt a keen sense of humiliation and resentment against the politicians and the structure of the Fourth Republic. As the Algerian crisis worsened and had an increasingly negative effect on the political stability of the Fourth Republic, the army in Algeria began the process of launching a *coup d'état* that was only forestalled by the return to power of General de Gaulle. De Gaulle had a particular vision of and for France and Europe, and despite having a broadly similar view to Britain regarding federalism, and preferring a confederal approach to a federal one, he was opposed to Britain being a member of the Common Market. De Gaulle was not an Anglophobe but he harboured longstanding mistrust of Britain, viewing its intentions in Europe as motivated by a desire to create the wider Atlantic Community that he wished to avoid, on the grounds that it would lead to American domination of Europe. He felt that Britain, as the leader of the Commonwealth, was not compatible with the economic aspects of the Common Market (not without some justification) and saw its EEC entry bid as it acting as an American Trojan horse.

Linked to the wider impact of the return of de Gaulle is the development of the French deterrent. France's desire to acquire atomic, and later thermonuclear weapons brought in a new element to Anglo-French discussions on Europe. Macmillan saw a possibility for a *quid pro quo* deal with de Gaulle, offering British, and possibly American assistance to France's atomic weapons program in exchange for de Gaulle's help with first of all the free trade area negotiations, and later the EEC bid. American opposition made this impossible, and to make matters worse, Macmillan's agreement with President Kennedy at Nassau provided further evidence for de Gaulle's suspicions of British motives in applying for EEC membership. Nassau gave de Gaulle the pretext he needed to veto the British bid, and while he cited Britain's Commonwealth links as the reason for this, nuclear weapons have long been seen as the reason for the timing of the veto, even if not for the decision to veto in the first place. Ultimately this is perhaps the tragedy of the Suez Crisis for Britain, in that it had done so much to change British policy on European integration to the point that it applied for EEC membership only five years after rejecting that option, and yet at the same time contributed to the frustration of that desire.

Chapter VI: Edward Heath, The Suez Crisis and British Policy Towards Membership of the European Communities

We in Britain are not going to turn our backs on the mainland of Europe or on the countries of the Community. We are part of Europe; by geography, tradition, history, culture and civilisation. We shall continue to work with all our friends in Europe for the true unity and strength of this continent.¹

Introduction

Edward Heath, the author of the above quotation, is not among the more celebrated figures to have been Prime Minister since the Second World War. David Starkey has labelled him the worst Prime Minister in British history, along with Lord North.² A search of the Bodleian catalogue reveals only twenty-two books about him compared to more than 150 each for Tony Blair and Margaret Thatcher, and more than 1000 for Churchill.³ Heath has enjoyed neither the longevity, nor indeed the controversy, of

¹ R. Pearce, 'Profiles in Power: Edward Heath', *Historical Review*, Vol. 62 (December 2008), p. 2.

² E. Caesar, 'David Starkey: A Man With Strong Opinions', *The Independent* (20 Apr., 2006).

³ P. Ziegler, *Edward Heath: The Authorised Biography* (London, 2010); D. MacShane, *Heath* (London, 2006); J. Campbell, *Edward Heath: A Biography* (London, 1993); A. Roth, *Heath and the Heathmen* (London, 1972); M. Laing, *Edward Heath: Prime Minister* (London, 1972); M. Evans, *Ted Heath: A Family Portrait* (London, 1970); G. Hutchinson, *Edward Heath: A Personal and Political Biography* (London, 1970); M. Holmes, *The Failure of the Heath Government* (Basingstoke, 1997); A. Seldon & S. Ball, *The Heath Government, 1970-1974: A Re-appraisal* (London, 1996).

Thatcher and Blair; Macmillan's reputation as a statesman; or an accession to power accompanied by a wave of popular enthusiasm, as enjoyed by Wilson. It is this author's contention however that Heath had an impact that was arguably as significant to Britain as Thatcher's monetarist policies, Macmillan's 'Winds of Change' or Atlee's nationalisation. An impact that is the basis of one of the enduring debates and controversies of modern British politics: Heath as Prime Minister took the United Kingdom into what is now the European Union forty years ago at the time of writing.⁴

While Heath remains a former Prime Minister with a deserved reputation for having strong pro-European sentiments, what is not so well known outside the academic community is that in 1963 he was the Lord Privy Seal and head of the team that made the first bid to enter the European Communities.⁵ Still less well known is that six years before de Gaulle vetoed the first bid, Heath was the Government Chief Whip at a time when, although he was well known within Westminster, he was a virtual unknown outside. It was during this time, at the end of the Suez Crisis in 1956 and early 1957, that Heath made his name and catapulted himself from obscurity to nationwide recognition as the man who held together a government split both by the decision to go to war with Egypt over the Suez Canal and the subsequent decision to withdraw from that conflict under heavy American pressure. On 3 February 1957 *The*

⁴ http://europa.eu/about-eu/eu-history/1970-1979/index_en.htm Accessed 22 March 2013; L. Heren, 'The Times: Meeting Challenge of New Frontier', *The Times* (01 Jan., 1973).

⁵ Although it is more common to refer to the European Economic Community (EEC) in this context, Britain was technically negotiating accession to the Treaties of Rome, which created two bodies, the EEC and the European Atomic Energy Committee (EURATOM) to add to the pre-existing European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC).

Sunday Times featured him in a small article in which he was described as ‘one of the finest Chief Whips of the century’.⁶ The article went on to state that he ‘is one of his party’s men of the future...he has the qualities of personality and oratory of which great parliamentarians are made’.⁷ More controversially, Heath, in his capacity as Chief Whip, was intimately involved in the leadership contest that followed Eden’s resignation. His conduct has been the subject of some debate and controversy amongst his biographers, with some claiming he was not as detached as he himself suggested. Macmillan’s post-election celebrations with Heath have been interpreted as him repaying Heath for his help.⁸

This author contends that through the elevation of Heath, the Suez Crisis had perhaps its greatest single impact on the nature of Anglo-European Relations, and it is this chapter’s express purpose to examine this contention, as well as establishing its authenticity. In order to accomplish this, it will examine the role Heath played in the Suez Crisis, how it contributed to his entry into the upper echelons of government, and, ultimately, the impact this had on British policy towards membership of the EEC. The most immediate impact of Suez in this context was that on Heath himself. The crisis afforded him an opportunity that he grasped with both hands. At its onset he was well respected within Westminster, but virtually unknown outside of it.⁹ By the time Macmillan succeeded Eden in January 1957 the media was beginning to take

⁶ ‘The Government Chief Whip’, *Sunday Times* (3 Feb., 1957), p. 3.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ A. Roth, *Heath* (1972), p. 113.

⁹ P. Ziegler, *Edward Heath* (2010), p. 103; Lord Kilmuir, *Political Adventure* (1964), p. 281.

note of Heath, and his influence within the Government.¹⁰ Alone among post-war Chief Whips he rose to become Prime Minister, a remarkable achievement if set in its proper context: there have been only three other Conservatives, and one Labour Chief Whip, who have attained one of the Great Offices of State.¹¹ This chapter will explore the position of Chief Whip, the reasons why its holders have not risen to the highest points of government, and what made Heath unique in having been the one to do so.

In the longer term, Heath's handling of the unsuccessful 1961-1963 negotiations was widely praised, and he developed the reputation outside of Britain, especially within European capitals, as a pro-European, and someone who was determined to bring Britain into the EEC as soon as possible. He was awarded the Charlemagne Prize in 1963, the European Prize for Statesmanship in 1972 and, in Opposition, despite personal and political misgivings, supported Harold Wilson's abortive attempt to enter the EEC. Upon winning the 1970 General Election, he was able to successfully dispel French fears of British membership and after discussions with Pompidou, signed the Treaty of Rome on Britain's behalf.¹² This last was perhaps the most significant event in the history of Anglo-European relations after the

¹⁰ T. Renton, *Chief Whip: People, Power and Patronage in Westminster* (London, 2004), p. 286.

¹¹ Chancellor of the Exchequer, Foreign Secretary and Home Secretary.

¹² J.W. Young, *Britain and European Unity 1945-1999* (Basingstoke 2000); S. George, *An Awkward Partner: Britain in the European Community* (3rd Edition) (Oxford, 1998); D. Gowland, *Reluctant Europeans: Britain and European Integration 1945-1996* (Harlow, 1999); U. Kitzinger, *Diplomacy and Persuasion: How Britain Joined the Common Market* (London, 1973).

Second World War, and one that owed its beginnings to the Suez Crisis, for Suez made Ted Heath.¹³

Unfortunately, at the time of writing, the Heath papers deposited in the Bodleian Library in 2011 have not yet been catalogued and are, therefore, unavailable. In addition the official papers from his time as Chief Whip have been added to the collection and are similarly unavailable. This chapter will still, however, make extensive use of primary source material. This will be in manuscript form from the National Archives, include Heath's own autobiography, and also draw on contemporary magazine and newspaper articles. In addition, secondary source material, predominately (but not exclusively) existing biographies of Heath, will be utilised along with other scholarly contributions that deal with a specific area of interest. These will include research evidence from fields including Anglo-European relations, Anglo-American relations, works dedicated to the Chief Whip, and the structure of Westminster politics itself, the pinnacle of which, Heath, unusually for a Chief Whip, reached in 1970.

Heath During the Suez Crisis

Ted Heath was first elected to Parliament in 1950 as M.P. for Bexley with a very narrow majority of 133 over the Labour incumbent. Bexley was a relatively new seat, created in 1945, and had been captured that year by the Labour Party.¹⁴ The new

¹³ J. Campbell, *Heath* (1993), p. 97.

¹⁴ 'First Results in the General Election', *The Manchester Guardian* (24 Feb., 1950), p. 3; 'Results of the General Election: English Boroughs', *The Manchester Guardian* (25 Feb., 1950), p. 5.

Member was, along with Iain Macleod, Robert Carr and Enoch Powell, among others, one of the founders of the 'One Nation Group'.¹⁵ Men who had been newly elected in the 1950 General Election founded 'One Nation' to represent themselves and their contemporaries. This intake, according to one historian, was 'considered symbolic of a widening of the Parliamentary Party's demography, with the arrival of a new wave of modern, professional, business-minded, and often lower-middle-class MPs'.¹⁶ Class notwithstanding, these men were modernisers by inclination who felt that Disraeli's One Nation Conservatism, was the right path for the party to go down. There is a certain degree of mythology at work where One Nation is concerned. It is based on what David Seawright describes as 'mythical origins', specifically that Disraeli was the first of a succession of leaders who sought to bridge the divide between rich and poor, and create one unified nation. In policy terms this meant pursuing a programme designed to ameliorate the economic situation of those social groups not traditionally associated with the Conservatives. This could include pursuing full employment, affordable housing, the new (in 1950) National Health Service and free education.¹⁷ Still, as Seawright has pointed out, while Disraeli did, in his speeches, refer to the

¹⁵ D. MacShane, *Heath* (London, 2006), p. 16; For the One Nation Group See: R. Walsha, 'The One Nation Group: A Tory Approach to Backbench Politics and Organisation 1950-1955', *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (2000), pp. 183-214; R. Walsha, 'The One Nation Group and One Nation Conservatism 1950-2002', *Contemporary British History*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (2003), pp. 69-120; D. Seawright, *The British Conservative Party and One Nation Politics* (London, 2009); P. Bridgen, 'The One Nation Idea and State Welfare: The Conservatives and Pensions in the 1950s', *Contemporary British History*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (2000), pp. 83-104.

¹⁶ R. Walsha, 'The One Nation Group: A Tory Approach to Backbench Politics and Organisation 1950-1955', *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (2000), p. 187.

¹⁷ D. Seawright, *The British Conservative Party and One Nation Politics* (London, 2009), pp. 1-8.

need to improve the condition of the multitude, he added the qualification that doing so must not violate ‘those economic principles of economic truth upon which prosperity of states depends.’¹⁸

Foundation myths aside, One Nation quickly came to the attention of the Conservative Party leadership.¹⁹ Heath was not to remain a member for long however as, soon after he gave his maiden speech in Parliament he was offered a position in the Whips’ Office as an unpaid Junior Whip.²⁰ His maiden speech has attracted scholarly attention, and rightly so, for it is one of the indicators that his pro-European sentiments were well developed by the time he entered Parliament. It has also been cited as a factor in his promotion.²¹ Initially as an unpaid Junior Whip, Heath moved up through the ranks to Deputy Chief Whip in 1952, until in 1955 Eden appointed him as Chief Whip, a position he held when Nasser nationalised the Suez Canal. Eden, who regarded him as being patient, adroit and dependable, later commented that he had never known a better equipped Chief Whip.²²

Heath was, along with Selwyn Lloyd, R.A. Butler and Harold Macmillan, one of the only men made aware of the full content and nature of the Protocols of

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 5.

¹⁹ R. Walsh, ‘The One Nation Group: A Tory Approach to Backbench Politics and Organisation 1950-1955’, *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (2000), pp. 185-186.

²⁰ ‘News in Brief’, *The Times* (7 Feb., 1951), p. 3.

²¹ D. MacShane, *Heath* (2006), p. 34.

²² A. Eden, *Full Circle: The Memoirs of Anthony Eden* (London, 1960); G. Hutchinson, *Heath* (Harlow, 1970), p. 83.

Sèvres.²³ Heath later claimed that he counselled Eden against military action in collusion with Israel on the grounds that he risked splitting the country, and that few people would believe his account.²⁴ Eden did not dispute this assessment, but maintained his opposition to allowing Nasser's action against British and French interests to go unopposed.²⁵ Heath's biographers have suggested he was personally opposed to the action taken over Suez but that, in line with his job as a Whip, he never expressed his view publicly.²⁶ Norman Brook, then Cabinet Secretary, included Heath in a list of Cabinet members who would likely express a preference for all means short of military action to be exhausted before the government resorted to violence.²⁷ Heath himself claimed to have been, along with 20-30 other Conservative MPs, opposed to military action over Suez but cited his duties as a Whip as the reason both for his lack of public statements, and, more importantly for not resigning:

The Chief Whip's relationship with the Prime Minister is a special and personal one. He owes complete loyalty to the Prime Minister who is entitled to count on

²³ T. Renton, *Chief Whip: People, Power and Patronage in Westminster* (London, 2004), p. 283.

²⁴ For the press see: G. Parmentier, 'The British Press in the Suez Crisis', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (June 1980), pp. 435-448; R. Negrine, 'The Press and the Suez Crisis: A Myth Re-Examined', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (December 1982), pp. 975-983; H. Thomas, *The Suez Affair* (London, 1966).

²⁵ E. Heath, *My Life* (1998), pp. 169-170.

²⁶ J. Campbell, *Heath* (1993), p. 93.

²⁷ TNA PREM 11/1152, 'Brook to Eden', 25 Aug. 1956; H.J. Dooley, 'Great Britain's 'Last Battle' in the Middle East: Notes on Cabinet Planning During the Suez Crisis of 1956', *The International History Review*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (August 1989), p. 500; K. Kyle, 'Brook: Cabinet Secretary', in S. Kelly & A. Gorst (Editors), *Whitehall and the Suez Crisis* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 69-70.

it. Any doubts or reservations should be expressed completely privately, one to one – which I did...For a Chief Whip to resign, particularly during a national crisis such as Suez, would be an act not only of utter disloyalty, but of wilful destruction.²⁸

It is Heath's actions in his capacity as Chief Whip that are the most important here. As he predicted the country, the House of Commons and more significantly the government itself was split over Suez.²⁹ A significant group of Suez rebels, mostly members of the right-wing Suez Group,³⁰ were opposed to the government's decision to withdraw under American pressure and their numbers were a concern to the government prior to a vote on November 8th. Heath managed to limit that rebellion to six abstentions and a subsequent one on December 6th to fifteen from the initial 86.³¹ Heath's reputation soared as a result of his handling of the Suez Crisis. Lord Kilmuir said of him:

²⁸ E. Heath, *My Life* (1998), p. 171.

²⁹ For a full account of the split over Suez see: R. Braddon, *Suez: The Splitting of a Nation* (Michigan, 1973); E. Heath, *My Life* (1998), p. 173.

³⁰ For an account of the history of the Suez Group see: S. Onslow, *Backbench Debate within the Conservative Party and its Influence on British Foreign Policy 1948-1957* (Basingstoke, 1997); S. Onslow, 'Battlelines for Suez: The Abadan Crisis of 1951 and the Formation of the Suez Group', *Contemporary British History*, Vol. 17 No. 2 (Summer 2003), pp. 1-28; L. Epstein, *British Politics in the Suez Crisis* (London, 1964); L. Epstein, 'Cohesion of British Parliamentary Parties', *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 50, No. 2 (June 1956), p. 338; J. Amery, 'The Suez Group: A Retrospective on Suez', in S. Iian & M. Shemesh (eds), *The Suez-Sinai Crisis 1956: Retrospective and Reappraisal* (London, 1990), pp. 84-95.

³¹ J. Campbell, *Heath* (1993), pp. 95-96.

Had it not been for the quiet skill with which Edward Heath and his colleagues in the Whips' Office handled the Parliamentary Party throughout the crisis, the situation might well have become desperate. It was the sort of situation where only the most tender handling was possible...while never showing weakness or forgetting his responsibilities to the Government, Heath calmly and gently shepherded the party throughout a crisis which might have broken it.³²

It was not just his Cabinet colleagues who were fulsome in their praise of Heath over his handling of the Whips' Office during the crisis. The *Sunday Times* wrote that the generalship of Heath was superb and that he never lost command of the situation.³³ *The Economist* took a more sarcastic line in referring to a triumvirate consisting of Macmillan, Butler and Heath running the government in Eden's absence, but nevertheless noted the contribution he made.³⁴

That Heath made an enormous contribution to the survival of the Conservative Government at the end of the Suez Crisis is not disputed. There is, on the other hand, something of a controversy surrounding his role in the leadership election that followed the subsequent resignation of Anthony Eden. There is no suggestion that he in any way precipitated Eden's departure. Eden may well have consulted him as to his position but there is no record to support this and Heath's own memoirs offer nothing

³² Earl of Kilmuir, *Political Adventure: The Memoirs of the Earl of Kilmuir* (London, 1967), p. 168.

³³ A Student of Politics, 'The Ranks Unbroken', *Sunday Times* (11 Nov., 1956), p. 9.

³⁴ 'Keeping the Tories Tame', *The Economist* (01 December 1956), p. 763.

beyond claiming that he had hoped Eden would not have to resign.³⁵ Heath, in his autobiography, claimed that Julian Amery (a prominent member of the Suez Group and son of fellow Conservative MP Leo Amery) offered the party the support of the Suez Group if Heath would bring about Eden's removal from office. This exchange reportedly ended, according to Heath, with the latter telling Amory to go to hell and then returning to dinner.³⁶

Heath claimed in 1998 that his sole contribution to the leadership contest between Macmillan and Butler was to speak to backbenchers before presenting their opinions to the party hierarchy and the Palace, trying to maintain a balance between the two candidates.³⁷ Margaret Laing's view was that he was sure already that Macmillan would win and that while he was loyal and obedient to Eden, he never felt the ease of relationship that he later enjoyed with Macmillan.³⁸ Andrew Roth, by contrast, does not outright accuse Heath of campaigning actively for Macmillan, but the way in which he phrases his account of Heath's report on backbench opinion, stating that having killed Butler's chances, Heath then went to tell him the outcome, does suggest that he is less convinced of his impartiality.³⁹ Heath is subsequently labelled 'Macmillan's man' (by Roth), a state of affairs dating back to the 1930s at Baliol College and an Oxford by-election against Quentin Hogg.

³⁵ E. Heath, *My Life* (1998), p. 178.

³⁶ T. Renton, *Chief Whip* (2004), pp. 284-285.

³⁷ E. Heath, *Course of My Life* (1998) pp. 176-178.

³⁸ M. Laing, *Heath* (1972), p. 117.

³⁹ A. Roth, *Heath* (1972), p. 113.

Tim Renton, notable for having served as Margaret Thatcher's Chief Whip, again stops short of accusing Heath of helping Macmillan in an 'undue' manner, but as with Roth, his account of Heath ensuring that Macmillan spoke after Butler at the pre-Christmas meeting of the 1922 Committee (despite Butler as acting leader theoretically having that prerogative) does have undertones of scepticism where Heath's impartiality is concerned.⁴⁰ It should be pointed out though that as Butler and Macmillan were candidates for the leadership of the Conservative Party, and hence at the time, Prime Minister, Heath would have laid himself open to charges of favouritism whether he had allowed Macmillan to speak or not. Only allowing Butler to speak in his capacity as acting leader may have been the proper form, but had Butler chosen to do so, he could have used the occasion to promote his own candidature. In this situation, not allowing Macmillan to speak could have been interpreted as giving Butler an unfair advantage, a factor that Heath insists he took into account.⁴¹

Aside from the contest itself, there is also the enduring problem of Macmillan's victory celebration. Macmillan, instead of partaking in the high thinking and quiet, which he stated would have been the mark of a Butler victory,⁴² went for champagne and oysters at the Turf Club, took Heath with him, and was photographed celebrating by the press. This was a source of annoyance to Macmillan, as it appeared that he was repaying Heath for ensuring his victory over his rival. Campbell interpreted the dinner as a perfectly natural move by a new Prime Minister,

⁴⁰ T. Renton, *Chief Whip* (2004), p. 286.

⁴¹ D.R. Thorpe, *Supermac* (2011), p. 371; E. Heath, *Course of My Life* (1998), p. 176.

⁴² A. Horne, *Macmillan 1957-1986: Volume II of the Official Biography* (Basingstoke, 1988), p. 5.

recognising where power lay within the Parliamentary Party, and beginning the business of government by discussing matters with his Chief Whip.⁴³ Horne as Macmillan's official biographer merely referred to the celebration, but made no mention of Heath's role in the leadership contest. Turner and Sampson limited themselves to describing Heath polling the backbenchers and being informed that a significant majority were against Butler – with no such feeling against Macmillan – and that on the basis of this information Heath advised Macmillan as the better choice.⁴⁴

Irrespective of whether Heath went beyond his remit in the 1957 leadership contest, it is certainly fair to say that he was one of the few members of the Conservative government to come out of the Suez Crisis with his reputation enhanced. He was credited with holding the party together, an undertaking that seems almost impossible even today when one considers the extreme polarisation of opinion in the Parliamentary Conservative Party. What is also a reasonable assessment is that his position as Chief Whip and his reputation within the government was such that it would have been foolish of the new Prime Minister to ignore him once he had taken office.

⁴³ J. Campbell, *Heath* (1993), pp. 97-98.

⁴⁴ A. Sampson, *Macmillan: A Study in Ambiguity* (Middlesex, 1967), p. 127; A. Horne, *Macmillan* (1989), p. 5; J. Turner, *Macmillan* (1994).

Suez Made Ted Heath

It has long been a mark of British politics that Chief Whips rarely rise to significant Cabinet roles.⁴⁵ Berlinski, Dewan and Dowding's 2007 study on Ministerial tenure between 1945 and 1997 said of Whips that, while a successful period of time as Whip can enhance future career prospects, being successful as a Whip was not thought to be an important indicator of someone's suitability for ministerial office.⁴⁶ Since the end of the Second World War in May 1945 only four of the fifteen Conservative Chief Whips, including Heath, have gone on to hold one of the Great Offices of State, and a further six held lower ranking Cabinet posts.⁴⁷ William Whitelaw was Home

⁴⁵ 'Do Government Chief Whips Have an Afterlife?' <http://nottspolitics.org/2012/10/22/do-government-chief-whips-have-an-afterlife-2/> Accessed 1 March 2013.

⁴⁶ S. Berlinski, T. Dewan & K. Dowding, 'The Length of Ministerial Tenure in the United Kingdom, 1945-97', *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (April 2007), p. 259.

⁴⁷ Although there is no formal ranking of seniority in the Cabinet, the Great Offices of State are seen as ranking only below the Prime Minister, and, by convention the choice of the Prime Minister indicates an informal hierarchy whereby a post can be considered high in rank in one administration, but rather low in another. See: Cabinet Seniority February 2013. <http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/government-and-opposition1/her-majestys-government/> Accessed 24 February 2013; M. Burch, 'The British Cabinet: A Residual Executive', *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (1988), p. 38; G. Owen, 'Ministry of Defence is the biggest winner in Cameron's Cabinet power shake-up', *Daily Mail* (30 May., 2010); G. Owen, '21st out of 23: Defence Secretary's Cabinet rank is the lowest in history prompting Armed Forces anger', *Daily Mail* (4 Jul., 2009).

Secretary for four years under Margaret Thatcher,⁴⁸ while Francis Pym, his successor as Chief Whip, had a two-year stint as Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs. An unfortunate comment on *Question Time* and his record as an economic and social “wet” saw him dismissed by Thatcher after the 1983 General Election.⁴⁹ David Waddington later became Home Secretary, Thatcher’s last before she resigned in November 1990, before moving to the House of Lords.⁵⁰

For the Labour Party the situation is broadly similar. While Geoff Hoon and Nick Brown both served as Chief Whip and held positions of varying seniority in the Cabinet, both did so before becoming Chief Whip. Only Jacqui Smith served a stint in the latter office before spending two years as Home Secretary, resigning as a result of the expenses scandal in 2009.⁵¹ Ted Heath is the only Chief Whip of either party to have subsequently been Prime Minister. John Major spent two years in the Whips’ Office before serving in the Cabinet, notably as Chancellor, and then succeeding

⁴⁸ M. Garnett, ‘Whitelaw, William Stephen Ian, Viscount Whitelaw (1918-1999)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/72564> Accessed 21 February 2013; P. Cosgrave, ‘Obituary: Viscount Whitelaw’, *The Independent* (2 July 1999).

⁴⁹ D. Hurd, ‘Pym, Francis Leslie, Baron Pym (1922-2008)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, January 2012), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/100102> Accessed 21 February 2013; A. Roth, ‘Obituary: Francis Pym’, *The Guardian* (8 March 2008).

⁵⁰ Waddington. D, *Who’s Who 2013* (Oxford, 2013), Online Edition, <http://www.ukwhoswho.com/view/article/oupww/whoswho/U38414/WADDINGTON?index=1&results=QuicksearchResults&query=0> Accessed 1 March 2013; D. Waddington, *Memoirs: Dispatches from Thatcher’s Last Home Secretary* (London, 2012).

⁵¹ Taken from http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/election_2010/8666867.stm 21 February 2013.

Margaret Thatcher as Prime Minister, but he was never the Chief Whip, and, compared to Heath's eight years as a Whip, his two year tenure was markedly brief.⁵²

Why then do so few Chief Whips progress on to the upper echelons of the British government, and what made Ted Heath so different? A popular idea is that the Chief Whip's role inevitably results in making enemies on the backbenches and occasionally amongst the more prominent MPs in ministerial positions.⁵³ Indeed, the Chief Whip is supposed to be concerned solely with the stability of the government and the loyalty of its members, and is thus theoretically immune from more personal considerations.⁵⁴ Heath himself is known to have made enemies during his years in the Whips Office, most notably Airey Neave, the escapee from Colditz Castle who later managed Margaret Thatcher's campaign against Heath for the leadership of the Conservative Party in 1975.⁵⁵ In addition to this, convention forbids a Whip from speaking in the House and thus, they rarely come to the attention of the media and the wider public.⁵⁶ Moreover, the role also prevents them from gaining experience in

⁵² A. Seldon, *John Major: A Political Life* (London, 1997); J. Major, *John Major: The Autobiography* (London, 2000).

⁵³ P. Ziegler, *Heath* (2010), pp. 92-93.

⁵⁴ D. Searing & C. Game, 'Horses for Courses: The Recruitment of Whips in the British House of Commons', *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (July, 1977), p. 361.

⁵⁵ P. Ziegler, *Edward Heath* (London, 2010), pp. 92-93.

⁵⁶ 'Do Government Chief Whips Have an Afterlife?' <http://nottspolitics.org/2012/10/22/do-government-chief-whips-have-an-afterlife-2/> Accessed 1 March 2013.

particular policy areas so they consequently lack both the exposure and the policy specialisation of other members.⁵⁷

This is certainly a factor where Heath was concerned. He accepted the offer to become a Whip in 1951 despite being concerned that the rules governing the discharge of the office would prevent him speaking in the House, gaining policy experience and honing his debating skills.⁵⁸ He was also aware that few Whips held high Cabinet office and none had, up to that point, gone to become Prime Minister.⁵⁹ It is clear that his misgivings were well founded: by late 1956 and the end of the Suez Crisis he was respected in Westminster but unknown outside it.⁶⁰ Suez changed this for Heath and its biggest impact upon him was that it brought to the attention of the press and the wider public. Politicians and journalists commented not only on his handling of the crisis in parliament, but also the extent to which he was becoming a more familiar figure.⁶¹ He was seen by some as not only having held the party together at a time of great difficulty, and with two antagonistic groups of MPs to control, but of having contributed to the overall leadership of the government in Eden's absence. The former can be contrasted with the 2013 EU Budget vote where,

⁵⁷ D. Searing & C. Game, 'Horses for Courses: The Recruitment of Whips in the British House of Commons', *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (July, 1977), p. 375.

⁵⁸ P. Ziegler, *Heath* (2010), p. 74.

⁵⁹ E. Heath, *Course of My Life* (1998), p. 163.

⁶⁰ 'Our London Correspondence', *The Manchester Guardian* (12 Jan., 1957), p. 3.

⁶¹ 'The Middle Ranks', *The Times* (17 Jan., 1957), p. 9; 'Jamaica Holiday for Prime Minister', *The Times* (22 Nov., 1956), p. 10; 'Table Talk', *The Observer* (13 Jan., 1957), p. 7.

despite a majority, the Government was defeated,⁶² and the July 1993 debate on the Social Chapter of the Treaty of Maastricht, the day after which John Major's government narrowly won a motion of confidence.⁶³

The second characteristic of being a Chief Whip, and one that perhaps explains why so few have risen to the top of government, is that it is seen as requiring skills more pertinent to a middle manager than a leader. In the early 1950s, the Conservative Party drew its Whips from among Members with middle-class and staff officer based military backgrounds. Heath was typical of this. The job was seen as a sergeant's route to advancement, that of a functionary.⁶⁴ Macmillan, despite his affection and respect for Heath, commented that he had been an excellent Chief Whip, a first class staff officer, but, crucially, no army commander.⁶⁵ The relevance of this statement can be questioned, although Heath's generally negative reputation in Downing Street would suggest that Macmillan might have had a point.⁶⁶

Before turning the focus of this chapter to Heath's impact on Anglo-European relations we should conclude by making clear once more the fact that Suez gave Heath an opportunity that he grasped with both hands. The crisis was so damaging to the party that Macmillan warned the Queen that he could not guarantee the survival of

⁶² www.channel4.com/news/cameron-faces-commons-vote-on-europe Accessed 25 March 2013.

⁶³ H.of C. Debs., Vol. 229, Cols. 520-612, Treaty of Maastricht (Social Protocol) (22 Jul., 1993).

⁶⁴ J. Campbell, *Heath* (1993), p. 103.

⁶⁵ A. Horne, *Macmillan* (1988), pp. 242-243.

⁶⁶ D. Hannan, 'In a Crowded Field, Edward Heath was Our Worst Prime Minister', *The Daily Telegraph* (6 Sep., 2010).

his government beyond six weeks.⁶⁷ Heath gained a public reputation for competence and loyalty and was seen as one of the most powerful and influential men in the government. His biographer John Campbell stated in 1993 that Suez made Ted Heath. A contemporary view comes from the 8 December edition of *The Economist*, which ran thus:

Mr Heath will surely have earned a niche in the Tory pantheon as the man who gave the party a second chance; at a time when the spotting of Tories who may some day move to much higher office has become the most popular Westminster occupation, here is another name to enter on the list.⁶⁸

Ted Heath and Europeanism

Edward Heath has had a deserved reputation as the most pro-European leader in British history, standing in direct comparison to more notably Euro-sceptic Prime Ministers such as David Cameron. His maiden speech in the House of Commons urged the then Labour government to adopt the Schuman Plan, he led the negotiating team for the first entry application between 1961 and 1963 as Lord Privy Seal, and he was ultimately the man who took Britain into Europe as Prime Minister in 1973. Despite the failure of the EEC entry negotiations he led between 1961 and 1963, de

⁶⁷ D.R. Thorpe, *Supermac: The Life of Harold Macmillan* (London, 2011), p. 363.

⁶⁸ 'Notes of the Week: Revolt Dampened', *The Economist* (8 Dec., 1956), p. 857.

Gaulle, the cause of that failure, reportedly told him in 1965 that he would be the man to take Britain in.⁶⁹

As a pro-European Heath was not by any means unique: his predecessor but one as leader of the Conservative Party, Harold Macmillan, had been an early supporter of European integration. Similarly, when he entered the Cabinet in 1959 there were already more senior members of the government with noted pro-European sympathies. Peter Thorneycroft, Duncan Sandys and Christopher Soames were three notable examples. There were differences, though. Whereas Macmillan's pro-Europeanism manifested itself as, and was an extension of, an overarching sense of the importance of the Atlantic Alliance, and the Anglo-American relationship, seeking closer links with Europe as a way to ensure the maintenance of a special US/UK link in accordance with known American policy, Heath was the opposite. Contrary to the perception of him in the context of Anglo-American relations more narrowly,⁷⁰ he did not disdain close relations with Washington and in fact when he was in agreement

⁶⁹ E. Heath, *The Course of My Life: The Autobiography of Edward Heath* (London, 1998), p. 240; G. Wilkes (Ed.), *Britain's Failure to Enter the European Economic Community 1961-1963: The Enlargement Negotiations and Crises in European, Atlantic and Commonwealth Relations* (London, 1997), p. 240.

⁷⁰ On Heath as anti-American see: C. Bartlett, *"The Special Relationship" – A Political History of Anglo-American Relations Since 1945* (London, 1992), pp. 129-130; H. Brandon, *The Retreat of American Power* (London, 1973), pp. 167-168; J. Dickie, *"Special" No More: Anglo-American Relations – Rhetoric and Reality* (London, 1988), p. 144; D. Dumbleby & D. Reynolds, *An Ocean Apart* (London, 1988), p. 284; A. Dobson, *Anglo-American Relations in the Twentieth Century* (London, 1995), p. 140; J. Dumbrell, *A Special Relationship: Anglo-American Relations in the Cold War and After* (London, 1971), p. 73.

with US policy, as he was over the 1972 bombing campaign in Vietnam, he was supportive.⁷¹ In an article on realism and British foreign policy in 1969 Heath had this to say:

Equally there is little argument in Britain about British membership in the alliances to which she now belongs, and in particular of the importance of the connection with the United States. Here again much of the rhetoric of the past has vanished, leaving behind a realization that a special relationship does not mean special privileges. It means a recognition that the two countries still hold interests in common across the world to an extent which goes well beyond the normal dealings between friendly states and peoples.⁷²

He did however see Britain's future, and more importantly its outlet for leadership, as being part of an integrated European Community. He told President Pompidou that even if Britain desired a special relationship with the US (implying that Britain did not), the relative size of the two countries made one impossible. By contrast, he felt that such a relationship was possible in Europe.⁷³ He was aware that British influence on US policy was nominal at best, a perception enhanced by the lack of US consultation over S.A.L.T., Nixon's visit to China, the 'Year of Europe' and the

⁷¹ G. Clark, 'Mr Heath rebuffs call for condemnation of US', *The Times* (01 January 1973), p. 8; H. Kissinger, *The White House Years* (London, 1979), p. 425; T. Robb, 'Henry Kissinger, Great Britain and the "Year of Europe": The Tangled Skein', *Contemporary British History*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (Jul., 2010), pp. 297-318.

⁷² E. Heath, 'Realism in British Foreign Policy', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 48 No. 1 (October 1969), p. 48.

⁷³ E. Heath, *The Course of My Life: The Autobiography of Edward Heath* (London, 1998), p. 370.

termination of the Bretton Woods monetary system.⁷⁴ Similarly, Heath felt that Britain was too dependent on the US for the maintenance of its nuclear deterrent and that the perception of Britain as an American Trojan horse was not limited to de Gaulle.⁷⁵ He felt it necessary to ensure that there could be no repeat of the charges of the 1950s and 1960s: namely, that Britain was colluding with the United States to the detriment of Europe in general and France in particular.⁷⁶

In the late 1960s he advocated pooling Britain's nuclear deterrent with the French *Force de Frappe*.⁷⁷ He did this primarily to reduce Britain's dependence on the United States where Polaris was concerned and to demonstrate his commitment to European integration. In practical terms this idea was a non-starter. Despite his desire to reduce British dependence on the US, he could not escape the fact that Britain could not share its nuclear deterrent with third parties such as France under the terms of the agreement with the US. Moreover, by the late 1960s France did not need to develop a deterrent in tandem with Britain as it had already developed its own.⁷⁸ Although more political and wishful thinking in concept, Heath's vision does serve to highlight the extent to which he was serious and committed to taking Britain into the

⁷⁴ See: A. Spelling, 'Edward Heath and Anglo-American Relations 1970-1974: A Reappraisal', *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol. 20 No. 4 (2009), 643; J. Campbell, *Edward Heath: A Biography* (London, 1993), pp. 342-351.

⁷⁵ TNA PREM 15/62, p. 8.

⁷⁶ H. Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval* (London, 1982), p. 192.

⁷⁷ E. Heath, *Old World, New Horizons: Britain, Europe and the Atlantic Alliance* (Harvard, 1970), pp. 72-73.

⁷⁸ J. Campbell, *Edward Heath: A Biography* (London, 1993), p. 341.

EEC. He was aware of the problems that had faced Macmillan, and himself, in 1962, and Harold Wilson in 1967, with trying to convince the French that the British government was sincere in its entry applications and overcome French suspicions that said applications were designed to ensure US dominance of European affairs.⁷⁹

Throughout his time as a Whip, the short period as Minister of Labour, during the Brussels negotiations, and in opposition to Wilson's Labour government, Heath was aware that much of the anti-Common Market feeling prevalent in Britain was centred on an emotional attachment to the Commonwealth.⁸⁰ Tied in with the concept of a strong Sterling Area, the Commonwealth and the remnants of the British Empire were seen as the forum for British leadership.⁸¹ They were seen as providing the irrefutable proof for the claim that Britain could not entertain more active participation in the European integration process because that process was incompatible with Commonwealth obligations. The Commonwealth gave Britain its world role and provided such a large share of British trade and trading obligations.⁸² Even in his capacity as head of the negotiating team for the first EEC entry bid, Heath had to maintain some semblance of this belief as indicated by his opening speech during the negotiations:

⁷⁹ E. Heath, *The Course of My Life: The Autobiography of Edward Heath* (London, 1998), p. 370.

⁸⁰ J. Campbell, *Heath* (1993), p. 337.

⁸¹ W. Kaiser, *Using Europe, Abusing the Europeans: Britain and European Integration, 1945-1963* (Basingstoke, 1999), p. 134.

⁸² *Ibid.*

In particular we had to think very deeply about the effect on the Commonwealth of so important a development in United Kingdom policy. I hope you will agree with me that the Commonwealth makes an essential contribution to the strength and stability of the world and that sound economic foundations and prospects of development go hand in hand with this. We believe that it is in the interests of all of us round this table that nothing should be done which would be likely to damage the essential interests of its Member Countries. Some people in the United Kingdom have been inclined to wonder whether membership of the Community could in fact be reconciled with membership of the Commonwealth...In particular I have noticed a growing understanding of the importance of the Commonwealth and, of the problems which would be created for Commonwealth countries by our entry into the Community.⁸³

The above quote from his speech in Paris should not be taken to suggest that Heath personally held such views. In his role as lead negotiator he was required to represent the views of the British government and, given that government's concern with the impact of Community membership on the Commonwealth,⁸⁴ and also EFTA, his stressing it should not be taken as anything more than representing the views of the government. Heath's personal views, and the basis of his policies in government between 1970 and 1974, were that the public's perception of the Commonwealth and

⁸³ Cmnd. 1565, *The United Kingdom and the European Economic Community. Text of the Statement made by the Lord Privy Seal at the Meeting with Ministers of Member States of the European Economic Community at Paris on October 10, 1961* (1961-1962), pp. 4-5.

⁸⁴ A. Milward, *The United Kingdom and The European Community Volume I: The Rise and Fall of a National Strategy 1945-1963* (Abingdon, 2012), p. 352.

its importance to Britain was emotional in nature, lagged behind reality, and that said attachment should be shelved.⁸⁵

In his autobiography Heath described the knowledge within the British government that the Commonwealth countries would be opposed or even, depending on the specific member, openly hostile to the prospect of Britain joining the EEC. He did stress his surprise that many of the non-white members of the Commonwealth were so implacably opposed, although by the 1970s he noted that their attitude had changed somewhat.⁸⁶ During the 1962 Commonwealth Conference he noted the desire of certain members of the Commonwealth and the British public that Britain joining the EEC would irrevocably damage the relationship between the Commonwealth and Britain. Moreover, the same groups wished Heath and his team to demand conditions that the Six would never accept. Heath was certain that the Commonwealth would survive and that the EEC served the real economic needs of Britain as opposed to the Commonwealth, which represented nostalgia.⁸⁷ In his lectures at Harvard in the late 1960s Heath used the term 'fissiparous'⁸⁸ to describe the Commonwealth and while being no more hostile in this arena than he was to good relations with the US, his overriding aim was to secure for Britain the membership of the EEC that would provide economic enhancement and the cherished world role.

⁸⁵ J. Campbell, *Heath* (1993), p. 336.

⁸⁶ E. Heath, *The Course of My Life* (1998), pp. 213-214.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 224-225.

⁸⁸ E. Heath, *Old World, New Horizons: Britain, Europe and the Atlantic Alliance* (Harvard, 1970).

‘Europeanist’ from the Start?

Although Heath has the reputation today as the most pro-European of Britain’s post-war Prime Ministers, there is some debate as to when he actually developed the commitment to European integration that he is perhaps best known for. His biographer, John Campbell, in describing his move from Minister of Labour to Lord Privy Seal, and number two to Lord Home at the Foreign Office, with special responsibility for Europe, attributes to Heath the finding of his life’s cause. He states that the cause of getting Britain into the EEC gave Heath a transforming vision he could pursue with passion.⁸⁹

It is a source of scholarly disagreement how far back Heath’s pro-European views actually went, and therefore whether they can be considered a factor in Macmillan’s moving him from the Ministry of Labour to the Foreign Office in July 1960. Miriam Camps includes Heath in the list of Cabinet appointments consisting of pro-Europeans being moved into key positions within the government. She cites it as evidence of new British thinking on Europe and that relations with the EEC had become a foreign policy priority. However, Camps also states that despite his maiden speech urging the Atlee government to adopt the Schuman Plan in 1950, few in 1960 were aware of it and he was seen as a new face to the group of pro-European Conservatives.⁹⁰ Nora Beloff, as we have already noted, claimed that Heath’s appointment was based on his record as Chief Whip and that if Europe were a factor, Macmillan would surely have chosen Thorneycroft, Soames or Duncan Sandys, the noted pro-Europeans already in the Cabinet. Beloff also cited Heath himself as telling

⁸⁹ J. Campbell, *Heath* (1993), pp. 112-113.

⁹⁰ M. Camps, *Britain and the European Community 1955-1963* (New York, 1964), pp. 314-315.

her he was not a committed European prior to 1960.⁹¹ Heath biographer John Campbell referenced the *Financial Times* as writing in July 1960 that Heath's European views were not known, and also wrote that it was the opinion of those who worked with him while he was Lord Privy Seal that, apart from personal opportunism, no motivating factor could be discerned from his European stance.⁹²

The views of Beloff and others are only one side of the argument, and a side that this author does not find convincing. In the first instance, while Heath is reported to have said to Beloff that he was not pro-European prior to 1960, his autobiography is clear in its portrayal of his Europeanist views as being deep rooted, and in existence long before he became Home's number two.⁹³ While Heath could be seen as employing hindsight in 1998, and seeking to portray himself as he would wish, irrespective of reality, it is equally plausible that his statement to Beloff was less than frank, at a time when public opinion was ambivalent and confused regarding British membership.⁹⁴ Moreover, the article cited by John Campbell makes no mention of Heath's European views at all, merely remarking that he had been given responsibility for European affairs and that this appeared to be in the context of a general shift in emphasis on the part of the government from a purely economic approach, to encompass political as well as institutional and procedural issues.⁹⁵

⁹¹ N. Beloff, *The General Says No* (London, 1963), p. 97.

⁹² J. Campbell, *Heath* (1993), p. 114.

⁹³ E. Heath, *Course of My Life* (1998), p. 145.

⁹⁴ Gallup Poll July 1960, '*British Attitudes Towards the Common Market 1957-1972*' (London, 1973).

⁹⁵ 'The Problem of Sixes and Sevens', *Financial Times* (28 Jul., 1960), p. 1.

The second claim is that while Chief Whip he seemed to have no problem or difficulty in silencing pro-European MPs, such as Geoffrey Rippon in 1955. Both Ziegler, and former New Labour MP, Denis MacShane, refer to this incident but make clear that Heath was doing his job despite his personal feelings on the matter. Ziegler for instance describes Heath ‘finding himself arguing against cases he held most at heart,’⁹⁶ and MacShane states that, even on Europe where his sympathies lay, he had to support Eden’s hostile position.⁹⁷ Heath as the Chief Whip was required to support the government whether he agreed with its policy or not, and the fact that he told Rippon that he could not continue as Parliamentary Private Secretary if he continued to advocate British membership of the Common Market should be interpreted as nothing more than a Whip doing his job.⁹⁸

There is a greater preponderance of evidence to support the view that Heath’s pro-European sentiments were developed long before the July 1960 reshuffle. Early biographer and childhood friend Margaret Laing was in no doubt when she said of Heath’s European views:

His view of Europe was no sudden inspiration. It was a deeply held conviction based on a triumvirate of ideas: his love of his country, sense of necessity of European unity that would lead to greater economic and political opportunity, need for greater independence of the United States...Conflicts and possible

⁹⁶ P. Ziegler, *Edward Heath* (2010), p. 89.

⁹⁷ D. MacShane, *Heath* (2006), p. 23.

⁹⁸ D. Searing & C. Game, ‘Horses for Courses: The Recruitment of Whips in the British House of Commons’, *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (July., 1977), p. 371.

solutions in Europe had been a pre-occupation since he observed the Nuremburg Rally in 1937.⁹⁹

Heath's Parliamentary Private Secretary was similarly certain when it came to Heath's European views and their origins. Quoted by Jacqueline Tratt, this MP asserted that Heath was intent from the onset that Britain should go into the EEC and that, when he was given responsibility for European matters by Macmillan, his mandate was to do just that.¹⁰⁰ MacShane's 2006 biography of Heath states that signs of Heath's European credentials were clear from the moment he rose to make his maiden speech in the House of Commons.¹⁰¹ Even Campbell described his interest in European travel as being unusual for an undergraduate and that there is no compelling reason to doubt his Europeanism. That his views were not more widely known was more a case of his having difficulty communicating his passions than not possessing them in the first place.¹⁰² This last point is reinforced by the fact that as Chief Whip he was prevented by convention from making his personal views known. As he had been in the Whips Office since 1951, and only came to public prominence as a result of the Suez Crisis more than five years after that, it is perhaps not surprising that his views were not widely known. Moreover, his only ministerial role after he ceased to

⁹⁹ M. Laing, *Edward Heath* (1972), p. 98.

¹⁰⁰ J. Tratt, *The Macmillan Government and Europe: A Study in the Process of Policy Development* (Basingstoke, 1996), p. 129.

¹⁰¹ D. MacShane, *Heath* (2006), p. 34.

¹⁰² J. Campbell, *Heath* (1993), pp. 114-115.

be Chief Whip was at the Ministry of Labour. There is a second convention that Ministers do not usually pass comment outside of their departmental purview.¹⁰³

Beyond the views of his biographers, there are two reasons that this author considers to be compelling when it comes to the issue of Heath's pro-European credentials. The first is his maiden speech in Parliament, and the second is the July 1960 reshuffle. Many authors have cited Heath's maiden speech as evidence of his conviction, indeed his only one prior to entering the Whips' Office.¹⁰⁴ It took place in June 1950 during a Parliamentary Debate about the Schuman Plan that would create the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), and whether or not Britain should join it. Eden led for the Conservative opposition, despite his own ambivalence if not outright hostility, to the project. Heath spoke after the then Chancellor, Sir Stafford Cripps, and sought to address his points specifically:

Now the Chancellor of the Exchequer spoke looking at the worst point of view the whole time. He spoke of the high authority, suggesting that we should have no say in arranging the power of the high authority. Surely that would not be the case. He said that we should be taking a risk with the whole of our economy. We on this side of the house feel that by standing aside from the discussions, we may be taking a very great risk with our economy in the coming years – a very great risk indeed. He said it would also be a great risk if we went in and then withdrew. We regard it as a greater risk to stand aside altogether at this stage...I appeal

¹⁰³ E. Heath, *Course of My Life* (1998), p. 145.

¹⁰⁴ 'Common Market: Crossing the Channel', *Time* (13 Jul., 1962), p. 2.

tonight to the Government to go into the Schuman Plan to develop Europe and to co-ordinate it in the way suggested.¹⁰⁵

The speech does not read as one written and presented by a man in any doubt as to his opinion. It demonstrates clearly Heath's views as he espoused them later,¹⁰⁶ and as presented by biographers such as Margaret Laing.¹⁰⁷ Given that it was only after 1960 that the balance of opinion in the Treasury suggested continued absence from the Common Market represented a grave economic risk, Heath's speech was remarkably prescient.¹⁰⁸ Eden, Churchill and Macmillan sent him notes of congratulation, and it has been suggested that the speech was a factor in the decision to offer him a place in the Whips' Office.¹⁰⁹

The second reason for this author's belief that Heath held pro-European views from an early point in his political career is the reshuffle that saw him move from the Ministry of Labour to the Foreign and Colonial office as number two to Lord Home, and spokesman in the Commons.¹¹⁰ This author rejects in, particular Beloff's assertion that, if entering the EEC was a factor, Macmillan would have entrusted it to one of the existing heavyweights in the government. It is true that Thorneycroft,

¹⁰⁵ H. of C. Debs, Vol. 476, Cols. 1907-2056, 'The Schuman Plan' (26 Jun., 1950).

¹⁰⁶ E. Heath, *Course of My Life* (1998), p. 145.

¹⁰⁷ M. Laing, *Edward Heath* (1972), p. 98.

¹⁰⁸ TNA CAB 129/102, C. (60) 107, 'Association With the European Economic Community' (6 Jul., 1960), p. 2.

¹⁰⁹ D. MacShane, *Heath* (2006), p. 37.

¹¹⁰ H. of C. Debs, Vol. 627, Cols. 1973-2005 (28 Jul., 1960).

Sandys and Soames were better known, and were considered the leading pro-Europeans, but they were also appointed to Cabinet or Ministerial position. Duncan Sandys, who had been Minister of Aviation, was promoted and appointed Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, and Soames was made Minister of Agriculture.¹¹¹ As two of the biggest obstacles to British accession to the Common Market were the system of Imperial and Commonwealth trade preference, and British agriculture, it is not surprising that Macmillan placed those two difficult, but crucial, departments in the hands of known pro-European allies. As for Peter Thorneycroft, he had resigned as Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1958 over a dispute with Macmillan over the extent of departmental spending cuts.¹¹² He was brought back into the Cabinet as Minister of Aviation in 1960,¹¹³ but, given the manner of his departure, it was perhaps to be expected that he was not entrusted with a significant role (and risk another disagreement and public resignation) until Macmillan's 'Night of the Long Knives' in 1962 when he became Secretary of State for Defence.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ 'Lord Home Foreign Secretary: Mr Heath as Spokesman in Commons', *The Times* (28 Jul., 1960), p. 10; 'Lord Home Foreign Secretary: Mr Heath to be Commons Spokesman', *The Guardian* (28 Jul., 1960), p. 1.

¹¹² 'Chancellor and Aides Resign', *The Times* (7 Jan., 1958), p. 8; 'Mr Thorneycroft's Reasons', *The Times* (7 Jan., 1958), p. 8.

¹¹³ S. Heffer, 'Thorneycroft (George, Edward) Peter, Baron Thorneycroft (1909-1994), Politician'. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/55876?docPos=1>.

¹¹⁴ 'Seven Ministers Out of Cabinet', *The Times* (14 Jul., 1962), p. 8; A. Horne, *Macmillan* (1989), p. 243.

Did Macmillan therefore select Heath based on his European convictions? His diaries make no mention of his reasons for selecting Heath, but they do reveal that they thought the promotion would be good for Heath, and his acceptance would be helpful; to Macmillan.¹¹⁵ Heath for his part did not publicly speculate as to the Prime Minister's reasons and Macmillan's biographers have had little to add either. Alistair Horne describes the move as Macmillan promoting a new star but questions Heath's European credentials.¹¹⁶ Sampson states that Heath joined the Foreign Office with new enthusiasm for Europe without providing any insights into that enthusiasm.¹¹⁷ John Turner describes Heath as being admired by Jean Monnet but does not offer any suggestions for the promotion,¹¹⁸ and Thorpe's recent work *Supermac: The Life of Harold Macmillan*, confines itself to the fact that Macmillan briefly considered Freddie Erroll,¹¹⁹ later to serve as President of the Board of Trade and succeeded in that role by Heath, for the role before he chose Heath.¹²⁰ One possible reason for both the 1960 promotion, and the 'Night of the Long Knives' two years later, was a desire on the part of Macmillan to promote and bring on younger, more professional types of Conservative, and Heath fitted into that mould perfectly.

¹¹⁵ P. Catterall (Ed.), *The Macmillan Diaries Vol. II: Prime Minister and After 1957-1966* (Basingstoke, 2011), pp. 309-310.

¹¹⁶ A. Horne, *Macmillan 1957-1986: Volume II of the Official Biography* (London, 1988), pp. 242-243.

¹¹⁷ A. Sampson, *Macmillan: A Study in Ambiguity* (Middlesex, 1967), p. 209.

¹¹⁸ J. Turner, *Macmillan* (Harlow, 1994), p. 219.

¹¹⁹ M. Garnett, 'Erroll, Frederick, James, Baron Erroll of Hale and Baron Erroll of Kilmun (1914-2000)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/74610?docPos=1> Accessed 26 March 2013.

¹²⁰ D.R. Thorpe, *Supermac: The Life of Harold Macmillan* (London, 2011), p. 476.

Heath's biographers appear to be undecided on the issue. Ziegler asserts that he was known to be well disposed to Europe, but not a Europhile, and critical of the failure of Attlee's Labour Government to adopt the Schuman Plan when it had the opportunity in 1950.¹²¹ Campbell referenced the views of some of Heath's colleagues who could discern nothing beyond personal ambition in his acceptance of the position.¹²² MacShane suggests Heath's views when he talks about Macmillan having an eye on Europe when he made his reshuffle appointments, but does not state outright that Heath's views were a factor.¹²³

Given that neither Heath, nor Macmillan, gave any solid indicators as to the reasons for the former being moved from the Ministry of Labour to the Foreign Office, it is difficult to make a pronouncement that will not be subject to challenge. There is, however, evidence that this author considers sufficient to tip the balance in favour of Heath's views on Europe being a factor. In the first instance, it is known that Macmillan was aware of Heath's maiden speech on the Schuman Plan a decade before, having sent him a note of congratulation.¹²⁴ Moreover, Beloff's suggestion that the promotion was based on his record as Chief Whip seems to ignore the fact that Macmillan had already given Heath the job of Minister of Labour in 1959 on the back of his prior service in the Whips' Office. He would therefore have been unlikely to give him a payoff for that service twice and must have thought highly of him for

¹²¹ P. Ziegler, *Edward Heath* (2010), pp. 116-117.

¹²² J. Campbell, *Heath* (1993), p. 114.

¹²³ D. MacShane, *Heath* (2006), p. 39.

¹²⁴ E. Heath, *Course of My Life* (1998), p. 145; D. MacShane, *Heath* (2006), p. 37.

other reasons.¹²⁵ Moreover, Heath had asked to be allowed to serve a full term in this role and it does not follow that Macmillan, having given him one job for services rendered, would then move him after less than a year, despite his undertaking that he would have a full term, for exactly the same reason.

Overall, this author is more convinced by the argument that Heath's Europeanist convictions were in evidence long before he was placed in charge of getting Britain into the EEC. His maiden speech contained all the hallmarks of the views he was later known for. His childhood friend Margaret Laing was unequivocal in her belief regarding how long he had been pro-European, several of his biographers take a similar line, and the arguments of Beloff and others regarding the reshuffle do not bear further scrutiny. What is necessary now is to turn to how much of an impact Heath had on the nature and evolution of Anglo-European relations.

Heath's Impact on British Policy

Heath's impact on the nature and state of Anglo-European relations can be divided into the short-term and the longer term, although the former had an effect upon the latter. His best known contribution is obviously that as Prime Minister he took Britain into the EEC in 1973, but outside of Britain it was the failed negotiations he led in 1961-1963 that, despite their ending in disappointment, made his reputation. This is significant, as although his pro-European reputation in Britain may have had little practical impact, it is indisputable that for Heath, or any other Prime Minister for that matter, to take Britain into the EEC would entail convincing the Six, France in

¹²⁵ P. Ziegler, *Edward Heath* (2010), p. 111.

particular, that it was a viable proposition.¹²⁶ For this reason, Heath's reputation on the continent was the more important.

Despite the fact that the EEC entry bid he led in 1961-1962 ended in failure, Heath emerged in Europe with an enhanced reputation. It is known that Jean Monnet, one of the founding fathers of the European integration process, knew and greatly admired Heath and his stance on British membership.¹²⁷ Even before de Gaulle delivered the *coup de grace*, it was clear that Heath was well viewed in European circles. Biographer Margaret Laing described the feeling of extraordinary warmth that Heath's skill, patience, amiability and knowledge in European circles, and went on to say that his wholehearted belief in Europe was endearing and that he was acquiring the reputation of a statesman.¹²⁸ Heath was featured on the cover of *Time* on 13 July 1962, and the article dedicated to the Common Market negotiations not only referred to him as a lifelong European, but also said the following:

Though many were skeptical of Britain's motives at first, Heath has convinced Common Market officials of his government's deep commitment to membership in the community. "If this is not so," remarked a Belgian official, "then Heath is a truly marvelous actor."¹²⁹

¹²⁶ P. Ziegler, *Heath* (2010), pp. 272-273.

¹²⁷ J. Turner, *Macmillan* (1994), p. 85.

¹²⁸ M. Laing, *Edward Heath: Prime Minister* (London, 1972), pp. 131-146.

¹²⁹ 'Common Market: Crossing the Channel', *Time* (13 Jul., 1962), p. 6.

Once it became clear that the British bid was doomed, Heath furthered his reputation in Europe via the tone and content of his final press conference. It was well received by the European press in attendance, many of whom were committed Europeans and who sympathised with him, as well as with Britain, and were furious with France.¹³⁰ Heath did receive one consolation from the failure of the negotiations. The University of Aachen, which had been due to award its prestigious International Charlemagne Prize¹³¹ for those who embody the hope for European integration, to General de Gaulle, instead awarded it to Heath.¹³²

As Leader of the Opposition between 1964 and 1970 there was little that Heath could do in practical terms to further the cause of British membership of the Common Market. He continued to campaign for British membership in public, as shown by his Godkin Lectures at Harvard in 1969, but could do little beyond this.¹³³ The issue had been effectively shelved as de Gaulle remained in power in France and there seemed no prospect of his leaving soon, or changing his mind once it was made up. The Conservative Party was broadly speaking, although not unanimously, in favour of British membership and had Heath's known sentiments in this regard did not prevent him succeeding Lord Home as leader in 1964,¹³⁴ nor remaining as leader

¹³⁰ A. Roth, *Heath* (1972), p. 167.

¹³¹ http://www.aachen.de/en/sb/pr_az/karls_pr/charlemagne_prize/index.html Accessed 18 March 2013.

¹³² A. Roth, *Heath* (1972), p. 170.

¹³³ E. Heath, 'Old World, New Horizons: Britain, Europe, and the Atlantic Alliance', *The Godkin Lectures on the Essentials of Free Government and the Duties of the Citizen* (Harvard, 1967).

¹³⁴ 'All Rivals Bow Out to Mr. Heath', *The Times* (28 Jul., 1965), p. 10.

in the aftermath of the 1966 General Election defeat.¹³⁵ At a time of public inconsistency when it came to support or opposition for the Common Market in general, and British membership in particular, Heath and his brand of pro-European sentiment was a constant.¹³⁶

There is one area of Heath's impact on relations between Britain and Europe during his time as Leader of the Opposition that is a source of disagreement amongst his biographers. In 1966 Wilson announced that the Labour Government would make a fresh attempt to enter the EEC.¹³⁷ Ziegler has registered his surprise that Heath, despite his desire to see Britain at the heart of Europe, did not publically support Wilson's initiative. He did state that Heath did not feel Wilson's bid was genuine and that because of this it would do nothing to further Britain's case, but there was also the sense that Heath felt Wilson was intruding upon 'his territory'.¹³⁸ Campbell, by contrast, while also referring to Heath targeting Wilson, and his belief that the attempt was misguided, nevertheless makes clear that Heath honourably lined his own MPs up to support the Government in the Commons.¹³⁹

¹³⁵ J. Campbell, *Heath* (1993), p. 246.

¹³⁶ 'British Attitudes to the EEC 1960-63', *The Journal of Common Market Studies*, Volume. 5, No. 1 (September 1966), p. 49; 'Public Opinion and the EEC', *The Journal of Common Market Studies*, Volume. 6 No. 3 (March 1968), p. 231; Gallup Poll July 1962; Gallup Poll October 1962.

¹³⁷ H. Parr, 'A Question of Leadership: July 1966 and Harold Wilson's European Decision', *Contemporary British History*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (2005), pp. 437-458.

¹³⁸ P. Ziegler, *Edward Heath* (2010), p. 191.

¹³⁹ J. Campbell, *Heath* (1993), p. 247.

In the event Heath was proved right. De Gaulle wasted no time in demonstrating that he had not altered his position from 1963, and the Soames Affair, where the contents of a meeting between President de Gaulle and the British Ambassador to France, Sir Christopher Soames, were leaked to the press by Embassy staff, did little to convince the French that Britain's application was worth entertaining.¹⁴⁰ Even if de Gaulle had not still been in power in France it is unlikely that the Wilson application would have succeeded. The then French Prime Minister, Pompidou, had visited London in 1966 and had left unimpressed, feeling that Wilson had deliberately snubbed him.¹⁴¹ British policy at the time was to try to isolate France and use the Five to compel it to abandon its opposition to British entry, a tactic that had failed in January 1963, and one that Heath argued would fail again.¹⁴²

It is here that we come to the crux of the matter. Although Heath in opposition could not do anything practical about Britain's continued absence from the Common Market, there is evidence to suggest strongly that he thought that the situation would change if he were in office. In the first instance, William Rees-Mogg, Editor of *The Times* from 1967-1981, reported that in an interview in *Le Monde* De Gaulle had said

¹⁴⁰ For the Soames Affair See: M. Pine, 'British Personal Diplomacy and Public Policy: The Soames Affair', *Journal of European Integration History*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (2004), pp. 59-76; M. Pine, *Harold Wilson and Europe: Pursuing Britain's Membership of the European Community* (London, 2008); A. Campbell, 'Anglo-French Relations A Decade Ago: A New Assessment', *International Affairs*, Vol. 58, No. 2 (Spring 1982), pp. 237-253.

¹⁴¹ S. Wall, *The Official History of Britain in the European Community: Volume II: From Rejection to Referendum 1963-1975* (Oxford, 2013), p. 376.

¹⁴² P. Ziegler, *Heath* (2010), p. 192.

that ‘The Labour Party would come to power for a short and disastrous experiment; then the Conservatives will come back with Heath at their head and it is he who will bring Britain into Europe’.¹⁴³ This was a remarkably prescient prediction from the General, but one based admittedly on personal experience and knowledge of Heath. More significantly, Heath’s reputation with Pompidou was extremely high. Back in 1960 Heath had met and greatly impressed Michel Jobert (Pompidou’s General Secretary by the 1970s), who later reported to his superior that Heath was a good European who should be supported, encouraged and relied upon.¹⁴⁴ Heath had known Pompidou since 1962 and had got on well with him. Pompidou, for his part, felt that a British bid led by Wilson was not credible, but that one led by Heath was.¹⁴⁵

That Heath was able to lead Britain into the EEC was in part due to the fact that de Gaulle had retired in 1969 and could no longer veto British bids. De Gaulle’s view that Heath would succeed in taking Britain into the EEC is known and has been referenced here, but, he was not a man ruled by sentiment, and there is no reason to suppose that Heath being pro-European would have induced him to remove his long-held opposition. Moreover, Heath’s biographers all make the point that de Gaulle’s departure merely exposed a crack in the hinges: it did not push the door to entry wide open. It was still for Britain to convince France that it was sincere in its desire to play a full role in a unified and evolving European Community. Heath’s reputation with

¹⁴³ W. Rees-Mogg, ‘Avec Heath a Leur Tete’, *Sunday Times* (1 Aug., 1965), p. 8.

¹⁴⁴ P. Ziegler, *Heath* (2010), p. 274.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 192-193; C. Swatridge, ‘A Committed European’, *European Integration Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (2005), p. 76.

Pompidou, and other European leaders made that possible.¹⁴⁶ His career-long advocacy of the principles of European integration, and the desire that Britain play a full and active part convinced the Six that under Heath, Britain was serious and that French opposition should be dropped.¹⁴⁷

The day before Britain signed the Treaty of Rome, Heath was awarded his second prize for European statesmanship. In a manner representative of the regard in which Heath was held in European capitals, Joseph Bech, President of the committee that awarded the European Prize for Statesmanship, paid fulsome tribute to him:

My Dear Prime Minister, Since October 1961, you have been constantly to the fore and have conducted, in your country's name, highly difficult negotiations with E.E.C. You have done this with extraordinary zeal and a profound knowledge of the situation.

Bech chose to quote at length from the speech given by his counterpart in Aachen nine years before when that institution awarded Heath the Charlemagne Prize:

We have all the impression that he has made of the task officially entrusted to him a deeply-felt personal mission, because he himself is profoundly

¹⁴⁶ H. Parr, 'The Significance of the 1967 Application', *UACES Conference, Forty Years Since the First Enlargement* (7-8 March 2013), Draft Paper, p.6;

<http://www.uaces.org/documents/papers/1302/parr.pdf> Accessed 19 March 2013.

¹⁴⁷ TNA PREM 15/62, pp. 8-9.

convinced of its supreme importance. As long as we in Europe have such men in leading positions, we shall have no reason to lack faith.¹⁴⁸

Beyond the accession of Britain to the European Community, Pompidou had further cause to see Heath as a genuine European partner. Although a fixture of modern life since the early 1990s, the Channel Tunnel was envisaged more than two decades before, and Heath put his political weight behind it. When the Channel Tunnel Agreement came to be signed in 1974, Pompidou declared that ‘Hitherto, virtually the sole link between the Continent and Britain has been called “Heath”. Now we are to have another link’.¹⁴⁹

Conclusion

The Suez Crisis made its impact on Britain, Europe and the wider world felt in many different ways. In the context of British and French policy revaluations towards membership of the European Communities one man best illustrates this: Ted Heath. As the Government Chief Whip during the Crisis, Heath had an extraordinarily difficult task. The operation itself, and especially the withdrawal under sustained American pressure, polarised the Conservative Party and forced Heath to deploy every weapon at his disposal to maintain the unity of the government, not once but twice. That he did so successfully has ensured that he was one of the few members of

¹⁴⁸ TNA FCO 41/942, ‘Speech by Mr. Joseph Bech, President of the Jury of the “Europa-Preis Fur Staatskunst”, at the Ceremony of Presentation of the Prize to Mr. Edward Heath, Strasbourg (21 Jan., 1972, p. 6.

¹⁴⁹ P. Ziegler, *Edward Heath* (2010), p. 277.

the Government to come out of the Suez Crisis with an enhanced reputation compared to that he maintained at the onset.¹⁵⁰

Described by his peers and the press as having handled the crisis with quiet skill, and as never losing command of the situation,¹⁵¹ Heath went from being a Chief Whip who was well respected within Westminster, but virtually unknown outside of it, to one considered by many to have been one of the men who ran the government during Anthony Eden's convalescence in Jamaica.¹⁵² More controversially as far as his biographers are concerned, he was intimately involved in the leadership contest, fought out between R.A. Butler and Harold Macmillan, which followed Eden's decision to resign in January 1957. Alternatively accused of having intervened to ensure Macmillan's succession, or at the very least having played an influential, if still impartial, role, he was the man whom Macmillan chose to accompany him to celebrate when he was duly chosen as the new Conservative Party leader.¹⁵³

Suez in this respect made the career of Ted Heath. He was respected but unknown before the crisis,¹⁵⁴ and publically known as one of the most powerful men in the Conservative Government after its conclusion.¹⁵⁵ He remains to this day the

¹⁵⁰ Earl of Kilmuir, *Political Adventure* (1967), p. 168.

¹⁵¹ A. Roth, *Heath* (1972), p. 110.

¹⁵² 'Keeping the Tories Tame', *The Economist* (1 Dec., 1956), p. 763.

¹⁵³ A. Sampson, *Macmillan* (1967), p. 127.

¹⁵⁴ 'Our London Correspondence' *The Manchester Guardian* (12 Jan., 1957).

¹⁵⁵ 'Table Talk' *The Observer* (13 Jan., 1957), p. 7.

only Chief Whip of either of the two main parties since the Second World War to have gone on to become Prime Minister. Many factors explain why this progression was almost unheard of. Chief Whips lack the policy expertise and public exposure that are usually prerequisites of climbing what Wilson called ‘the greasy pole’, and they inevitably make too many enemies in the exercising of their duties.¹⁵⁶ Heath however, thanks to Suez, gained so much public exposure, almost uniformly positive, that after the 1959 General Election Macmillan appointed him to the Cabinet as Minister of Labour. Heath, despite his avowed wish to serve a full term in this role, was moved a year later when Macmillan reshuffled his Cabinet, and was appointed Lord Privy Seal. The title was a device to give him the required seniority as he was in fact the number two man at the Foreign Office and, as the Secretary of State, Lord Home, was in the House of Lords, Heath was the *de facto* representative of the government on foreign affairs in the Commons. He also had a particular brief, to take Britain into Europe, a cause that had been close to his heart from the start of his political career.¹⁵⁷

Although there is disagreement amongst his biographers as to just how early he developed the pro-European views that were to define his career,¹⁵⁸ this author feels that his maiden speech in Parliament,¹⁵⁹ his own pronouncements in his autobiography, the account of his Private Secretary,¹⁶⁰ and that of childhood friend

¹⁵⁶ T. Renton, *Chief Whip* (2004), p. 286.

¹⁵⁷ J. Campbell, *Heath* (1993), pp. 112-113.

¹⁵⁸ N. Beloff, *The General Says No* (1963), p. 97; M. Camps, *Britain* (1964), pp. 314-315.

¹⁵⁹ H. of C. Debs, Vol. 476, Cols. 1907-2056, ‘The Schuman Plan’ (26 Jun., 1950).

¹⁶⁰ J. Tratt, *The Macmillan Government* (1996), p. 129.

and biographer Margaret Laing¹⁶¹ are more convincing interpretations than those labelling him as a pragmatist or late convert on Europe. Moreover, it is unlikely that Heath, with the reputation of a man who would not trouble to hide his feelings, would have been able to develop such a committed position as late as 1960 and convince a man as sceptical and mistrustful of Britain as General de Gaulle of his conviction.¹⁶²

Heath in his role as Lord Privy Seal, with responsibility for Europe, was appointed to lead the negotiating team tasked by Macmillan with securing British entry to the EEC and, although de Gaulle's veto in January 1963 prevented him from accomplishing this goal, the manner in which he undertook it impressed many in Europe.¹⁶³ Before the negotiations had even started he impressed Michel Jobert, who would later work for Pompidou and assure him that Heath was genuine in his desire to see Britain enter the European Community, and should be supported and encouraged in this endeavour.¹⁶⁴ His conduct in Brussels was such that he was awarded the prestigious Charlemagne Prize in 1963, and in opposition he supported Wilson's abortive EEC bid in 1967, despite his personal, and as it turned out, prescient misgivings about its prospect of success.¹⁶⁵ He continued to push for Britain to play the role he felt it always should have played. Upon becoming Prime Minister in 1970 he succeeded in overcoming French opposition, convinced Pompidou and in 1973 was able to sign the Treaties of Rome on behalf of his country.

¹⁶¹ M. Laing, *Edward Heath* (1972), p. 98.

¹⁶² G. Wilkes, *Britain's Failure* (1997), p. 240.

¹⁶³ A. Roth, *Heath* (1972), p. 167.

¹⁶⁴ P. Ziegler, *Edward Heath* (2010), p. 274.

¹⁶⁵ J. Campbell, *Heath* (1993), p. 247.

The Suez Crisis gave Heath the opportunity to make his name, and started him on the road that would lead, via the first EEC application, to his taking Britain into the European Community. In so doing, Suez gave Britain a leader whose passion and commitment to the cause of Britain as a full partner in Europe was such that it was enough to convince European leaders, Pompidou above all, that Britain's desire was genuine and that de Gaulle's veto should be lifted. Suez may not have pushed Britain into the EEC immediately, but it brought to prominence the man who eventually would, and changed the nature of Anglo-European relations. While we will never know for sure, it is worth wondering how Britain's relationship with Europe would look today if Heath had remained Prime Minister and leader of the Conservative Party after 1975 rather than losing to Margaret Thatcher. In any event, Suez made Heath, and as such can be said to have had a significant impact on the nature and state of Anglo-European relations.

Chapter VII: Conclusions

At the time of writing (December 2015), Britain's continued membership of the European Union is in doubt. In recent months the Prime Minister has laid out the areas in which he wants Britain's relationship with Brussels to be renegotiated with more powers being repatriated to Westminster. Britain, although an EU member since 1973, has never been entirely comfortable with its membership, which has remained one lacking conviction. A generation of British policymakers saw Britain as having a global role that set it apart from the rest of Continental Europe, a view that was seemingly strengthened by the retention of many elements of the Empire in 1945 and the fact that Britain was the only European belligerent not to suffer defeat and occupation during the Second World War. Although Winston Churchill spoke of the need for a United States of Europe, he saw Britain as an ally, a supporter, a facilitator of such an entity, but, crucially, not a member.¹ The Labour government rejected the chance to join what became the European Coal and Steel Community in June 1950, and the Conservative governments of Churchill and Eden opposed the creation of the European Defence Community, as well as refusing to actively participate in the 1955/56 Messina discussions.² This last has been the basis for the accusation that Britain 'missed the boat', losing the opportunity to shape Europe to its own designs and preferences.³

¹ TNA CAB 129/48, C. (51) 32, 'United Europe: A Note by the Prime Minister and Minister of Defence' (29 Nov., 1951), pp. 1-2.

² D. Gowland & A. Turner, *Reluctant Europeans: Britain and European Integration 1945-1998* (Harlow, 2000), p. 102.

³ M. Camps, 'Missing the Boat at Messina and Other Times?' in B. Brivati & H. Jones (eds), *From Reconstruction to Integration: Britain and Europe since 1945* (Leicester, 1993), pp. 134-143.

In the summer of 1956 Chancellor Harold Macmillan and President of the Board of Trade Thorneycroft presented 'Plan G' to their colleagues in the British government.⁴ This was a proposal for the creation of a partial free trade area as an alternative to the Customs Union being discussed by the Six. After the Six signed the Treaties of Rome in March 1957 the British government adapted the plan and proposed to the Six that their new European Economic Community form part of a wider free trade area. When France vetoed further negotiations in November 1958,⁵ Macmillan's government, along with the governments of Austria, Denmark, Norway, Portugal, Sweden and Switzerland formed the European Free Trade Association (EFTA).⁶ EFTA was designed, at least from the perspective of the British government, to force the Six to allow the rest of the OEEC to enjoy the benefits of the Common Market without having to agree to membership. By May 1960 Macmillan had accepted that this was unlikely and began the process that would end with Britain's first application for EEC membership. De Gaulle's veto in January 1963 ended Macmillan's bid, which was followed by another in November 1967 with identical results.⁷ It was not until the General retired in 1969 that the main obstacle to British membership was removed. Heath's Conservative government opened negotiations and signed the Treaties of Rome in January 1973.⁸

⁴ TNA CAB 129/82, E.I. (56) 14 'United Kingdom Initiative in Europe: Plan G: Interim Report by Officials' (27 Jul., 1956), pp. 1-15.

⁵ P. Mangold, *The Almost Impossible Ally: Harold Macmillan and Charles de Gaulle* (London, 2006), p. 114.

⁶ Cmnd. 823 (59) 'Stockholm Draft Plan for a European Free Trade Association' (Jul., 1959).

⁷ C. Hargrove, 'De Gaulle Rules Out Early Negotiations with Britain', *Times* (28 Nov., 1968), p. 1.

⁸ D. Cross, 'Britain fulfils its first duties as EEC member,' *Times* (2 Jan., 1973), p. 1.

At the start of this thesis we established that while the Suez Crisis and the development of British and French policy re-evaluations towards membership of the European Communities have been the subject of extensive bodies of literature, they have not received much academic attention in conjunction with each other. Historians who have considered Suez in the context of European integration have tended to either dismiss it as having any impact, either on British policy reappraisals or the evolution of French ideas,⁹ making relatively unsubstantiated claims that it served as a point of realisation that provoked a policy review,¹⁰ or limiting its impact to one very narrow area such as Plan G.¹¹ It has been this author's opinion that the under-developed arguments put forward thus far have not done justice to the significance that Suez had on British and French policy re-evaluations towards membership of the European Communities. Accordingly this thesis first tested the arguments of George, Milward and Young, then set out three ways in which this author believes Suez was partly responsible for policy re-evaluations and for the existence of the European

⁹ A. Gorst & L. Johnman, *The Suez Crisis* (Abingdon, 1997); K. Kyle, *Suez: Britain's End of Empire in the Middle East* (London, 1991); A. Moravcsik, *The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht* (London, 1999); R. Ovendale, *British Defence Policy since 1945* (Manchester, 1994); S.C. Smith (Ed.), *Reassessing Suez 1956: New Perspectives on the Crisis and its Aftermath* (Aldershot, 2008); H. Young, *This Blessed Plot: Britain and Europe from Churchill to Blair* (London, 1999).

¹⁰ S. Bulmer, 'Britain and European Integration: Of Sovereignty, Slow Adaptation and Semi-Detachment', in S. George (Ed.), *Britain and the European Community: The Politics of Semi-Detachment* (Oxford, 1992); S. George, *Britain and European Integration since 1945* (Oxford, 1991); S. George, *An Awkward Partner: Britain in the European Community* (3rd Edition) (Oxford, 1998).

¹¹ A. Milward, *The United Kingdom and the European Community Volume I: The Rise and Fall of a National Strategy 1945-1963* (London, 2002), p. 252.

Communities themselves: the rise to power of Harold Macmillan; three significant changes in France (the creation of the EEC itself, the return to power of General Charles de Gaulle, and the development of the French nuclear deterrent); and the longer-term impact through the rise of Edward Heath.

Although there are numerous studies that have examined the role of Whitehall departments in the formulation of government policy, this thesis has taken a ‘high political’ approach, emphasising the decision-making role of elected ministers.¹² This is not to diminish the influence of Civil Servants such as Sir Frank Lee, nor to suggest that Whitehall had no role to play in advising Ministers. The focus on the role of elected leaders reflects three things; that it is hard to definitively quantify the influence that Whitehall had on Cabinet Ministers and the Prime Minister; that Whitehall’s role was constitutionally to advise and then implement government policy whether it followed Whitehall’s advice or not; and that ultimately, decisions were made by ministers and the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister was of particular significance in this work because the Conservative leaders of the period 1955-1963 were all men who sought to dominate their cabinets, and were prone to appointing ministers likely to agree with them, as well as interfering in areas they deemed to be their own preserve. Churchill acted as his own Minister of Defence until 1954 and even after Macmillan formally took on the role Churchill interfered. Eden was a foreign policy expert and while he was forced to appoint Macmillan as Secretary of

¹² A. Adamthwaite, ‘Overstretched and overstrung: Eden and the Foreign Office and the making of policy, 1951-5’, *International Affairs*, Vol. 64, No. 2 (Spring., 1988), pp. 241-259; J. Ellison, *Threatening Europe: Britain and the Creation of the European Community, 1955-58* (Basingstoke, 2000); N.Piers Ludlow, ‘A Waning Force: The Treasury and British European Policy, 1955-63’, *Contemporary British History*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (Winter., 2003), pp. 87-104.

State for Foreign Affairs in 1955, he replaced him with the more malleable Selwyn Lloyd as soon as he could. Macmillan also saw himself as an expert in foreign affairs and while Minister of Housing, Defence and Chancellor of the Exchequer, at various points, was in the habit of dictating and despatching memoranda on foreign policy, much to the annoyance of Eden. His cabinet changes reflected his desire to maintain control over government policy, particularly his reshuffle in July 1960, which has long been interpreted as a precursor to the first EEC bid, based on the number of noted 'Europeanists' he promoted.

This thesis has also attempted to deal with an issue that is problematic for historians of Britain's relationship with the European Communities. This is the problem of assigning categorical definitions to political figures based on retrospective analysis of their views on Europe. Despite the presence and usage of generic terms such as 'Euro sceptic' and 'Europhile' or similar, politicians rarely conform to one extreme or the other. There are exceptions such as Nigel Farage in the modern era or Lord Beaverbrook in the 1950s and 1960s, but, as the debates amongst historians of Harold Macmillan and Winston Churchill demonstrates, things that these men have said and done over the course of lengthy careers can be taken by either side of the debate and used to suggest the figure in question was of a similar mind-set to them. Macmillan was no more in favour of federalism than Eden had been, partly the basis for the views of historians who have questioned his reputation as a broadly 'pro-European' politician.¹³ This author would submit that this is entirely irrelevant. What

¹³ N. Ashton, *Kennedy, Macmillan and the Cold War: The Irony of Interdependence* (Basingstoke, 2002); D. Carlton, *Anthony Eden: A Biography* (London, 1981); R.P.T. Davenport-Hines, *The Macmillans* (London, 1993).

made Macmillan's accession at the expense of Eden and Butler significant to the development of British policy was the way he viewed 'Europe' as an issue compared to his colleagues, and the ability he had to adapt his personal views when he deemed it necessary. Butler was sceptical in both the modern and contemporary sense about the value to Britain of membership of a united Europe and it is notable that his memoirs and the biographies that exist about his life make little to no mention of 'Europe'.¹⁴ In a sense he was similar to Eden in that both men would deal with 'Europe' as and when it presented a specific issue to be dealt with. At other times they appeared to have no interest in it at all.

Macmillan was different. His views on specific aspects of European integration were similar to Eden's, but unlike his colleagues 'Europe' was an issue that occupied his thoughts whether it was a political priority for the government or not. The overall idea of uniting a continent previously divided by ideology and riven by warfare was the sort of high political scheme that appealed to him and as has been stated, he would try to change government policy on the matter even when it did not directly concern his ministerial responsibilities. Modern historians may disagree as to the extent of his support for an integrated Europe, but this does to a certain extent rely on modern interpretations and the application of flawed, generalized definitions of what it means to be 'Europeanist'. Macmillan's contemporaries certainly saw him as a European. Indeed, Butler predicted that Macmillan becoming Prime Minister would

¹⁴ R. Butler, *The Art of the Possible* (1971); R. Butler, *The Art of Memory: Friends in Perspective* (London, 1982).

lead to Europe assuming a greater importance as his colleague was determined to take Britain into it.¹⁵

A third area of broad focus in this work was the extent to which the policies Macmillan, De Gaulle and Heath pursued were driven by their personal views on European integration. To an extent this is something that will almost always be impossible to state with any certainty, particularly in the case of Heath and De Gaulle whose papers are at the time of writing inaccessible to researchers. Moreover, even Macmillan whose diaries have been published in edited form by Peter Catterall did not make clear-cut statements as to why he made the decisions he did.¹⁶ What we can do as researchers is examine those decisions and try to apply them to the known views. Heath is perhaps the simplest here because the policies he pursued in office were in line with the Europeanist views for which he is best known. He believed that a united Europe was in the best interests of all the European nations including Britain and although his most famous act was taking Britain into the EEC, this author would suggest that the best example of his actions being dictated by his views was his support for Harold Wilson's ill-fated membership in 1967. Heath did not believe the bid would work as it lacked credibility, but, despite his role as Leader of the Opposition, he supported the Government's attempt on the basis that EEC membership was in Britain's interest whoever took it in.¹⁷

¹⁵ Lord Butler, *The Art of Memory: Friends in Perspective* (London, 1982), p. 101

¹⁶ P. Catterall (Ed.), *The Macmillan Diaries Vol. I: The Cabinet Years 1950-1957* (Macmillan, 2003); P. Catterall (Ed.), *The Macmillan Diaries Vol. II: Prime Minister and After 1957-1966* (Macmillan, 2011).

¹⁷ P. Ziegler, *Edward Heath: The Authorised Biography* (London, 2010), p. 191.

Macmillan, as appears to be the case with every facet of his life and premiership, is rather more complicated.¹⁸ In 1951 he wrote Churchill a lengthy memorandum in which he urged the new Conservative government to be more positive towards Europe than the previous Labour administration had been. His references to Europe assumed that it was an issue that the Conservatives could unite behind in contrast to the policies of the Socialists, which suggested a certain degree of party-political calculation. However, in 1952 he joined with pro-European Tories including David Maxwell-Fyfe and urged Churchill and Eden again to adopt a more pro-European stance.¹⁹ Once he became Prime Minister it is this author's argument that Macmillan's personal views on Europe influenced his policies even if they were not solely responsible for them. His attempts to create an alternative to the EEC and then subsume it within a wider free trade area both fitted in with his preference for a confederal approach to European integration whereas his decision that Britain would seek membership of the EEC, the federal nature of which he disliked, strongly suggests more pragmatic than conviction based motives. Overall it is fair to say that even though he disliked federalism, his pragmatic approach to politics and the fact that European integration as an ideal and a concept appealed to him sufficiently to enable him to take a decision at odds with one aspect of his personal views.

This thesis had two specific aims: firstly to correct what this author sees as a historiographical imbalance that has seen Suez and its influence on Europe

¹⁸ M. Francis, 'Tears, Tantrums, and Bared Teeth: The Emotional Economy of Three Conservative Prime Ministers, 1951-1963', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (Jul., 2002), pp. 354-387.

¹⁹ J.W. Young, 'Churchill's 'No' to Europe: The 'Rejection' of European Union by Churchill's Post-War Government, 1951-1952', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Dec., 1985), p. 923.

diminished, dismissed or insufficiently considered; secondly to provide a new interpretation that recognises the contribution that Suez made to British and French policy re-evaluations towards membership of the European Communities. Suez was one of many events in the post-war era that played a role here including the decisions by Britain and France to begin to divest themselves of their empires, the failure of Macmillan's four-power summit in May 1960, and of course the wider context of the Cold War. However, this thesis has attempted to demonstrate that Suez not only influenced British and French policies, but was to an extent responsible for the existence of what is now the European Union.

One of the arguments that has been put forward by British historians is that Suez was such a disaster for Britain that its government embarked upon a period of reappraisal that led ultimately to the decision to accord greater significance to links with Europe. This argument has traditionally been somewhat under-referenced and so three research questions were asked: Did the crisis make clear to British policymakers the weakness of its world position? Did the government undertake a reappraisal? Was there any evidence of a shift in policy towards closer ties with Europe? The research undertaken for this project at the National Archives demonstrated that not only was the government acutely aware of the damage that Suez had done to its economic position as well as its relations with the United States and the Commonwealth, but that it actively began to review its policies.²⁰ Some of these reviews, such as the 'Defence Outline of Future Policy', predated Suez but others including an operational

²⁰ TNA CAB 134/4108, C.M. (56) 90 'Minutes of Cabinet Meeting' (28 Nov., 1956), p. 3; CAB 195/16, C.M. (57) 3 'Minutes of Cabinet Meeting' (8 Jan., 1957), p. 3; PREM 11/1138, 'Thoughts on the General Position After Suez' (28 Dec., 1956), pp. 1-5.

study by the Ministry of Defence, the broad 'Future Policy Study, 1960-1970' and two smaller foreign policy studies were conducted after it. In each case the influence of the crisis is clear, either by direct reference to it,²¹ or by the use of phrases such as 'recent events' or references to the need to ensure that military action is based on economic capabilities.²²

The most important issue was the third question, the extent to which closer ties with Europe were an outcome of this reappraisal. What is clear from the research material considered is that despite some advocacy of a 'turn to Europe' on the basis that neither the Commonwealth nor the US were reliable partners,²³ the initial priority of Macmillan's government was to repair the relationship with the US. However, despite the initial focus on the United States, there is ample evidence to support the claim that closer ties with Europe became British policy after and as a result of Suez. The French Ambassador, who witnessed the debate in parliament that led to the adoption of Plan G in late November 1956, attributed a shift in attitudes as much to

²¹ TNA DEFE 5/73, C.O.S. (57) 17 'Operational Requirements For Emergencies or Limited War in the Ministry of Defence: Note by Major-General W.G. Stirling' (11 Jan., 1957).

²² Cmnd. 124 'Defence Outline of Future Policy' (Apr., 1957); TNA CAB 129/100, C. (60) 35 'Future Policy Study, 1960-1970' (29 Feb., 1960), pp. 1-58; CAB 130/39, 'The Position of the United Kingdom in World Affairs: Report by Officials' (1 May., 1958); CAB 129/92, C. (58) 77 'The Effects of Anglo-American Interdependence on the Long-Term Interests of the United Kingdom' (10 Apr., 1958).

²³ 'The Year is 1957', *The Economist* (19 Jan., 1957), p. 180; CPA, CRD 2/34/2 'Conservative Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee: Record of Meeting' (14 Nov., 1956), p. 1; TNA CAB 129/84, C.P. (57) 6 "'The Grand Design" Co-operation with Western Europe: Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs' (4 Jan., 1957).

Suez as to party politics.²⁴ Moreover, the focus on the US meant in practice a greater care for Europe through Macmillan's policy of interdependence. Prior to Suez, British policymakers had been dismissive of the desire of the US that Britain participate actively and fully in attempts to further integrate Europe. The experience of facing US opposition and being forced to withdraw in humiliating circumstances meant that British leaders were now prepared to accede to US desires. Ultimately, one of the two most oft-cited reasons for Macmillan's EEC bid was a fear in London that the growing economic strength of the EEC would see it replace the UK as the European partner of choice for the US.²⁵ The shift in emphasis may not have been immediate, but it is clear that Suez contributed to the willingness of the British government to engage actively with the integration project.

As far as British policy re-evaluations towards membership of the European Communities is concerned, the most significant contribution of Suez was its role in the careers of two British Prime Ministers: Harold Macmillan and, later, Edward Heath. The Suez Crisis destroyed the political career of Anthony Eden and also halted that of R.A. Butler, who had been seen as the heir apparent for some time.²⁶ Indeed, given his age and the presence in Butler of the likely successor to Eden, it is fair to say that without Suez or at least a crisis of a similar nature, Macmillan would never have become Prime Minister. The crisis gave him a unique opportunity, as Butler was

²⁴ DDF 1956 Tome III, 'Chauvel to Pineau' (29 Nov., 1956), pp. 426-427. Translated by Dan Whyman; H. of C. Debs., Vol. 561, Cols. 34-164, 'European Trade Policy' (26 Nov., 1956).

²⁵ K. Steinnes, 'The European Challenge: Britain's EEC Application in 1961', *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (Mar., 1998), pp. 62-64; M. Camps, *Britain* (1964), p. 336; W. Kaiser, *Using Europe, Abusing the Europeans* (Basingstoke, 1996), pp. 122-123.

²⁶ 'The Heir Too Apparent', *The Economist* (22 Dec., 1956), p. 1034.

beginning to lose support within the Conservative Party – partly a reflection of his support for appeasement and a sense that he was too weak and indecisive to defend British interests.²⁷ Butler had been sceptical about Suez, a position known to the rank and file of the party but had done nothing to try to stop it. He was also in the unfortunate position of deputising for Eden when the decision to withdraw was made and announced, associating him with it.²⁸ It was easy for Macmillan to put Butler's appeasement record in the minds of the Conservative party in his speech to the 1922 Committee and it was reported that many made their decision for Macmillan based on that speech.²⁹

Despite his biographers disagreeing as to the extent of his 'Europeanism',³⁰ and remaining cognisant of the problems in assigning broad definitions to individuals based on modern understanding of the terms, this work took the view that Macmillan's accession to the Premiership was of fundamental importance to British policy on the European Communities. Even though he possessed the same distaste for federalism as his predecessors, Macmillan was seen by his contemporaries as a friend of Europe, a 'European' Conservative and there were certainly stark differences

²⁷ K. Kyle, *Suez: Britain's End of Empire in the Middle East* (London, 1991), p. 534.

²⁸ E. Pearce, 'Part One: Richard Austen Butler', in E. Pearce, *The Lost Leaders: The Best Prime Ministers we Never Had* (London, 1997), p. 90.

²⁹ D.R. Thorpe, *Supermac: The Life of Harold Macmillan* (London, 2011), pp. 354-355; P. Ziegler, *Edward Heath: The Authorised Biography* (London, 2010), p. 104 A. Howard, *Rab: The Life of R.A. Butler* (London, 1987), p. 241.

³⁰ D. Carlton, *Anthony Eden* (1981), p. 285; N.J. Ashton, *Kennedy, Macmillan and the Cold War: The Irony of Interdependence* (Basingstoke, 2002), p. 127; R.P.T. Davenport-Hines, *The Macmillans* (London, 1993), p. 281.

between him and Eden and Butler.³¹ Firstly Macmillan was much more pragmatic than Eden or Butler and was thus able to adapt when the occasion called for it. His decision that Britain should try to enter the EEC if acceptable terms of membership could be secured was an example of this. He had not altered his negative view of federalism but accepted that attempts to find another way had failed and so as it was in Britain's interest to join, he would attempt to facilitate it. While we remain aware of the risks of making counterfactual arguments, it is doubtful that Butler would have made such a decision. The second mark of distinction for Macmillan in comparison with his peers was that unlike either of them he actively thought about European unity believed in it passionately. Dislike of federalism merely meant he disagreed with one type of European unity; Butler, by contrast, had little interest beyond a feeling that EEC membership was incompatible with Britain's Commonwealth links and existing agricultural arrangements.³² Eden saw Europe as an issue of some importance and certainly felt that a united Europe was better than a divided one, but if it were not a pressing concern he was not inclined to devote much thought to it at all.³³

Macmillan's initial policy endeavours in Europe once he became Prime Minister were a continuation of his pre-Suez attempts to find a way to maintain British influence in Europe and also prevent the creation of a Common Market. In this way his policies were motivated more by his personal views as the proposed FTA was

³¹ 'The Year is 1957', *The Economist* (19 Jan., 1957), p. 180.

³² D. Gowland et al, *Britain and European Integration* (2010), p. 107; A. Howard, *Rab* (1987), pp. 295-296; A. Milward, *The United Kingdom and the European Community Volume I* (2002), p. 229.

³³ D. Carlton, *Anthony Eden: A Biography* (London, 1981), p. 272; V. Rothwell, *Anthony Eden: A Political Biography* (Manchester, 1992), p. 96.

more to his taste than the new EEC.³⁴ There was also a pragmatic element at work but as his views were in line with the policies he pursued it is reasonable to conclude that his views on European integration were at least as significant. The EEC bid appears to have been more a pragmatic consideration than one of conviction. Nevertheless, while the specific nature of the EEC was not to his taste, the broader scheme of creating a united Europe with Britain at its heart certainly was.

The second way in which this thesis saw Suez as influencing British and French policies in Europe concerned France. France had a similar experience to Suez as Britain in so far as it was humiliated by the outcome of the crisis, striking as it did at the heart of its identity and self-perception as a great power. What differed though was the way in which the French government reacted to it. The French government's principal motivation in attacking Egypt was its belief that Nasser was a source of financial and military support for the rebels in the ongoing Algerian uprising. The interception of an Egyptian cargo ship carrying weapons to Algeria was evidence of this,³⁵ and French leaders declared that Egypt was simply another theatre of the Algerian war.³⁶ The experience of being forced to withdraw, at a time when they considered themselves to be pushing the Egyptians back, made the French army more determined to win in Algeria, and also reduced their respect for and loyalty to the Fourth Republic.³⁷ Eighteen months later this was to result in an attempted *coup*

³⁴ HMD vol. II (29 Nov., 1961), pp. 429-431.

³⁵ A. Horne, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962* (Basingstoke, 1977), p. 158.

³⁶ M. Evans, *Algeria: France's Undeclared War* (Oxford, 2012), p. 183.

³⁷ J. Talbot, *The War Without a Name: France in Algeria 1954-1962* (London, 1981), pp. 71-72; A. Horne, *A Savage War* (1977), p. 164.

d'état by the forces in Algeria that ended when the President Michel Debre called General de Gaulle back to power as Prime Minister.³⁸ Through the Algerian crisis, Suez had played a role in de Gaulle's return.³⁹

De Gaulle had perhaps more impact on Anglo-European relations in the 1960s than any other man. Despite having a view of European integration, known as the *Union des patries*, that was close to the British preference,⁴⁰ and having a longstanding association with Harold Macmillan, he consistently prevented British aims from being realised.⁴¹ He vetoed the Maudling negotiations in 1958, and in trying to ensure that France was accorded equal weight in the western alliance, as well as attempting to obtain British help for the French nuclear deterrent, he presented Macmillan with an acute and ultimately irresolvable problem. Macmillan knew that he needed the General's goodwill and cooperation if Britain were to succeed in obtaining closer ties with Europe, and was inclined to assist him where possible. Unfortunately, he was constrained by the limits of Anglo-American nuclear cooperation and the fact that the US did not want Britain to have a more influential voice in NATO, let alone add France as well. In *ultima ratio* de Gaulle's greatest impact between 1958 and 1963 was his decision to veto Macmillan's EEC entry bid, ensuring that for the time being, Britain remained outside of a growing market with the potential to supplant it as the Americans' European partner of preference.

³⁸ J. Fenby, *The General: Charles De Gaulle and the France He Saved* (London, 2010), p. 397.

³⁹ P. Mangold, *The Almost Impossible Ally: Harold Macmillan and Charles De Gaulle* (London, 2006), pp. 170-171.

⁴⁰ HMD vol. II (29 Nov., 1961), pp. 429-431.

⁴¹ P. Mangold, *The Almost Impossible Ally* (2006), pp. 31-64.

The Suez Crisis had two additional impacts on France and French policy that translated into Anglo-European affairs. The threat by the Soviet Union to launch rocket attacks on London, Tel Aviv and Paris in November 1956 had a more long lasting effect than either Bulganin or Khrushchev realised. The threat was hollow, but coming at a time when France was being frustrated by the US and then forced to withdraw when its British ally gave in to American demands, the threat added to an existing feeling, dating back to Dien Bien Phu, that France could not rely on US support when its vital interests were at stake. During a meeting on the night of the 6th of November, Guy Mollet said as much to the German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer.⁴² France drew two conclusions from this: the first was that in order to retain any semblance of great power status it had to press ahead with the creation of the Common Market and ensure that a united Europe was led by France. The second was to that to be truly independent and have the ability to defend its interests in the face of superpower opposition, it must possess nuclear weapons of its own.

There has been disagreement among commentators as to the influence of Suez in the creation of the EEC. French historians such as Maurice Vaisse, Pierre Guillen, and Isobel Tombs, and German historians Clemens Wurm and Hans Jurgen Küsters have credited the crisis with removing French doubts about the Common Market thus ensuring its creation in 1957.⁴³ Others, most notably Alan Milward and Andrew

⁴² DDF, 1956 Vol. III, 'Conversation Between Adenauer and Mollet' (6 Nov., 1956), Translated by Dan Whyman; A. Gorst & L. Johnman, *The Suez Crisis* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 122-123.

⁴³ M. Vaisse, 'Post-Suez France' in WM. Roger Louis & R. Owen (eds), *Suez 1956: The Crisis and its Consequences* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 335-337; R. Tombs & I. Tombs, *That Sweet Enemy: Britain and*

Moravcsik, have dismissed the role of Suez as a coincidence, claiming that the accounts linking the crisis to the EEC are based solely on the recollection of a conversation in which Adenauer reportedly told Mollet that Europe would be his revenge for the US and British abandonment of France in Egypt,⁴⁴ and that a French official at the Spaak negotiations had told his British counterpart on 26th September that France had decided to sign the Treaties of Rome.⁴⁵

Although Milward and Moravcsik may have a point when they question the reliance on Pineau's recollection as the sole source for an argument, their own case is itself not borne out by the evidence. Robert Marjolin's memoirs state explicitly that Suez emboldened Mollet, who had hitherto hesitated to defy sceptical French opinion opposed to the Common Market, to bring his influence to bear and overcome it.⁴⁶ Moravcsik, somewhat grudgingly, has conceded that Suez gave Mollet an extra

France, the History of a Love-Hate Relationship (London, 2007), pp. 617-618; P. Guillen, 'Europe as a Cure of French Impotence? The Guy Mollet Government and Negotiation of the Treaties of Rome,' in E. Di Nolfo (Ed.), *Power in Europe? Volume II: Great Britain, France, Germany and Italy and the Origins of the EEC 1952-1957* (Berlin, 1992), pp. 505-516; C. Wurm, 'Two Paths to Europe: Great Britain and France from a Comparative Perspective,' in C. Wurm (Ed.), *Western Europe and Germany* (1995), p. 179; H.J. Küsters, 'West Germany's Foreign Policy in Western Europe 1949-58: The Art of the Possible' in C. Wurm (Ed.), *Western Europe and Germany: The Beginnings of European Integration 1945-1960* (Oxford, 1995), pp. 68-69.

⁴⁴ C. Pineau, *1956 Suez* (Paris, 1976), p. 191.

⁴⁵ A. Moravcsik, *The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht* (London, 1999), pp. 119-121; A. Milward, *The United Kingdom* (2002), p. 252.

⁴⁶ R. Marjolin, *Architect of European Unity: Memoirs 1911-1986* (Translated by William Hall) (London, 1989), p. 297.

weapon to use, and if Pineau's recollection could be questioned then so could Marjolin's. However, this is not the limit of the evidence. Contemporaneous media articles such as *The Economist's* 19 January 1957 piece on the Common Market, as well as the accounts of US observers, refer to the Common Market discussions hanging in the balance as late as October-November 1956.⁴⁷ Moreover, Spaak and the Belgian Chef du Cabinet, Robert Rothschild, both stated that the enthusiasm for the Common Market that France was displaying by mid-December 1956 amounted to a virtual about-face and was attributable to Suez.⁴⁸

The impact of the creation of the EEC on Britain's European policy was straightforward. It removed the basis for a long-held British belief that French opposition to supranational institutions would stymie the proposed Common Market, as it had the EDC. Furthermore, it forced British leaders to confront the possibility that if Britain were to remain excluded from this new body, its trading and diplomatic links outside of Europe would be at risk.⁴⁹ Maudling's negotiations and the creation of EFTA were attempts to deal with the EEC without having to accept supranational institutions, but ultimately they simply delayed the inevitable and Britain duly applied for membership. Even so, were it not for the Suez Crisis and its impact on French

⁴⁷ 'The Treaties of the Six: The Common Market Takes Shape', *The Economist* (19 Jan., 1957), p. 171; FRUS 1955-1957 Volume. IV, Doc. 195, 'Telegram from the United States Representative to the European Coal and Steel Community (Butterworth) to the Department of State' (25 Oct., 1956); Ibid, Doc. 197, 'Conant to the Department of State' (30 Oct., 1956).

⁴⁸ FRUS 1955-1957 Volume. IV, Doc. 206, 'Alger to Department of State' (19 Dec., 1956).

⁴⁹ TNA CAB 129/91, C. (58) 27 'European Free Trade Area: Memorandum by the Paymaster-General' (30 Jan., 1958), p. 3.

attitudes towards European integration, there might have been no EEC to cause Britain such problems in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

The final consideration is to return to the French nuclear deterrent. Best-known in historical terms for the period in which de Gaulle was in office, the French *Force De Dissuasion* emerged out of the Fourth Republic. French nuclear technology and the institutions that dealt with it were created in the late 1940s, and the French defeat in Indochina in 1954 has been mooted as a catalyst for the decision to develop nuclear power for military purposes.⁵⁰ However, there is a case to be made for the influence of Suez in this regard as well. The experience of being threatened by the Soviet Union with nuclear attack and the perception that the US would not defend France convinced French leaders that a French bomb was a matter of national necessity. Explorations had already begun in 1954 about developing one, but no official policy decision had been made. Mollet's government, which came to power in February 1956, was opposed to nuclear weapons, and there was a crucial difference between 1954 and 1956. In 1954 the US seemed to be unwilling to assist France by using nuclear weapons to support the garrison at Dien Bien Phu. Two years later, the perception was that the US nuclear umbrella, which had previously made the creation of a French deterrent unnecessary, was not reliable and France was vulnerable to nuclear attack.

On November 30th a protocol was signed establishing an atomic military program and work formally began on developing a French deterrent. The impact of

⁵⁰ L. Scheinman, *Atomic Energy Policy in France Under the Fourth Republic* (Princeton, 1965), pp. 105-106.

this deterrent was to add an extra dimension to Anglo-French negotiations on Europe. The aforementioned desire of de Gaulle to increase French influence extended to seeking the assistance of Britain in the development of the French deterrent, and Macmillan explored ways in which he could exchange that support for de Gaulle's help in Europe.⁵¹ As we have seen this was impossible, not just because the US would not have agreed to it, but because Macmillan was sceptical as to whether de Gaulle would deliver his promises once he had achieved what he wanted. Beyond this, Macmillan's decision to purchase Polaris from the US under the terms of the 1962 Nassau Agreement, gave the General the excuse he had been seeking to veto the British EEC bid.⁵²

The third way in which Suez was influential returns us to British politics and may also form something of a postscript for this work. One of Macmillan's Cabinet changes in July 1960 was to make Edward Heath the Lord Privy Seal with special responsibility for Europe. In the same way that Suez made it possible for Macmillan to become Prime Minister, it directly influenced the course of Heath's political career. His biographer John Campbell claimed that Suez made Ted Heath, and this was no exaggeration.⁵³ Chief Whips do not as a rule, go on to subsequently hold senior Cabinet office and Heath is the only such man since the Second World War to become Prime Minister.⁵⁴ Heath was the government Chief Whip during the Suez

⁵¹ HMD vol. II (29 Jan., 1961), p. 358.

⁵² J. Fenby, *The General* (2010), p. 488.

⁵³ J. Campbell, *Edward Heath: A Biography* (London, 1993), p. 97.

⁵⁴ S. Berlinski, T. Dewan & K. Dowding, 'The Length of Ministerial Tenure in the United Kingdom, 1945-97', *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (Apr., 2007), p. 259.

Crisis and while he had come to the attention of Churchill, Eden and Macmillan with his maiden speech in June 1950, he was largely unknown outside of Westminster.⁵⁵ His tenure as Chief Whip saw him deal with one of the most difficult and fraught situations in post-war British politics, trying to prevent not one, but two significant backbench rebellions over Suez from bringing down the government.⁵⁶ One contemporary article considered him to be one of the potential future leaders of the Conservative Party, based on his performance during the crisis.⁵⁷

Heath was without a doubt the most pro-European UK Prime Minister of the modern era. He used the occasion of his first speech in Parliament during the debate on the Schuman Plan to argue for British participation.⁵⁸ More recent biographers including Denis MacShane, who was an MP himself towards the end of Heath's life, saw him as a lifelong Europeanist. If the feature *Time* carried on him in July 1962 is any indicator, many contemporary observers saw him thus.⁵⁹ Whether or not he was a Europeanist from 1937 or 1961, his impact on Anglo-European relations cannot be doubted. Macmillan appointed him to lead the negotiations for his government's ill-fated EEC membership bid in August 1961 and even though he was unsuccessful, his efforts were recognised by the University of Aachen which awarded him the

⁵⁵ 'Our London Correspondence', *The Manchester Guardian* (12 Jan., 1957), p. 3.

⁵⁶ Earl of Kilmuir, *Political Adventure: The Memoirs of the Earl of Kilmuir* (London, 1967), p. 168; 'The Middle Ranks', *The Times* (17 Jan., 1957), p. 9.

⁵⁷ 'Notes of the Week: Revolt Dampened', *The Economist* (8 Dec., 1956), p. 857.

⁵⁸ H. of C. Debs, Vol. 476, Cols. 1907-2056, 'The Schuman Plan' (26 Jun., 1950).

⁵⁹ D. MacShane, *Heath* (London, 2006), p. 34; 'Common Market: Crossing the Channel', *Time* (13 Jul., 1962), p. 2.

International Charlemagne Prize, given to those who embody the hope for European integration.⁶⁰ More importantly, he had established Britain's intentions to become a member of the Common Market, and, in what this author sees as the most convincing evidence for his impact, General de Gaulle, who had so completely stymied the efforts of two of the most successful Prime Ministers of the post-war period (Harold Macmillan and Harold Wilson), predicted in August 1965 that a Conservative government led by Heath would enter the EEC.⁶¹ Seven years later, after establishing his and his country's credibility as a potential member of the European Communities, Heath proved the General right and took Britain into Europe.

As with Macmillan, it can be said that without the Suez Crisis Heath would most likely never have been in the position to have the impact on Anglo-European relations that he did. Even if we place greater emphasis on his being a *protégé* of Macmillan's and the beneficiary of Prime Ministerial patronage, we have already established that Suez was chiefly responsible for Macmillan's ability to provide said in the first place. Moreover, Heath was the only post-1945 Chief Whip to become Prime Minister, and one of only four Conservative Chief Whips to have held one of the Great Offices of State. Numerous articles have provided explanations as to why Chief Whips rarely achieve fame and high office,⁶² and the contemporary accounts that demonstrate his enhanced reputation and where it came from, make a compelling case for Suez being absolutely critical in Heath's rise to power.

⁶⁰ http://www.aachen.de/en/sb/pr_az/karls_pr/charlemagne_prize/index.html, accessed 18 Mar., 2013.

⁶¹ W. Rees-Mogg, 'Avec Heath a leur Tete', *Sunday Times* (1 Aug., 1965), p. 8.

⁶² 'Do Government Chief Whips Have an Afterlife?' <http://nottspolitics.org/2012/10/22/do-government-chief-whips-have-an-afterlife-2/> Accessed 1 March 2013.

Final Conclusions

In the next two years (2016 and 2017) Britain and Europe will mark the sixtieth anniversaries of the Suez Crisis, and then of the signing of the Treaties of Rome that created the European Communities. Although much scholarship to date has seemed to consider these two events as separate, having little or no relevance to each other, this thesis has demonstrated that they are, in fact, intrinsically linked. By showing British leaders that their pre-crisis perceptions of Britain's strength were erroneous, Suez set in motion a process of review that saw greater consideration given to closer ties with Europe. It ended the political career of Anthony Eden, halted that of Rab Butler and played a decisive role in the rise to power of Britain's two most pro-European Prime Ministers. Harold Macmillan moved his country towards the point where membership of the EEC was palatable, Edward Heath made British membership credible in Europe and in 1973 succeeded where Macmillan had failed, taking Britain into the Common Market.

Suez also influenced Britain's partner in Egypt. France, feeling betrayed and abandoned by its Anglo-American allies, responded by reversing its own hostility to supranationalism and signing the Treaties of Rome, and by officially launching a nuclear weapons programme. Furthermore, Suez made France even more determined to hold onto its position in Algeria, and in so doing, played a role in the return of General Charles de Gaulle. In this way Suez represents something of a paradox for Anglo-European relations. The event that did so much to make British membership of Europe a viable prospect was also the one that prevented that from happening for another sixteen years.

Although the twenty-first century question of Britain's relationship with 'Europe' can be vitally informed by these intertwined histories of imperial crisis and European union, and highlights just how interdependent the UK and the EEC had become, it also is important to consider the specific historical implications of the Suez Crisis and Europe. Britain has in the past been accused of being 'absent at the creation' and 'missing the boat'. The Suez Crisis helps to demonstrate the worldview that had to be altered before that could change – a more analytical and useful approach than this simple condemnation. By prioritising its Atlantic and Imperial links and so refusing to join the Six in creating the EEC, it lost the ability to shape its institutions and direction. The Suez Crisis demonstrated more clearly perhaps than anything else, the fact that after 1945 the era of European powers able to dominate the world was over. The new bipolar world order dominated by the superpowers made it imperative for any European power to accept that European colonialism was finished, *de facto* if not quite *de jure*, and that their future lay in an integrated European system.

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