

**Shaping the Future of the World:**  
**Eden, The Foreign Office and British Foreign Policy**  
**1941-1943**

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## Abstract

The Second World War has captured the interest of people around the world, and has fascinated generations of historians. Despite the time that has elapsed since the events, and the opening of the official papers in 1977, one thing remains the same, the under-examination of British foreign policy during the war. The history that has been written has struggled to break from the picture Churchill painted in '*The Second World War*', presenting the inevitability of the Anglo-American special relationship and minimising the important contributions of Eden and the Foreign Office.

In an exercise in anti-Whig history, this thesis attempts to right this historical wrong, and suggest that this was not the only outcome available to Britain as a result of the Second World War. By examining the Foreign Office records, it presents a different picture: that traditional British foreign policy was still going strong, and that the Foreign Office, with Eden at the helm, had its own vision for the post-war world. In this vision Britain would remain a great power with an independent foreign policy, and would be involved in a global post-war organisation designed to maintain European and World peace.

This work will examine the origins of this vision, and trace its development through the early years of the war, highlighting the plans that were brought forward and the efforts that were made to make this official policy. It will also assess the reasons for the apparent failure of this policy, and offer suggestions of possible outcomes for Britain had it been implemented. This vision fundamentally differed from Churchill's, but ultimately could have supplemented it, had the great man allowed it to do so.

## Contents

Title Page	Page 1
Abstract	Page 2
Contents	Page 3
Acknowledgements	Page 4
List of Abbreviations	Page 5
1) Introduction	Page 6
2) Background	Page 12
3) A Man Going Home	Page 25
4) 'An Enemy under a Very Thin Disguise'	Page 40
5) An Eventful Winter	Page 67
6) Between a Rock and a Hard Place	Page 84
7) Two Steps Back, One Step Forward	Page 105
8) Towards a Foreign Policy	Page 123
9) Shaping the Future of the World	Page 160
10) The Future Remains Elusive	Page 194
11) The Foreign Office's Finest Hour?	Page 223
12) Conclusion	Page 261
List of Principal Characters	Page 268
Bibliography	Page 274

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### **Abbreviations**

The following abbreviations have been used throughout the text and footnotes.

CAB:	Cabinet Papers
CCA:	Churchill College Archive Centre, Cambridge
FCNL:	French Committee of National Liberation (also French National Committee of Liberation, National Committee for Liberation of France)
FNC:	French National Committee (also Free French National Committee)
FO:	Foreign Office / Foreign Office Papers
PREM:	Prime Ministers Papers
TNA:	The National Archives, Kew Gardens, London

## **1) Introduction**

In 2002 Winston Churchill was voted the greatest Briton by a nationwide poll conducted by the BBC,<sup>1</sup> mainly because of his efforts during the First, but more noticeably the Second World War. People around the world find a particular interest in both Churchill and the Second World War, and both topics have been and continue to be subject to scholarship by historians and academics from other fields. This is, in no small part, down to the man himself. Churchill was not only responsible for directing the British war effort, creating and enacting policy; delivering speeches, many of which are still famous today; leading the country to victory; but also for writing and publishing that history afterwards. Consequently, post-war historical study centred on the myths, legends and facts laid down in Churchill's *'The Second World War'*, partly due to the compelling nature of the work, and partly because at the time it was one of the only places where publication of official documents could be found. The opening of the papers for the Second World War period in 1977 paved the way for a great mass of detailed studies, provoking much debate on many topics. But when it came to the study of British foreign policy during the Second World War, the Churchillian line remained more or less intact.

That this should have been a less popular area of historical debate is possibly no surprise if the BBC is to be believed, as whilst Churchill was not the only Prime Minister on the list, Anthony Eden, a famous Prime Minister but more importantly one of Britain's premier Foreign Secretaries, did not make the top 100 greatest Britons shortlist, nor did any other Foreign Secretary.<sup>2</sup> Many historical works, as shall be examined later, focus on the foreign policy of Churchill rather than that of the Foreign Office and, therefore, look to explain the origins and development of the 'special relationship', emphasise the importance of the American alliance for Britain's war effort, and highlight Britain's determined focus on winning the war

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/parliamentary-archives/archives-highlights/archives-churchill/>.

<sup>2</sup> [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/tv\\_and\\_radio/2208671.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/tv_and_radio/2208671.stm).

at all costs. Significant emphasis is also placed on Anglo-German relations, especially the effort to explain appeasement; and on studying the development of a world divided by the Cold War. Despite its role in the build up to the war, its involvement for two years as a neutral power and its active involvement for four years as an ally of Britain, there have been comparatively few detailed works examining the relationship between Britain and the Soviet Union. More has been written about the relations between Britain and France, unsurprisingly as they were allies throughout the war and had been co-operating together in the build up to the war. There is, however, still relatively little on the particular area to be examined by this thesis, the British foreign policy that never was. This was the policy that came to be favoured by Eden and the Foreign Office, centring on post-war planning, particularly regarding Europe, but also on a global scale, and the conflict that arose between this policy, and the pro-American policy of Churchill. It aims to reconstruct Eden and the Foreign Office's view of planning for the post-war world, and examine how coherent this vision was. Due to the limitations placed upon this thesis, it is impossible to examine this in the entire scope of British foreign policy, so it will concentrate on two of the most important European Powers with whom Britain had to deal during this period, the Soviet Union and France, as well as looking at the influence that the United States had on foreign policy. This should allow an examination of whether the Foreign Office did have a specific policy based around the idea of post-war planning, and how successful this policy was. Likewise, the wording restriction prevents a study of the entire war period, so this work will focus on the period from Eden's return to the Tehran Conference, as the decisions of Tehran meant that, for most of 1944, military thinking and preparation for Overlord was the main focus of British policy. Churchill's version of events cannot be ignored, but this study hopes to show, through detailed use of the archives and other primary and secondary sources, the existence of an alternative foreign policy, and examine why this never came to fruition - and the potential results if it had.

The study will begin in chapter two by examining what the historiography has to say on this topic to show where this thesis fits, and look at the background and events in the first two years of the war so that any change in policy coming from Eden's return to the Foreign Office can be set against the existing policy direction. Of most use here will be biographies of Eden and Halifax, memoirs of contemporaries which contain thoughts about Eden's appointment, as well as more general works on the Second World War which will provide the background to the period under investigation. Excavating from the archives a foreign policy direction favoured by Eden, the thesis will move on to examine how this developed through the course of the war as events unfolded, and will follow a generally chronological structure. That is not to say that it was Eden alone who was responsible for formulating schemes and policy ideas, but that his experience and differing outlook to Halifax helped the Foreign Office view things with a different perspective, which could have yielded different results. Eden's job, after all, was to be the Foreign Office representative in Cabinet, as well as being its chief diplomat and senior manager, so it would be difficult to suggest that, even with his high work rate and undisputed talents, he could have regularly drawn up new policy in addition to his other responsibilities. Chapters three and four will examine the immediate and longer term impacts of Eden's arrival at the Foreign Office, and this is where more of the archival evidence will be brought in, particularly the Foreign Office papers and Eden's own correspondence to examine what he thought of the previous policies, and what his priorities should be upon taking the Office.

The main task of this thesis will be to examine, through detailed use of the archival sources, particularly the Foreign Office records, what was happening in the Foreign Office during this period, and whether or not Eden and his Department actually had a clear policy that they were attempting to follow. Chapters five through seven take up this challenge, looking particularly at the key issues of the Soviet Frontier demands and the means by which these can be integrated with Britain's own war aims, and the necessity to maintain and foster a



French resistance movement which often caused more contention than assistance to the allied cause. Again the official documents found in the Foreign Office papers at the National Archives will be crucial to explain the actual thinking of Eden and his contemporaries, particularly the many folders in FO 371 that cover these particular topics,<sup>3</sup> but memoirs and diaries will also be useful to show how personal and political opinions may have differed. Some of the secondary works, such as Barkers *'Churchill and Eden at War'* will be particularly useful here as they discuss how some of the Foreign Office aims started to link together with the day to day management of Anglo-French and Anglo-Soviet relations. Once their policy is discovered, it will be important to see exactly what this policy was. There is plenty of evidence supporting Churchill's policy, which favoured America and focussed on winning the war rather than planning for the future. One famous example of this was his quote that "we shall not overlook Mrs Glass's Cookery Book recipe for Jugged Hare – 'first catch your hare'".<sup>4</sup> There is, however, relatively little historical discussion of any other strands of foreign policy that may have been at play, except when alternate policy ideas caused friction in the Churchill-Eden relationship. In particular, a foreign policy which focussed on the need to prepare for the post-war world during the war, and involved collaboration in a European or World organisation would be hard to pick out of the existing historiography. It will be a key task of this thesis to examine whether or not this was actually the policy of the Foreign Office, or whether it was just an idealist side project that they worked on whilst supporting Churchill in his military and political quest.

If it was the case that this was a genuine foreign policy initiative, and they were actually working towards post-war European or Worldwide co-operation then it will be crucial to examine and analyse speeches, initiatives and any policies they put forward as the war progressed, regardless of their implementation, to fully understand what they were trying to achieve. Whilst examining these it will

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<sup>3</sup> For example TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/32876-32879 on Anglo Soviet relations and FO 371/31872, FO 371/31897 and FO 371/31940 on the Free French.

<sup>4</sup> TNA, Prime Ministers Papers, PREM 4/100, Churchill's minute to Eden on the 'Four Power Plan', 18 October 1942.

be important to ignore the overall success of the individual policies and look at the big picture of what was trying to be achieved. The chronological structure is useful here, as it reduces the risk of drawing a line backwards to events during the war from events that came later, which might give events more or less significance than they may actually have had at the time. Chapters' eight to eleven take up this task, and see significant discussion of detailed policy work by the Foreign Office that is contained in the archives, though not really discussed in the historiography. The Foreign Office files are incredibly illuminating here, as there are a large number of folders and files that examine and consider post-war plans, be they military or political, sensible or spurious, which help form what eventually developed as the Foreign Office policy.<sup>5</sup> Here the secondary work becomes less helpful, as many of these plans are not discussed, but memoirs and diaries, particularly those of Gladwyn Jebb and the edited volume on Charles Webster, do offer assessments of some of them, and it is always illuminating to see the thoughts of contemporaries, and the thinking of the men who wrote a good deal of these papers.

Some references to events after the war will be used occasionally to demonstrate where policy ideas that were not implemented could have provided different results to those that were. In works that do mention some sort of European foreign policy, there is variation as to when this comes about, so this structure will also be useful in determining timeframes and also what Eden and the Foreign Office were doing in the meantime.

It will also be interesting, as the thesis develops, to establish how far such a policy was a result of internal ideas and decisions, or whether it was one that was forced on the Foreign Office by military circumstances or political decisions in other fields or even other countries. Was it, for example, a result of internal prejudice towards the United States that the Foreign Office sought to work in a broader framework than Churchill envisaged, or was it because Churchill crowded them out of the American relations that they had to opt for this course? Arising from this is a question about the ideological impetus for such a policy, and the

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<sup>5</sup> For example TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/35339-35341 which contain many proposals for a European post-war settlement submitted to the Foreign Office in early 1943

thesis will consider whether or not this policy came about due to an ideological leaning towards the Soviet Union within the Foreign Office, or whether they were acting along the lines of realpolitik, and this just happened to coincide with Soviet demands, such as over the 1941 Frontiers.

If there is no evidence of such a policy, or insufficient evidence to claim that what the Foreign Office was working on was a cohesive vision or idea, then this will lend substance to Churchill's view of the war, and an argument as to why historians tend to focus more on Churchill. To not undertake this examination, and to assume that because Churchill's vision came to pass that is what is important to study, does the history of the war, and particularly those involved in its foreign policy aspect, a great disservice.

The final task will be to consider, depending on the results of this examination, what was achieved. Did efforts by Eden and the Foreign Office actually result in political progress with this policy, did it influence decisions made elsewhere, and did it have any lasting results? This will require investigation of events both within and outside the time period of this thesis, and some counterfactual discussion, but these will be required to demonstrate whether any lasting impact can be seen from the ideas put forward. This will also show whether any outcomes other than the 'special relationship' would have been possible for Britain as a result of this foreign policy.

## 2) Background

There appears to be little direct scholarship that examines this particular topic, so in order to study the historiography one must look at the historiography of the Second World War in general, and locate those works that reference this subject, most notably those specific to the study of Eden. Most of the secondary literature on the Second World War, and especially that concerning foreign policy, is very much dominated by Churchill. He was the leader who brought Britain through the Second World War as one of the victorious allies, and in hindsight, his views, or some of them at least, can certainly be seen to be responsible for this. However, the light shone on British foreign policy is very much pointed towards America, and this phenomenon is generally accredited to Churchill. For the other powers involved in the defeat of Germany, and certainly the Soviet Union, which was arguably more significant in Europe than America, the limelight was very much shining the other way. Both the Soviet Union and France can be overlooked when examining the struggle between Britain and Germany, though France receives a little more attention due to the conflicts between Churchill and de Gaulle, and that it started the war fighting against Germany. Both these countries played a role in the British war effort, whether directly and intentionally or indirectly and unintentionally, yet the relationships between them and Britain can get neglected in comparison to America. Their importance becomes apparent, however, when studying the man who was Foreign Secretary for much of the war, Anthony Eden. As will be seen his views on foreign policy differed from Churchill's, and were often based more on "stark realism"<sup>1</sup> and perspective than Churchill's emotional and whimsical views, though it must be noted that Eden did occasionally get "in rather a flap".<sup>2</sup> What remains to be seen is whether Eden's particular brand of foreign policy came to anything. The lack of historical discussion suggests results were limited.

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<sup>1</sup> Carlton, D. *Anthony Eden, A Biography*, (London, 1981), p. 192.

<sup>2</sup> Dilks, D [Ed.]. *The Diaries of Alexander Cadogan*, (London, 1971), 31 December 1940, p. 345.

Based on his significant experience in European diplomacy, and his former responsibility for the League of Nations, it is unsurprising that Eden would have looked at policy with a view towards post-war co-operation between powers. The secondary work supports this, though not always in great detail. There are many references to Eden and 'post-war planning' or 'post war co-operation', but these are not always well explained. Elisabeth Barker gives the clearest account of Eden's foreign policy during the war, and in her book *'Churchill and Eden at War'* the idea of Eden following a post-war plan can be traced throughout the war, though Barker herself provides no detailed analysis. She does, however, assert that as early as 1942 Eden was formulating ideas that could help shape post-war Europe and the peace. The example she cites is the Four Power Plan, proposed by Eden in autumn 1942, which would allow "for joint responsibility by the US, Britain, the Soviet Union and China in keeping peace".<sup>3</sup> He argued that "My design is to have a basis of a foreign policy now, which policy, if the basis is sound today, should carry us over into the peace".<sup>4</sup> This was a sensible strategy, as it would have ensured the three main powers, along with China, were involved and cooperating from an early opportunity, giving time for relations to develop, and alleviating fears that any one power was being left out (most notably the Soviet Union). This plan receives limited coverage in the historiography, perhaps a suggestion of its failure. It was important, however, as it shows Eden's long-term foreign policy goals from an early date and received Cabinet approval. Conversely, David Carlton's biography suggests that it was 1943 before Eden began exploring this particular policy. He argues that until 1943 Eden had tried to delay any idea of a deal with the Soviets out of fear of the frontier question. Victor Rothwell goes further, and suggests that "he did have much to contribute on some of the issues which were to become more important ... during 1944, including post-war arrangements in east and central Europe; policy in Italy ... the future of Germany; and, last but not least, the future of France".<sup>5</sup> Given the disparity in the

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<sup>3</sup> Barker, E. *Churchill and Eden at War*, (London, 1978), p. 211.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p. 211.

<sup>5</sup> Rothwell, V. *Anthony Eden: A Political Biography, 1931-57*, (Manchester, 1992), pp. 70-71.

biographies of Eden on this topic there appears room for this study to undertake further examination and see if the archival sources can provide a firmer understanding of Eden's policy and its origins.

Virtually all sources record Eden's advocacy of recognising the 1941 Soviet Frontiers at the start of 1942, though they generally suggest this was on the grounds of stark realism as opposed to being part of Eden's long-term European plan. Carlton and John Charmley hint that this could be with the post-war landscape of Europe in mind, but only in the context of Eden's memorandum to the Cabinet which stated that, on the assumption Germany is defeated, "there will be no counterweight to Russia in Europe ... Russia's position on the European continent will be unassailable".<sup>6</sup> This is one of the points which may well be influenced by Churchill's legacy, as he rejected Eden's pleas for accepting the frontiers at this stage in favour of the ideals of the Atlantic Charter. If looked at from Churchill's perspective with his developing American friendship, this was a good choice to make; however, if looked at differently, it clearly hampered Anglo-Soviet relations, and thus Eden's attempts to create greater European understanding and co-operation. Churchill's works emphasise the importance of America, and this particular issue is a good example. He goes to great lengths in *'The Grand Alliance'*, to show how firmly he impressed upon Eden his support for America, publishing a minute to Eden that told him point blank that nothing was of more importance than "those principles of freedom and democracy set forth in the Atlantic Charter".<sup>7</sup> Barker, Charmley, and Carlton argue that from 1943 Eden's policy had at least some grounding in an idea about the structure of post-war Europe, and the European Advisory Commission can be seen as an example. Barker also notes that some of Eden's ideas for post-war Europe became part of the set up of the United Nations. There is scope here to examine in more detail why Eden urged the acceptance of the Soviet frontiers when he did, and why he felt that post-war collaboration with the Soviet Union was desirable as far as British

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<sup>6</sup> Carlton, *Eden*, pp. 192-3 and Charmley, J. *Churchill: The End of Glory: A Political Biography*, (London, 1995), p. 485.

<sup>7</sup> Churchill, W.S. *The Second World War, Volume III: The Grand Alliance*, (London, 1985), p. 616.

interests were concerned. Was this in line with an idea of a post war European policy, or was there something else underlying the actions of Eden and the Foreign Office. Martin Folly's *'Churchill, Whitehall and the Soviet Union, 1940-45'* is one of the few works that actually examines in detail the Anglo-Soviet relationship during the war, and his study suggests that there was a genuine idea amongst British Officials, made from observation and debate, that the Soviet Union would continue to co-operate with the Western powers after the war.

The most commonly suggested start point for a European based post war policy was after Eden's visit to Washington in March 1943, though this appears to be based on distrust of America, rather than a sudden change to being pro-Soviet or pro-European. The suggestion is that he was unconvinced of American sincerity, and thus made it the role of the Foreign Office to effectively plan against Churchill for a European post-war system which would not be influenced by the Americans. As David Dutton remarked in his biography, Eden was very worried about "placing Britain's eggs in a single [American] basket", and he "believed that an Atlantic partnership would need to be balanced by her [Britain's] position in Western Europe, particularly in association with a revived France, and, if possible, by continuing friendship with Russia".<sup>8</sup> Thus we can see the idea of balancing both sides, so that if things didn't go to plan with the American alliance, there would still be something left for Britain. The idea of Eden being wary of America is one that comes across in many of the works, although they differ on the degree. Charmley argues in *'Churchill: The End of Glory'*, that Eden saw the American Alliance as potentially ruinous to Britain, suggesting it was "endangering the whole future of Anglo-French relations - and with it any hope of a British foreign policy independent of America".<sup>9</sup> Here we clearly see Eden's hope lay firstly in Europe, working with France particularly to create a post-war European system that would ensure peace, and secondly the desire for the British to act independently of the Americans. Barker, however, argues that his anti-American

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<sup>8</sup> Dutton, D. *Anthony Eden: A Life and Reputation*, (London, 1997), p. 146.

<sup>9</sup> Charmley, *End of Glory*, p. 544.

attitude was not as strong as Oliver Harvey's, for example, and that it was also pragmatic. In October 1943, for instance, she noted his willingness to accept an American compromise proposal over the administration of France after liberation as he saw it as the Americans moving in the right direction.<sup>10</sup> Some allowance must also be made for Eden here, as he was the head of the Foreign Office, which was quite strongly anti-American, and feared the spread of American influence in Europe. He thus had to balance any particular leaning he had with those of his Department. He also had Harvey as his Private Secretary, who was pro-Soviet and anti-American, which may well have influenced his views. How far this affected Eden is hard to gauge, but it is clear that there was some anti-American sentiment to Eden's policy, especially around Tehran with the American refusal to treat Britain as an equal, which confirmed his desire for a pro-European policy.

One thing evident in the secondary sources is the idea that Eden may have been following a pro-European policy because of his sympathy towards the Soviet Union. In 1935 he was the first British statesman to meet the Soviet Dictator, Joseph Stalin, a meeting which left both men with good impressions of the other. He had also volunteered his services in 1939 during the attempts to gain an alliance with the Soviet Union, and despite support from his predecessor, Lord Halifax, was turned down by the Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain. Whilst outside the Foreign Office he was in contact with the Soviet Ambassador, Ivan Maisky, and was generally in favour of an alliance with Stalin. Once back at the Foreign Office, Sir Stafford Cripps, the British Ambassador in Moscow, noted that Eden made it one of his main priorities to improve relations with the Soviet Union. Harvey noted in his diary in December 1941 "that A.E. is the one man in England who is ready to put their [Russia's] case"<sup>11</sup> and this can be seen throughout the war. There was concern that Harvey could have influenced Eden, as Carlton illustrated with a quote from the Permanent Under Secretary Sir Alexander

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<sup>10</sup> Barker, *Churchill and Eden*, p. 101.

<sup>11</sup> Harvey, J [Ed.]. *The War Diaries of Oliver Harvey, 1941-1945*, (London, 1978), 18 December 1941, p. 77.



Cadogan's diary from 23 May 1942: "I *think* he'll be all right. But he is subject to temptation and that ass Harvey's advice".<sup>12</sup> In fact, Harvey's influence on Eden was often limited, and Cadogan had commented shortly after Eden's appointment that he was "glad to find A. not 'ideological' and quite alive to uselessness of expecting anything"<sup>13</sup> from Russia. It is interesting, however, that both Carlton and Charmley suggest that in their reactions to the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union, Churchill was far more exuberant and enthusiastic than Eden initially, and that Eden and the Dominions Secretary, Viscount Cranborne, had to remind Churchill that "half the country" regarded the Soviet Union as being "politically ... as bad as Germany", and they took the "Tory standpoint" that aid should be "purely military".<sup>14</sup> Churchill's interest soon waned, partly because, contrary to his and the military's expectations, the Soviet Union was not quickly defeated;<sup>15</sup> partly because collaboration with Russia brought up the topic of war aims and post-war planning, something Churchill wanted to avoid; and partly because he was reluctant to treat the Soviet Union as an equal partner, as evidenced by his veto of Eden's proposed visit to Moscow early that year on the grounds of Eden's safety, a concern that he had never shown to any of Chamberlain's visits to Hitler.<sup>16</sup> A passage in Dutton's biography is, however, very revealing. He noted that "After a period when the scope for diplomatic initiative had been limited, after the setback of his two-month odyssey to the Middle East and in the context of an administration in which Churchill would always reserve for himself some of the main components of British foreign policy, relations with the Soviet Union came to assume a central importance for Eden, particularly after the Nazi invasion of June 1941. Diplomacy towards a country which was certain to emerge - assuming an Allied victory - as one of the great powers of the post-war world became a key issue for Eden - *his* preserve in a way that Anglo-American relations could never be".<sup>17</sup> This suggests, with some accuracy, that Eden focussed on the development of Anglo-Soviet

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<sup>12</sup> Carlton, *Eden*, p. 198.

<sup>13</sup> Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 6 January 1941, p. 347.

<sup>14</sup> Charmley, *End of Glory*, pp. 455-6.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, p. 456 and Carlton, D. *Churchill and the Soviet Union*, (Manchester, 2000), p. 84.

<sup>16</sup> Barker, *Churchill and Eden*, p. 226.

<sup>17</sup> Dutton, *Eden*, p. 181.

relations as they were the only other major power he could court. His determination to do so, however, resulted in some historians levelling the charge of appeasement against him.<sup>18</sup> Churchill held the American card for himself, so it was left to Eden and the Foreign Office to deal with Russia. This also meant dealing with the questions of war aims, the immediate effects on Europe and post-war planning by default, so it is logical that they would try and develop policy that took these into account. Whether it was because of Russia that they came up with this policy, or because of this policy line that Eden looked favourably on Russia is hard to determine, but the fact Churchill was occupied with America meant, in theory at least, that Eden could focus on this policy without American influence. Although some in the Foreign Office, mainly personified by Harvey, had an ideological leaning towards the Soviet Union, the department as a whole was more balanced, and so it is unlikely, especially given the strength of Churchill in Cabinet, that a policy dictated by ideology would have arisen or made any progress. Indeed, the closest thing to an ideology that comes across from the Foreign Office is anti-Americanism, and this is something that shall be examined in greater detail as the thesis progresses.

Conversely, it could have been a sign of arrogance that Eden wanted a preserve of his own. If Churchill's was to be the USA, the next best thing was the USSR. Gabriel Gorodetsky, in *'Grand Delusions'*, implied that Eden was bordering on arrogance with his views towards Anglo-Soviet relations when he became Foreign Secretary, suggesting that he seemed "to believe naively that the mere announcement of his appointment would lead to an improvement in relations".<sup>19</sup> Thus the idea that this came across in foreign policy is one that certainly has some standing. It is often mentioned that Eden was looking for recognition, and in a way that is no major issue, but perhaps he also believed some of the rhetoric of being "a man going home".<sup>20</sup> He himself noted in his papers that "the Russians profess to

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, p. 214.

<sup>19</sup> Gorodetsky, G. *Grand Delusion, Stalin and the German Invasion of Russia*, (London, 1999), p. 93.

<sup>20</sup> Carlton, *Eden*, p. 170, and Eden, A. *The Eden Memoirs: The Reckoning*, (London, 1965), p. 183.

regard me as one who has no prejudice against them".<sup>21</sup> It is undeniable that ego and vanity played their part in Eden's views, but so too, it will be argued, did a genuine vision about what sort of post-war settlement would suit Britain best.

The hand which Eden had to play was heavily influenced by the dire situation he inherited in December 1940. The relationship with France, Britain's great ally, had gone from high hopes to enmity. During the first year of the war tensions grew between the two, particularly after the Soviet invasion of Finland on 30 November 1939.<sup>22</sup> Initial reactions were muted, but the spirited Finnish resistance led to a change of heart and significant pressure from the French required action to be taken. The fall of Prime Minister Edouard Daladier in March 1940<sup>23</sup> accentuated this pressure, and consequently the ill-fated Narvik campaign was planned. This pressure irritated many in Britain, with Cadogan commenting with annoyance that "They [France] talk about 'vigorous prosecution of the war', which means that *we* should do it, provided that we remove the war as far as possible from France!".<sup>24</sup> Unfortunately for the French, war soon came to them, and by 22 June an armistice had been signed between the new French Government under Marshall Philippe Pétain<sup>25</sup> and Germany, and by 25 June Hitler was boasting that "The war in the West is ended".<sup>26</sup> The armistice agreement left much of French territory being ruled by this newly formed Vichy regime. Whilst not entirely loyal to Germany, it was often thought to have, as Churchill put it, "effectively placed its every resource at the disposal of the enemy".<sup>27</sup> Churchill had backed the rebel Free French General Charles de Gaulle, so there existed the germ of a possible democratic restoration should France be liberated, but events were

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<sup>21</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/24B, Eden to Cripps, 17 January 1941.

<sup>22</sup> Cosgrave, P. *Churchill at War, Volume I: Alone 1939-40*, (London, 1974), p. 101.

<sup>23</sup> Churchill, W.S. *The Second World War, Volume I: The Gathering Storm*, (London, 1985), p. 518.

<sup>24</sup> Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 1 April 1940, p. 267. [*italics and ! in original*]

<sup>25</sup> The Reynaud Government had been overthrown on 16 June and replaced by a Government under Marshall Pétain, whose purpose was to conclude an armistice with Germany.

<sup>26</sup> Eade, C [Ed.]. *The Collected Works of Sir Winston Churchill: Centenary Limited Edition, Volume XIX: The War Speeches, Volume One, May 1938-June 1941*, (London, 1975), p. 218, editor's introduction to 'The Fall of France' speech.

<sup>27</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/13/1, Churchill's Minute to the Chiefs of Staff on The Mediterranean, 15 October 1940.

proving him to be a difficult protégé. There is no room to look in detail at the wider aspects of this division on the French colonial possessions, or its impact on the support or otherwise for the allied cause in different parts of the French Empire, but this is covered in great detail by Martin Thomas in his book *'The French empire at war, 1940-45'*.<sup>28</sup> The nature of post-war France would be critical to British and European security; but in 1941, it took an effort of imagination to see France restored and sitting alongside the British at the end of hostilities.

The Soviet Union was a different matter entirely. Since 1917 they had been controlled by the Bolsheviks, a Leninist Communist party, and an authoritarian one at that, directly opposing liberal democratic Britain. Not only that, but some in Britain, such as Churchill during the 1930s, actually saw the Soviets as being worse than the Nazis, and there was often more sympathy felt towards Hitler as a leader than Stalin. These attitudes were largely reciprocated, as Vladimir Lenin believed that Britain represented "the undoubted leader of the capitalist conspiracy" which, it was claimed, was out "to destroy the first communist state".<sup>29</sup> Throughout the inter-war period there were many examples of ideological differences, probably the two most notable were the Russian Civil War, where Britain, France, Germany and the USA all sent troops to fight against the Bolsheviks in favour of the pro-Monarchy White forces;<sup>30</sup> and the raid on the All-Russian Co-operative Society (ARCOS) and the Soviet Trade Delegation premises in 1927 which led to a break in diplomatic relations.<sup>31</sup> Many in the pre-war Government, including Chamberlain, held strong anti-Soviet views, and indeed it has been argued that "personal prejudice" and "ideological antipathy" were partly responsible for Chamberlain's decision making when it came to attempted pre-war agreements with the Soviet

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<sup>28</sup> Thomas, M. *The French empire at war, 1940-45*, (Manchester, 1998).

<sup>29</sup> Northedge, F.S. and Wells, A. *Britain and Soviet Communism: The Impact of a Revolution*, (London, 1982), p. 3.

<sup>30</sup> Ullman, R.H. *Anglo-Soviet Relations, 1917-1921, Volume II: Britain and the Russian Civil War, November 1918-February 1920*, (New Jersey, 1968), p. 7.

<sup>31</sup> Neilson, K. *Britain, Soviet Russia and the Collapse of the Versailles Order, 1919-1939*, (Cambridge, 2009), p. 55.

Union.<sup>32</sup> After the Nazi-Soviet Pact the totalitarian powers were effectively allies, so in 1941 it was hard to look upon the Soviet Union with the same kindness that would have been afforded an invaded democracy. Anthony Peters suggested that at the start of the Second World War, “Anglo-Soviet relations were still characterised by suspicion and thinly veiled hostility”,<sup>33</sup> and much of this was due to the ideological conflicts during the interwar years.

Ideology was not the only issue standing between Britain and Russia. History also played a part in shaping the relations of the two powers. The Crimean War [1853-1856] was fought by Britain and France against Russia on Russian territory;<sup>34</sup> Russia went to war with Britain’s ally Imperial Japan in 1904;<sup>35</sup> and most notably Lenin and the Bolsheviks had pulled Russia out of the First World War with the signing of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk,<sup>36</sup> leaving Britain, France and America to shoulder the remaining burden of defeating the Germans. Thus historical apprehension and ill feeling was the base for relations during the inter-war period, and the ideological differences did little to help the situation. Russian actions during the period of Appeasement and during the opening year of the Second World War did little to thaw the cold atmosphere. Although the Soviet Union made some trade and economic agreements with France, it made no similar commitments to Britain, and come 1939 it remained unclear as to where the Soviet Union stood if a general conflict broke out. The answer was soon discovered as Britain was an unwilling partner in the negotiations for an agreement with the Soviet Union in 1939, and the stalling of these negotiations contributed to the signing of the Nazi-Soviet Pact.<sup>37</sup> In Cabinet on 24 August Halifax commented that “it appeared to be contrary to good faith that, while we were conducting negotiations with the Russians in all confidence, they should have been

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<sup>32</sup> Self, R [Ed.]. *The Neville Chamberlain Diary Letters, Volume Four: The Downing Street Years, 1934-1940*, (Aldershot, 2005), p. 19, editors text.

<sup>33</sup> Peters, A.R. *Anthony Eden at the Foreign Office 1931-1938*, (New York, 1986), p. 373.

<sup>34</sup> Waldron, P. *The End of Imperial Russia, 1855-1917*, (Basingstoke, 1997), p. 107.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, p. 29.

<sup>36</sup> The treaty of Brest Litovsk Signed 3 March 1918 between Germany and Russia, Joll, J. *Europe Since 1870, An International History*, (London, 1990), p. 235.

<sup>37</sup> Degras, J [Ed.]. *Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy, Volume III: 1933-1941*, (London, 1953), pp. 359-361. Treaty of Non-Aggression between the USSR and Germany, 23 August 1939.

negotiating with Germany behind our back”.<sup>38</sup> Anglo-Russian relations returned to the freezer for at least another eighteen months.

The Russian decision to side with Germany was one thing, but its continued belligerency annoyed Britain. It had invaded Eastern Poland, a country which had been guaranteed by the allies against German aggression, had essentially annexed Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia,<sup>39</sup> and then followed this up by invading Finland. This last act was a major problem for the allies. Finland was a democracy and a bystander, and had been attacked without cause. Churchill, however, managed to find the light in both these events, and suggested that both were necessary for Soviet security, an argument he could have made but did not make about Russian frontier demands in 1942. In the case of Poland he commented that “We could have wished that the Russian armies should be standing on their present line as the friends and allies of Poland instead of as invaders. But that the Russian armies should stand on this line was clearly necessary for the safety of Russia against the Nazi menace. At any rate, the line is there, and an Eastern Front has been created which Nazi Germany does not dare assail”.<sup>40</sup> He took the same line on Finland, believing that “any strengthening of Russia’s position in the Baltic was desirable”<sup>41</sup> both for Soviet security, and the overall situation of Europe at that particular time. These events, whilst not wholly relevant to this study, are worth noting for as an early example of Churchill’s notable swings in policy. On this occasion he moved from inter-war hostility towards the Soviet Union, to appeasement proposals for a ‘Grand Alliance’, through support for aggressive Soviet military activities, to be followed by the return to anti-Soviet rhetoric in support of the Finnish resistance. This was a clear example of the changing mood of Churchill’s foreign policy, something this thesis will go on to suggest happened on more than one occasion, thus making it particularly difficult for Eden, as Foreign Secretary, to get on with his job.

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<sup>38</sup> TNA, Cabinet Papers, CAB 23/100/10, Cabinet Conclusions, 24 August 1939.

<sup>39</sup> Piirimäe, K. *Roosevelt, Churchill, and the Baltic Question: Allied Relations During the Second World War*, (New York, 2014), p. 12

<sup>40</sup> Eade, *Collected Works*, ‘The First Month of War’, October 1, 1939, p. 108.

<sup>41</sup> Reynolds, D. *In Command of History: Churchill Fighting and Writing the Second World War*, (London, 2004), p 122.

Having looked at where Britain stood in its relations with France and Russia, there remains the issue of Britain's own political standing at the beginning of 1941. After being diplomatically outmanoeuvred by Germany and the Soviet Union before the war, Britain was very much on the back foot. Instead of fighting alongside France and Russia, the failed negotiations meant Britain and France alone went to war against Germany after the invasion of Poland, though no real fighting commenced until spring 1940. The closest Britain came to fighting in the first months of the war was a proposal to send military aid to Finland against the Soviet Union, a seemingly bad idea from whatever angle it is viewed. When the 'phoney war' ended, the British found themselves driven from Europe and in a position more parlous than any since the era of Napoleon. The defeat at Narvik brought Churchill (who had been largely responsible for it) to office in May 1940, and the death of Chamberlain in November 1940 brought him to the leadership of the Conservative Party. But his erratic judgment and his egotism, both of which were in evidence from the time he returned to Government in September 1939, were not forgotten.

If the outbreak of war had brought Churchill back into the Cabinet as First Lord of the Admiralty, it took longer for Eden to return there. He was brought into the Government in 1939, but only as Dominions Secretary.<sup>42</sup> As Prime Minister, Churchill made him Secretary of State for War, thus including him *de-facto*, in the War Cabinet.<sup>43</sup> Eden's time at the Dominions Office was quieter than Churchill's at the Admiralty, and Eden himself suggested that his role in the Cabinet as Dominions Secretary was "anomalous, not to say humiliating"<sup>44</sup> with nothing major to do, though this was perhaps more a frustrated comment than a true reflection of working in Government during wartime. He became far more active after his promotion to the War Office, applying himself to this new job with

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<sup>42</sup> Gilbert, M. *Winston S. Churchill, Volume V: 1922-1939, Prophet of Truth*, (London, 1990), p. 1107.

<sup>43</sup> Churchill made Eden Secretary of State for War on 11 May 1940, Broad, L. *Sir Anthony Eden: The Chronicles of a Career*, (London, 1955), p. 140.

<sup>44</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 91.

“enthusiasm”.<sup>45</sup> He took a more active part in the high level discussions of the war, and accompanied Churchill to the Franco-British Supreme War Council meeting in June 1940.<sup>46</sup> He also visited the Middle East on what would become the first of many wartime missions, developing invaluable contacts with the Middle East Commander, General Archibald Wavell; he successfully reorganised and re-armed the Army after its evacuation from France and formed the Home Guard volunteer force, though had Churchill to thank for its name.<sup>47</sup> Despite a failed attempt to return Eden to the Foreign Office in September 1940, Churchill was still keen on the idea; but it was not until December 1940 that the opportunity arose. When Philip Lothian, the Ambassador in Washington, passed away, Churchill considered Halifax for the post, and with Halifax accepting, there was a vacancy at the head of the Foreign Office, and Churchill “had no doubt who should fill the vacancy”.<sup>48</sup> Eden's promotion was announced on 23 December 1940<sup>49</sup> and his return was described as “like a man going home”.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Rothwell, *Eden*, p. 54.

<sup>46</sup> Aster, *S. Anthony Eden*, (London, 1976), p. 63.

<sup>47</sup> Broad, *Eden*, pp. 143-147. Originally called the Local Defence Volunteers.

<sup>48</sup> Churchill, W.S. *The Second World War, Volume II: Their Finest Hour*, (London, 1985), p. 504.

<sup>49</sup> Carlton, *Eden*, p. 170.

<sup>50</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 183.



### 3) A Man Going Home

Lothian's death allowed Churchill to send Halifax, tainted by his association with appeasement, to Washington. The political Left regarded him as an opponent of cooperation with the USSR,<sup>1</sup> though Andrew Roberts defends Halifax from such a charge, noting that Cripps' appointment was his idea, that he helped maintain relations during the winter war with Finland and did not condone the Soviet invasion of Poland, which prevented further alienating Russia.<sup>2</sup> Halifax had also warned of the danger of the French maintaining inadequate defences as a result of their defeatist attitude, thus leaving Britain alone to face the might of Germany.<sup>3</sup> Despite this, there was increasing discontent with his position, and Churchill was conscious of this, believing that "his record in the years before the war and the way in which events had moved left him exposed to much disapprobation and even hostility from the Labour side of our National Coalition. I knew that he was conscious of this himself".<sup>4</sup> This seems an odd sentiment when Halifax would have been preferred as Chamberlain's successor in May 1940 by the Left, but, as we know from many sources, including Halifax's own diary,<sup>5</sup> Churchill was looking for a way to move him from the Foreign Office. As we have seen, Churchill described Eden's return as being "like a man going home".<sup>6</sup> Though he had enjoyed his time at the War Office, Eden knew that "there could not be any argument", and accepted his increased responsibility.<sup>7</sup> He was, however, glad that he would now be Churchill's colleague at the Foreign Office rather than his subordinate with the Army.<sup>8</sup> It is important to note that Eden's return to this high post was down to Churchill's desire to have him there, and his gratitude for this was something that can be seen to weigh on his conscience throughout the war.

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<sup>1</sup> Wells, H.G. 'Halifax Must Go!', The News Chronicle, 3 October 1940, quoted in Roberts, A. *The Holy Fox: The Life of Lord Halifax*, (London 1997), p. 253.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 254.

<sup>3</sup> Mangold, P. *Britain and the Defeated French: From Occupation to Liberation, 1940-1944*, (London, 2012), pp. 22-23.

<sup>4</sup> Churchill, *Their Finest Hour*, p. 504.

<sup>5</sup> Halifax's Diary, 17 December 1940, quoted in Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, p. 341. Editors text.

<sup>6</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 183.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, p. 183.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, p. 183.

Eden was the obvious choice, not least with regard to the USSR. In his previous stint as Foreign Secretary he was in favour of working with Russia, and in 1935 had been invited to Moscow to meet Stalin,<sup>9</sup> a meeting that was marked with friendliness and openness according to Molotov.<sup>10</sup> He could make a plausible claim (provided no one looked too closely<sup>11</sup>) to have been an anti-appeaser; he had worked with the League of Nations to try and maintain European co-operation in a difficult period; and that part of the political spectrum which distrusted Halifax could greet Eden with some enthusiasm. His ability, his Foreign Office history and his tireless work ethic meant he earned the loyalty and devotion of his officials, some of whom were notable in their own right, and many of whom were as experienced, if not more so, than their new master.<sup>12</sup> His return also renewed a partnership formed during the mid 1930s with Cadogan. Under Eden's first period as Foreign Secretary he was instrumental in bringing Cadogan back from China as Senior of the Deputy Under-Secretaries in the Foreign Office, and had even tried to promote him in place of Sir Robert Vansittart as Permanent Under-Secretary in 1936.<sup>13</sup> Eden was seemingly the ideal choice to try and navigate Britain through the difficulty of the war, ensuring that it maintained its position and did not find itself isolated.

Eden's problems were immense, however. Effectively isolated by a German-dominated Europe, still under threat of defeat, Britain's first priority was survival. Trying to focus on diplomacy to create the sort of post-war world which would make the sacrifices of war worthwhile was no small challenge whilst dealing with Churchill, the American President Franklin Roosevelt, Stalin and General de Gaulle.

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<sup>9</sup> Roberts, G. *The Unholy Alliance: Stalin's Pact with Hitler*, (London 1989), p. 66.

<sup>10</sup> Piirimäe, *Roosevelt, Churchill and the Baltic*, p. 59

<sup>11</sup> Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 1 December 1941, Cadogan noted: "Does A. realise that *he* is responsible for the great and tragic 'appeasement' – not reacting to German occupation of the Rhineland in 1936? How lucky he is – no one has ever mentioned *that!*".

<sup>12</sup> Connell, J. *'The Office' A Study of British Foreign Policy and its Makers 1919-1951*, (London, 1958), p. 283.

<sup>13</sup> Neilson, K and Otte, T.G. *The Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, 1854-1946*, (New York, 2009), p. 237.

Eden was well-placed to deal with the pressing issue of relations with the USSR. He had met Stalin and been an advocate of Anglo-Russian cooperation in the late 1930s; he had volunteered to go to Moscow in 1939 to try and secure an agreement;<sup>14</sup> and had maintained good relations with Maisky. He consequently believed that “the Russians profess to regard me as one who has no prejudice against them”.<sup>15</sup> With the pro-Soviet Harvey reappointed as his Private Secretary, no one could accuse Eden of hostility towards the Russians.

Eden’s record on France was less suggestive of possible progress. Despite the fact that Halifax had raised the idea of staging a coup against the Vichy authorities in Dakar in July 1940,<sup>16</sup> he received little political blame for its failure, and appears to have sustained a better working relationship with both the Free French and Vichy than was maintained with the Soviets. Indeed, Roberts argues that “Halifax’s skill in dealing with the raw and sensitive French mood was ultimately of great value”,<sup>17</sup> providing a Foreign Office supported financial agreement to back de Gaulle, as well as a *modus vivendi* with Vichy after the release of the terms of the Franco-German treaty in October 1940. Thus in Anglo-French relations Eden had a harder act to follow. Thanks to Churchill, Eden’s involvement in relations with France began before his return to the Foreign Office. He had accompanied Churchill to France in June 1940 to meet then Prime Minister Paul Reynaud, as well as Pétain and General Maxime Weygand.<sup>18</sup> During this trip Eden realised that the end of French resistance was imminent, and there could be two French Governments after any surrender. Even Weygand, whom he regarded very highly, gave the impression of “reserved fatalism”.<sup>19</sup> Eden shared Churchill’s early good impression of de Gaulle when they met, and it seems that, unlike Churchill, he was to find de Gaulle more manageable over the long term, and under his leadership,

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<sup>14</sup> Parker, R.A.C. *Chamberlain and Appeasement: British Policy and the Coming of The Second World War*, (Basingstoke, 1993), p. 234.

<sup>15</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/24B, Eden to Cripps, 17 January 1941.

<sup>16</sup> Roberts, *Holy Fox*, p. 258.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, p. 259.

<sup>18</sup> Gilbert, M. *Winston S. Churchill, Volume VI: 1939-1941, Finest Hour*, (London, 1991), pp. 498-500.

<sup>19</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 117.

the Foreign Office was to prove less of a block on enthusiasm for the Free French than under Halifax.<sup>20</sup> On this visit Eden was already thinking that de Gaulle might be at the head of one of the French groups, most likely the one responsible for carrying on the French resistance from the colonies.<sup>21</sup> When he returned to the Foreign Office, however, he found that Britain was thinking of Anglo-French relations simply in terms of relations with the Vichy Government of Pétain, and thus was largely ignoring the Free French Movement and de Gaulle. Whilst holding good impressions of de Gaulle, Eden was not fully convinced he was the man to lead France. This left Eden with a problem, as he doubted the reliability of the Vichy government, but did not have confidence in its likely alternative. Consequently, he was initially prepared to follow Churchill's policy of talking to all sides to try and get as much as possible from each, not entirely dissimilar to previous British foreign policy.

But even with his "keen desire to improve our relations with the Soviet Government",<sup>22</sup> and determination to set relations with France on a more stable and normal footing, Eden was frustrated by current events. As he came to office the fall-out of Soviet Foreign Minister Vaycheslav Molotov's visit to Berlin and the Nazi-Soviet tussle over Bulgaria was in full swing, as well as the Italian war with Greece. There was disillusionment over trade talks with Russia, with Cripps threatening to withdraw from negotiations, frustrated with their lack of co-operation. Additionally, relations with Vichy were being strained by the varied allegiances of its leaders, with some, such as Admiral Francois Darlan, pushing for economic negotiations with Germany, and others stating that this was out of the question; not to mention the increasing tension between Vichy and the Free French Movement over de Gaulle's activities, especially in North Africa.

Eden also found himself "horrified at deadness of Foreign Office and its wooliness",<sup>23</sup> and Harvey was "equally appalled by [its] anti-liberal attitude".<sup>24</sup> It

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<sup>20</sup> Thomas, *The French Empire at war*, p. 72.

<sup>21</sup> Barker, *Churchill and Eden*, p. 33.

<sup>22</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/24B, Eden to Cripps, 17 January 1941.

<sup>23</sup> Gorodetsky, G. *Stafford Cripps Mission to Moscow 1940-42*, (Cambridge, 1984), p. 88.

is hard to see where this idea originated except, perhaps, the continued inclusion of Vansittart, now Chief Diplomatic Advisor, though more likely this was simply Harvey's more eccentric views clouding his judgement on the personnel in the Foreign Office, many of whom were remnants from the Munich era, a group of people he particularly detested.<sup>25</sup> It seems that, along with the change of Foreign Secretary, changes in attitude and personnel were required before any significant change could be brought to foreign policy. Thus as well as calming Cripps and convincing him to continue negotiations, Eden had to adjust the attitude of the Foreign Office and restrain its more anti-Soviet elements, otherwise it "would indicate to the Soviets that the new Foreign Secretary intended to initiate a policy of toughness rather than conciliation".<sup>26</sup> He also needed to continue Foreign Office support for the apparently dwindling Free French Movement, as well as trying to prevent Vichy falling to the Germans. His initial actions, therefore, were not designed to introduce a new era of friendly relations, but principally to prevent any deterioration from their already low ebb, to bring a steadying influence to the Foreign Office and take it out of its policy of apparent drift.

Unfortunately, attempts to change attitudes or personnel would have to wait, as current events were threatening to overtake the British. On 10 and 11 January 1941 Germany and Russia signed several new agreements: a Frontier Treaty setting out the borders between the Soviet Union and Germany after the admission of Lithuania into the USSR; a new economic agreement regulating the trade of materials until August 1942; and an agreement concerning repatriation and property claims in the Baltic.<sup>27</sup> According to *Pravda* the negotiations were "conducted in a spirit of mutual understanding and confidence in keeping with

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<sup>24</sup> Kitchen, M. *British Policy towards the Soviet Union during The Second World War*, (London, 1986), p. 44.

<sup>25</sup> Carlton, *Eden*, p. 184-5.

<sup>26</sup> Hanak, H. 'Sir Stafford Cripps as British Ambassador in Moscow May 1940 to June 1941', *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 94, No. 370 (Jan. 1979), pp. 67-68.

<sup>27</sup> Degras, *Soviet Documents*, pp. 479-482. Soviet-German Treaty on the Frontier between the USSR and Germany 10 January 1941 and Statements on Soviet-German Agreements concerning Repatriation and Property claims, and an Economic Agreement 11 January 1941.

the friendly relations existing between the USSR and Germany".<sup>28</sup> This was problematic for the British. Germany and Russia were able to come to terms over grievances, whereas the British had comparatively little to offer the Russians in any negotiations, a factor that had hampered the 1939 talks.<sup>29</sup> These agreements came into force immediately and, for the time being, heralded a closer co-operation between Russia and Germany, making it harder for the British to achieve anything. This did not improve Cripps' mood, and during November he commented that "it looks like we are in for a long spell of 'negative' action here, that is just ignoring this country & vice versa and merely writing notes to one another of complaints".<sup>30</sup> A later diary entry revealed how correct that assessment had been. It read "the only thing that looks fairly clear for the moment is that they don't want to have anything to do with us! I still haven't seen any of them since mid-November".<sup>31</sup> This isolation, coupled with the January agreements, led Eden to conclude that "After that, and their failure to respond to any of our various approaches, there can, I think, be no question of our making any further political or economic offers to the Soviet Government".<sup>32</sup>

Another issue hampering British attempts to improve relations was the outstanding question of the Russian annexation of the Baltic countries during the summer of 1940. In their first meeting since becoming Foreign Secretary, Maisky treated Eden to "a monologue about the outstanding Baltic States dispute",<sup>33</sup> considering this of fundamental importance, and informed Eden that "a British recognition of the Soviet absorption of the Baltic States was a prerequisite for a significant improvement in relations".<sup>34</sup> Maisky highlighted three key points of conflict: the Baltic gold which Britain had seized as compensation for the nationalization of British property; Baltic ships seized in Britain, and the fate of the

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<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, p. 482.

<sup>29</sup> Piirimäe, *Roosevelt, Churchill and the Baltic*, p. 25

<sup>30</sup> Gorodetsky, G [Ed.]. *Stafford Cripps in Moscow 1940-1942: Diaries and Papers*, (London, 2007), 13 November 1940, p. 81.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, 15 January 1941, p. 87.

<sup>32</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/24B, Eden to Cripps, 17 January 1941.

<sup>33</sup> Miner, S.M. *Between Churchill and Stalin: The Soviet Union, Great Britain, and the Origins of the Grand Alliance*, (London, 1988), p. 108.

<sup>34</sup> Gorodetsky, *Grand Delusion*, p. 92.

sailors on board the seized ships.<sup>35</sup> Whilst Eden saw room to progress on the last point, and authorised Cripps to negotiate a settlement on this issue,<sup>36</sup> overall he felt that Britain could not “hope to gain anything in the present circumstances by making fresh attempts to reach a settlement on the various outstanding Baltic questions [...] Maisky has approached me urging that we should make an effort, and we have made a start with a minor point of repatriation of Soviet sailors. But, despite his assurances, I see no sign of Russian willingness to co-operate, nor, I think, shall we see any such signs”.<sup>37</sup> Such a statement showed that Eden, like Cripps and Halifax before him, thought relations would not improve, as they realised that the Baltic question, especially after the January agreements, was not going to be easily solved.

There was the possibility, however, that Anglo-Russian relations could improve as new opportunities arose. At the end of January, Eden, against the advice of some in the Foreign Office who felt the British should retaliate against Cripps’ poor treatment in Moscow by refusing to see Maisky, had another meeting with the Ambassador. He complained that Molotov had not seen Cripps in several months<sup>38</sup> and, with Maisky providing only a feeble explanation, Eden warned that “if Cripps continued to receive such cold treatment, Maisky could expect the same”.<sup>39</sup> This resulted in a rapid change of fortunes for Cripps, who, on 1 February, had his first meeting with Molotov since the previous summer. There was, however, little to discuss, and Cripps noted with dejection that the talks were “unproductive”.<sup>40</sup> However, the confidence gained from this meeting prompted him to remark to the Soviet Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Andrey Vyshinsky, that current Soviet policies “could affect Britain’s attitude to any German peace proposals”<sup>41</sup> if they were along the lines that “Western Europe should be returned to its former status, while Germany should be unhampered in

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<sup>35</sup> Miner, *Between Churchill and Stalin*, p. 108.

<sup>36</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/24849, Eden to Cripps, 27 December 1940.

<sup>37</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/24B, Eden to Cripps, 17 January 1941.

<sup>38</sup> Kitchen, *British Policy*, p. 46.

<sup>39</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/29463, Eden to Cripps, 29 January 1940.

<sup>40</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/24856, Cripps to FO, 1 February 1941.

<sup>41</sup> Ross, G [Ed.]. *The Foreign Office and the Kremlin: British Documents on Anglo-Soviet Relations 1941-45*, (Cambridge, 1984), p. 10.

the expansion of her 'living space' to the east".<sup>42</sup> He also proposed that Eden, whilst visiting Egypt, Greece and Turkey, should come to Moscow to meet Stalin. This idea was unanimously rejected: Vyshinsky informed Cripps that "the time had not yet come"<sup>43</sup> for such a meeting; Churchill vetoed the idea, informing Eden that "I would hardly trust them for your personal safety or liberty".<sup>44</sup> This was an ironic statement considering the lack of regard shown for Chamberlain's safety or liberty in three visits to Germany in September 1938. Eden himself was disinclined to go to Moscow without official invitation, and informed Cripps that it was bad policy for the British to "run after the Russians".<sup>45</sup> It could also be assumed that, had Churchill heard of Eden's incident whilst flying between Cairo and Cyprus, he wouldn't have wanted him spending any more time than necessary on a plane.<sup>46</sup> Eden did not visit Moscow but as a compromise, he suggested that Cripps visit him in Ankara.<sup>47</sup>

At the beginning of March Cripps went to Turkey, where he discussed the Balkans, Turkey, Yugoslavia and the Baltic question with Eden. His diary revealed little success in relation to Russia, though he hoped that he had persuaded Eden to take some action over the Baltic.<sup>48</sup> Unfortunately there is no room for a full examination of the whole Baltic question, but Kaarel Piirimäe's recent study provides an in depth discussion on the question, from the often overlooked perspective of the Baltic powers.<sup>49</sup> He had some success in improving Russo-Turkish relations, helping to ensure a Russian declaration that, in the event of Turkey being attacked "and forced into war for the defence of its territory, it could then, in accordance with the non-aggression pact existing between Turkey and the

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<sup>42</sup> Hanak, 'Cripps as British Ambassador', p. 68.

<sup>43</sup> Gorodetsky, *Stafford Cripps*, 26 February 1941, p. 92.

<sup>44</sup> TNA, Prime Ministers Papers, PREM 3/395/16, FO To Eden, 23 February 1941.

<sup>45</sup> Gorodetsky, *Stafford Cripps*, p. 101.

<sup>46</sup> Dixon, P. *Double Diploma: The Life of Sir Pierson Dixon, Don and Diplomat*, (London, 1968), pp. 74-75. Dixon recalled the voyage being so secret the pilot didn't know the destination, and consequently left Eden piloting the plane. This almost resulted in chaos when he accidentally turned off the engine, almost forcing an emergency landing.

<sup>47</sup> Gorodetsky, *Stafford Cripps*, Cripps diary of trip to Turkey, March 1941, p. 93.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*, p. 94.

<sup>49</sup> Piirimäe, *Roosevelt, Churchill and the Baltic*, (New York, 2014).



USSR, count on the complete understanding and neutrality of the USSR".<sup>50</sup> This indirectly helped Anglo-Russian relations, as it alleviated the fear of hostile Russian designs on Turkey, and thus on the Balkans as a whole. Richard Austen 'Rab' Butler, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs announced that the agreement was "regarded by the Government as eminently satisfactory", and that the Government "hoped that such developments would draw closer our relations with the Soviet Government".<sup>51</sup> It is worth noting, however, that Butler was later forced to concede "that I cannot report any progress with these matters so far"<sup>52</sup> in relation to the hope that the Russo-Turkish agreement would improve Anglo-Russian relations.

While relations with the Soviet Union were progressing, affairs with France were also a key focus, and Eden wanted to "have done with the whole apparatus of backstairs diplomacy" which he felt had "reduced Britain's policy towards Vichy to such an unsatisfactory muddle".<sup>53</sup> His efforts were directed towards ending the system of diplomacy by personal relationship and opening up more formal channels. His first step was to send a Treasury Official to France<sup>54</sup> in an effort to settle outstanding financial matters and to institute a formal contact with Vichy. Next he proposed that Churchill, using his relationship with Roosevelt, send a message to Pétain via the US ambassador in Vichy, Admiral Leahy. He failed, however, to take into account that Leahy was sympathetic to Vichy and was strongly suspicious of Britain, thus rendering this approach ineffective.<sup>55</sup> Whilst Pétain had no intention of acting on the British suggestion that he should move the French Government to North Africa, one positive that came from this message was that Weygand requested supplies alongside a vague promise that Morocco would one day resume the fight against Germany alongside the British.<sup>56</sup> It seemed that

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<sup>50</sup> Degras, *Soviet Documents*, p. 484. Joint Soviet-Turkish statement on Neutrality, 25 March 1941.

<sup>51</sup> Hansard, Series 5, Vol. 370, c. 975. Butler speaking in the House of Commons, 2 April 1941.

<sup>52</sup> Hansard, Series 5, Vol. 371, c. 260. Butler speaking in the House of Commons, 24 April 1941.

<sup>53</sup> Thomas, R.T. *Britain and Vichy: the dilemma of Anglo-French relations, 1940-42*, London, 1979, p. 81.

<sup>54</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Minutes, CAB 65/10/30, Cabinet Conclusions, 27 December 1940.

<sup>55</sup> Barker, *Churchill and Eden*, p. 37.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, p. 37.

this, together with the courting of Weygand that had been occurring over the past few months under Churchill's encouragement,<sup>57</sup> was thawing the General's loathing of the British. Unfortunately, Weygand, who felt the idea of a continued struggle from Africa ridiculous,<sup>58</sup> was simply throwing out feelers in an effort to make the British reveal their hand, and, as he suspected, it was a weak one.<sup>59</sup>

Whilst attempts to seduce Weygand were proving futile, there were other difficulties. One of these was the post-armistice situation with Vichy regarding the internment of British and French citizens and service personnel by the other. Vichy had interned, at various points of its African empire, 200 British service personnel.<sup>60</sup> Likewise the British had detained two French submarine crews who had surrendered to Britain, but who remained loyal to Pétain and the Vichy regime. Although a delicate situation, Eden and the Foreign Office saw this as a chance to take a positive step in relations with Vichy, who had proposed that the crew of the two submarines should be exchanged for all British service personnel held in French Africa.<sup>61</sup> Whilst this meant Vichy would receive more personnel than the British, the Foreign Office were happy to accept as it avoided Vichy breaking the terms of the Armistice agreement with Germany, and it was hoped that, in facilitating this, the British might earn some goodwill from Vichy. Unfortunately, a delayed response from Vichy, and changing circumstances meant that the proposal was never implemented. The Foreign Office, despite the references in minutes and communication with Churchill, didn't count on just how seriously the "fear of the Germans",<sup>62</sup> felt by some Vichy officials, would affect their decision making, a feature of relations which had not been uncommon since the armistice.

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<sup>57</sup> Thomas, *Britain and Vichy*, p. 85.

<sup>58</sup> Thomas, M. *The French empire at war*, p. 39.

<sup>59</sup> Thomas, *Britain and Vichy*, p. 85.

<sup>60</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/28264, Speight's Minute on negotiations (recipient deleted), 8 January 1941.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid*, Eden to Prime Minister, 13 January 1941.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, Eden to Prime Minister, 13 January 1941.

This fear would also figure in another Foreign Office scheme to improve communication with the French. This was the “Lancelot” mission, an attempt by the Foreign Office to secretly contact Weygand, via an emissary acting on behalf of General George Catroux.<sup>63</sup> Though introduced in late 1940, Eden took an interest in the scheme when he returned to the Foreign Office, and was particularly keen to see “Lancelot’s” report on his return to London in January 1941. The report suggested that Weygand was “looking forward to the time when he can resume hostilities but that the time is certainly not yet”.<sup>64</sup> This came as no surprise to Eden, as this had always been Weygand’s standpoint, though he took encouragement from Weygand’s more restrained demands for support, and his assurances that “there can be no question of cession of bases in French Empire to Germany or to Italy” and that “any policy of alliance between France and Germany is absolutely out of the question”.<sup>65</sup> This could have been convincing had the report not contained serious hints of the unwillingness to act on these assurances. It contained numerous references to the fear of Germany felt in France, with “Lancelot” commenting that Weygand did not want to commit to anything so as “not to arouse German suspicions” or “give the Germans a pretext to occupy the rest of France”.<sup>66</sup> Thus the mission did not reveal anything new to the Foreign Office, but was successful in opening up a new channel of communication with Weygand. As this scheme was constructed under Halifax’s tenure of the Foreign Office, Eden’s interest in it suggests that no fresh impetus had accompanied his appointment, and that he was reluctant to break with current policy.

This was soon to change, however, as Eden was considering taking a firmer line with Vichy. Cranborne wrote to Eden expressing concern at the situation with France. He condemned what he saw as the “twilight policy”, and was pleased that Eden was proposing to “take a firm line”.<sup>67</sup> Whilst recognising that the situation

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<sup>63</sup> “Lancelot” – Mr. Mittelman, former French Naval Liaison Officer and member of Free French Movement, Egypt, TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/28243, W.H.B Mack’s minute, 5 Jan 1941.

<sup>64</sup> Report of “Lancelot” mission, TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/28243, FO to Lampson, 13 January 1941.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/8A, Cranborne to Eden, 29 April 1941.

was not overly promising for this change of policy, it was acknowledged that waiting would simply allow Darlan and the pro-German elements within Vichy time to prepare for possible action against Britain. It was also hoped that Britain could “force the pace” and coerce “Vichy to declare themselves”, thus enabling Britain to “bring in North Africa on our side ... and we might finally expose Darlan to the United States”.<sup>68</sup> This certainly seemed a good idea, as if Vichy could be exposed to be, under Darlan’s influence, drifting ever closer to Germany, then it would ease British relations with the USA over this complex issue. This would be advantageous to the British, as American favouritism of Vichy, and disinterest in de Gaulle, a man towards whom Roosevelt developed “a visceral dislike”<sup>69</sup> made it difficult for them to conduct their ideal strategy, which was to support de Gaulle as the alternative to Vichy since he was willing to carry on the fight against Germany. Thus if Britain could prove to America that Vichy was essentially hostile to the British war effort, then they would look more favourably on British support of de Gaulle, and British policy regarding France would not have to tip-toe around American support for Vichy.

It was not just policy with Vichy that Eden was under pressure to change, he also faced demands to change the way policy towards the Free French Movement, and especially de Gaulle was conducted. A telegram from the British Governor of Equatoria, Martin Parr, suggested that de Gaulle was “extremely tired” and “exceedingly depressed” by the situation in France and the way he was being treated by the British Government.<sup>70</sup> De Gaulle considered that only Churchill fully understood the “moral importance of the Movement” at that point in time, and Parr suggested that Eden encourage Churchill to write to de Gaulle in an attempt to allay the despair he felt of “ever persuading His Majesty’s Government to attach all the importance warranted” to his mission.<sup>71</sup> It seems de Gaulle was more fragile mentally than the Foreign Office believed, and was sensitive to the fact they were also dealing with Vichy. This implies that de Gaulle needed plenty of

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<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> Mangold, *Britain and the Defeated French*, p. 12.

<sup>70</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/8A, Parr to FO, 14 May 1941.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

encouragement and support just to keep going, let alone push his movement forward or take an active part in the war, something which would become important later.

Despite efforts from both outside and within the Foreign Office to alter their policies, the muddle to which R.T. Thomas referred appears to have remained unsolved. Indeed, muddle was the appropriate word, as it was the very phrase used within the Office in May 1941. When discussing a telegram from General Sir Edward Spears the “unjustified lack of enthusiasm for the Free French Movement” was picked upon as particularly concerning, the suggested explanation being “muddled thinking” on the part of British officials, both home and abroad, who had a distinct “lack of understanding of the Government’s policy”.<sup>72</sup> It was felt that if this could be solved, it could pave the way for better relations with the Free French Movement. The solution was to be a pamphlet, created by the Spears Mission in collaboration with the Political Intelligence Department, which could be distributed both at home, and amongst the fighting services and Government missions abroad. This would serve to educate on Government policy and publicise the Free French Movement. Whilst this was despatched in large quantities, its impact was limited, as later reports suggest that its advice was not heeded.

Eden was finding there was a muddle with regard to both the direction and the running of foreign policy. Though other departments rarely interfered in the business of the Foreign Office, with many department heads on good terms with Eden and not feeling the need to challenge him in the foreign policy sphere, Eden faced difficulties from one particular source. That, of course, was Churchill, and this relationship would need significant management if it was to prove an enduring partnership. For a man who resigned in 1938 due in no small part to Chamberlain’s attempts to control foreign policy, it would not be a stretch to imagine Eden having difficulty working with Churchill should a similar situation arise. On 10 January 1941 Eden set out his position to Churchill in a strongly

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<sup>72</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/28546, Spears Mission to War Office, 30 April 1941, and Morton to Mack, 3 May 1941.

worded telegram, stating that “it should be made plain that the responsibility for advising you and the War Cabinet on the conduct of foreign policy is that of the Foreign Secretary and of the Foreign Secretary alone. This responsibility extends, of course, to the whole sphere of foreign policy”.<sup>73</sup> Eden was apparently firing a warning shot at Churchill, letting him know exactly where he felt both he and his department expected to stand when it came to all things foreign policy related. He goes on in the communication to make it clear to Churchill that “we can none of us wish to re-enter a period of divided responsibility for the conduct of foreign policy”.<sup>74</sup> We can see how Eden felt about the idea of someone else interfering with foreign policy, though it is not clear if this was a ploy to provoke a response from Churchill; an attempt to look strong in the eyes of his department; a statement born out of arrogance or over-confidence in his own importance, or a genuine concern about the future control of policy. What ever the reason, Eden had made his stand, and as shall be seen throughout this thesis, his position in relation to Churchill was a concern that always sat close to the surface. Eden makes no reference to this in his memoirs, however, stating instead that “In wartime diplomacy is strategy’s twin. There is a strict inter-play of interests”.<sup>75</sup> This suggests he accepted the idea of some collaboration between himself and Churchill with regard to foreign policy. Maybe this was a sign of a post-war mentality of trying to explain events so as not to damage the author’s credibility, maybe it was an effort to provide a favourable picture of the role the author played in shaping the circumstances that existed at the time of writing, or maybe he had simply forgotten. Either way, it is interesting that it wasn’t mentioned.

Since Eden’s appointment as Foreign Secretary, despite some positive efforts, British foreign policy towards Russia and France appeared quite restrained. Although Eden was decisive in preventing relations from deteriorating, most notably ensuring that Cripps was able to continue his work in Moscow and

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<sup>73</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/7B, Eden to Churchill, 10 January 1941.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 183.

stopping de Gaulle from giving up, there was no decisive shift in policy. Eden was reluctant to visit Moscow, and he did not want to raise the British offer regarding the Russian annexation of the Baltic States from that given in the previous October under Halifax. He was also reluctant, although gradually less so, to take a firm line with Vichy, yet also to fully commit to supporting de Gaulle's Free French Movement. This would indicate that the replacement of Halifax by Eden did not, as was hoped, provide for a direct improvement of relations, and there is no evidence that had Halifax gone to Turkey as Foreign Secretary, rather than Eden, the outcome would have been different. Thus it would appear that the summary given by Gorodetsky that "the change in scenery did not entail a change of policy"<sup>76</sup> is, on the whole, accurate. It seems Eden did not bring with him a change of policy, it could be argued that he brought a change of intentions, but that the biggest change was simply a change of appearance and style.

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<sup>76</sup> Gorodetsky, *Grand Delusion*, p. 92.

#### 4) 'An Enemy under a Very Thin Disguise'

Though the initial impact of Eden's return to the Foreign Office was quite limited, it seems that as 1941 progressed, he began to bring a clearer sense of direction to British foreign policy. Whether he needed a bedding-in period to understand running the Foreign Office in war time, or simply needed time to understand the diplomatic situation and the Foreign Office mindset is unclear, but whatever the reason, it seems that during the spring Eden began to assert himself. This was as much due to circumstance as planning, as outside events provided new opportunities that could be exploited, though these did not always lead to positive results. It also saw the beginnings of what could be considered post-war thinking, particularly with Eden's speech in May which looked to the future freedom of the continent of Europe, and began to speculate how this would look and, importantly, how this could be achieved.

April started with a good deal of promise. Russia had reached a new agreement with Turkey, and issued statements against the entry of German troops into Bulgaria, which warned that "the German Government must understand that it cannot count on support from the U.S.S.R. for its acts in Bulgaria".<sup>1</sup> This suggested a cooling of relations between Russia and Germany, and amplified the British hope that Russia might see the German danger, and become more co-operative. This hope was increased by the Russian Non-Aggression Treaty with Yugoslavia,<sup>2</sup> signed after political instability had resulted first in a Yugoslav decision to join the Axis, then a *coup d'état*.<sup>3</sup> This step both rebuffed German territorial expansion and increased Soviet security in the area, and consequently the security of British interests in Turkey. Molotov informed Schulenburg that "the

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<sup>1</sup> Sontag, R.J. and Beddie, J.S [Ed's]. *Nazi-Soviet Relations 1939-1941: Documents from the Archives of The German Foreign Office*, (Washington DC, 1948), Telegram from Schulenburg to the German Foreign Office, 17 March 1941, p. 279.

<sup>2</sup> Degras, *Soviet Documents*, Treaty of Friendship and Non-Aggression with Yugoslavia, 5 April 1941, pp. 484-485.

<sup>3</sup> Maisky, I. *Memoirs of a Soviet Ambassador: The War 1939-43*, [trans. Rothstein, A.], (London, 1967), p. 128.



Yugoslav Government had proposed to the Soviet Union the negotiation of a treaty of friendship and nonaggression, and the Soviet Government had accepted the proposal. In its decision . . . the Soviet Government had been actuated solely by the desire to preserve peace".<sup>4</sup> The agreement was meant to bring Germany back to the negotiating table, but unfortunately resulted in the German invasion and occupation of Yugoslavia.<sup>5</sup> This situation created an imminent German threat to Russia, and consequently the clear policy aim to warn Russia, and thereby improve relations. In a meeting with Vyshinsky which Cripps described as "the most useful I have had since I came",<sup>6</sup> he was informed of the Russian agreement with Turkey, and felt this demonstrated "a new spirit in the Kremlin",<sup>7</sup> which was less enthusiastically pro-German. This feeling increased with the German victory in Yugoslavia, and Eden saw an opportunity to "consider Anglo-Russian relations afresh".<sup>8</sup>

It seems this new policy began to take effect, as in Moscow and London there appeared to be new feelings towards an agreement between the two powers. Based on the events in the Balkans, together with evidence reaching the Foreign Office about German plans to attack Russia, Eden spoke to Maisky on 16 April, informing him that "it was our conviction that Germany's military ambitions were boundless. Russia, I was quite sure, was threatened".<sup>9</sup> This was the first of many communications between Eden and Maisky along these lines, as British intelligence gained more accurate information of German intentions, and the Soviets appeared increasingly unwilling to act upon this. Cripps mirrored this attitude and was "firmly convinced . . . that Germany and Russia would be at war 'before summer'".<sup>10</sup> Even Churchill, who had taken little interest in Russian affairs, took it upon himself to help this cause. Upon receiving military intelligence regarding German troop movements in Eastern Europe from Cadogan, not his

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<sup>4</sup> Sontag and Beddie, *Nazi-Soviet Relations*, Telegram from Schulenburg to the German Foreign Office, 25 March 1941 p. 317.

<sup>5</sup> Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 15 April 1941, p. 371.

<sup>6</sup> Gorodetsky, *Stafford Cripps*, 10 March 1941, p. 98.

<sup>7</sup> Miner, *Between Churchill and Stalin*, p. 117.

<sup>8</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/24B, Eden to Cripps, 16 April 1941.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Gorodetsky, *Stafford Cripps*, p. 98. Editor's comments.

own intelligence briefing as he suggested in '*The Grand Alliance*',<sup>11</sup> he responded that "Stalin must be warned"<sup>12</sup> and began drafting a telegram to do just that. This telegram, however, was to become a source of contention between Eden and Churchill.<sup>13</sup> It was short and cryptic to "arrest his [Stalin's] attention and make him ponder".<sup>14</sup> Unfortunately it was beaten to the punch by a telegram from Eden which, in less cryptic terms, spelled out the issue,<sup>15</sup> and also by an approach made by Cripps to Vyshinsky.<sup>16</sup> Having delivered his message, and with his inability to see Stalin,<sup>17</sup> Cripps felt the message from the Prime Minister would be shorter, less detailed, less emphatic and a serious tactical mistake.<sup>18</sup>

Eden agreed with Cripps' assessment and told Churchill that "I think there may be some force in Sir S. Cripps's arguments against the delivery of your message. If you agree, I would propose to tell him that he need not now deliver the message".<sup>19</sup> Churchill downplayed Eden's actions in '*The Grand Alliance*', mentioning the telegram but not commenting about Eden standing against his position.<sup>20</sup> Churchill blamed Cripps for the failure to deliver the message, despite Eden supporting the Ambassador, overruled them and the message was finally delivered to Vyshinsky, as Molotov again refused to see Cripps.<sup>21</sup> Eden's trust in Cripps' judgement was well placed, as he was clearly reacting to events as they occurred, recognising their significance, whereas Churchill was acting on the significance of one event, and was trying to force this onto everyone else. This is not to remove blame from Cripps, who disobeyed direct orders to deliver the message, but it is important to see that Eden agreed with Cripps that the message

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<sup>11</sup> Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 28 March 1941, p. 367, Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, p. 319.

<sup>12</sup> Carlton, *Churchill and the Soviet Union*, pp. 82-83.

<sup>13</sup> For the Telegram see TNA, Prime Ministers Papers, PREM 3/395/2, Prime Minister to Cripps, 3 April 1941.

<sup>14</sup> Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, p. 320.

<sup>15</sup> TNA, Prime Ministers Papers, PREM 3/395/2, Eden to Cripps, 4 April 1941 and Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, p. 320.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, Cripps to Foreign Secretary, 12 April 1941.

<sup>17</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/29479, Cripps to Churchill, 5 April 1941.

<sup>18</sup> TNA, Prime Ministers Papers, PREM 3/395/2, Cripps to Foreign Secretary, 12 April 1941.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, Eden to Churchill, 15 April 1941.

<sup>20</sup> Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, pp. 320-323.

<sup>21</sup> FO 800/279, Memorandum by Sargent on Cripps' behaviour as Ambassador in Moscow, 26 April 1941, quoted in Ross, *FO and the Kremlin*, p. 72.

should not be delivered, and stood up for the Ambassador against Churchill. It also highlights that Churchill's version of events cannot be taken at face value, as investigating this incident reveals that Eden was as much at fault as Cripps, yet Churchill lays no blame at his door. This incident shows that the Foreign Secretary and Ambassador were on the same page, and were both acting along the lines of the same policy, the first time this can be seen in the study so far. This also indicates that Eden's labour to refresh the attitude of the Foreign Office was beginning to deliver some rewards.

While there were promising developments in the situation with Russia, relations with France were heading in the other direction. Vichy France was drifting ever closer to Germany, to the point where it was seen by some as "an enemy under a very thin disguise".<sup>22</sup> This was compounded by the influence of Darlan, who Churchill described as "a bad man, with a narrow outlook",<sup>23</sup> especially after he visited Hitler in May to discuss renewed Franco-German co-operation, the position of the French fleet and a plan by German Foreign Minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop, for France to attack Britain.<sup>24</sup> Whilst not taking this threat too seriously, the British were particularly concerned about the French Navy, and its possible effects on their threatened Mediterranean supply-lines. Fortunately, this concern was shared in America, and pressure was put on Vichy to resist German demands over their fleet so as to protect the Atlantic supply lines. But, unfortunately for Eden, the Americans saw Vichy as a regime still able to keep some distance from Germany, and maintained diplomatic relations with it.<sup>25</sup> Eden and the British saw the Vichy French as German puppets. The result was an area of long-term Anglo-American disagreement. Eden felt compelled to push for a strengthening of the blockade to prevent supplies reaching German occupied territory. The Americans, seeing Darlan's negotiations, felt the time was right to

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<sup>22</sup> ADM 199/1279, 31 October 1941, quoted in Mangold, *Britain and the Defeated French*, p. 67.

<sup>23</sup> Gilbert, M. *The Churchill War Papers, Volume III: The Ever-Widening War 1941*, (London, 2000), p. 220.

<sup>24</sup> Mangold, *Britain and the Defeated French*, p. 70.

<sup>25</sup> Thomas, *Britain and Vichy*, p. 109.

increase the supplies sent to Vichy as a way to bolster their opposition to Germany. Unfortunately for Eden, his policy involved asking the Americans, whom it was felt held greater influence at Vichy, to pressure them not to make new agreements with Germany and to ensure supplies sent to North Africa did not reach German occupied territory.<sup>26</sup> Thus whilst Eden attempted to strengthen British policy, his methods inadvertently blocked his intentions, resulting in increased American aid to North Africa and Vichy, and Eden having to back down from taking a firm line.

So far then it seemed that, whilst Eden and the Foreign Office were making steps in the right direction in Anglo-Vichy relations, the complications of the Vichy-Free French dilemma, along with the conflicting ideas coming from America about which French group to support, meant little had been, or indeed could be achieved in the present climate. The British policy of blockading Vichy was continually being thwarted by American aid, and concern over American public opinion over the plight of the French people meant that Britain could not risk taking a firm policy against Vichy. At this time there was also little that could be done with regard to the Free French Movement, and maintaining de Gaulle's ego was not high on anyone's priority list, in spite of his complaints that the British were not offering him enough support in trying to promote and facilitate the operation of the Free French Movement.<sup>27</sup> Thus as summer approached there was a distinct frostiness to relations with both the Free French and Vichy, as on the one hand the situation meant little concern could be paid to the Free French, while at the same time little could be done to improve the situation with Vichy. While there were good intentions, it seems these were not born out in the early months of the year.

With the fall of Yugoslavia, and the failure of Britain's "pre-emptive occupation"<sup>28</sup> strategy in Greece, British troops were once again involved in direct

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<sup>26</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 245.

<sup>27</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/8A, Parr to FO, 14 May 1941.

<sup>28</sup> Mangold, *Britain and the Defeated French*, p. 73.

fighting with German forces, though they were rapidly forced off the mainland, and came under heavy assault in Crete and Egypt. With German influence spiking in the Middle East, particularly with the Rashid Ali coup in Iraq, the British position in this area looked very weak. Eden used this Middle East situation in his Mansion House speech, given on 29 May 1941, as an example of how far the tentacles of Hitler's New Order had spread. In this speech he considered the unstable situation, went on to discuss some of the aims to combat this New Order, and from this set out some aims for post-war Europe, and plans for what sort of foreign policy would be needed to achieve these. He stated that "While all our efforts are concentrated on winning the war, His Majesty's Government have naturally been giving careful thought to this all-important matter".<sup>29</sup> Unfortunately he went on to say that they had decided to agree with Roosevelt's message to Congress of January 1941, where he declared his desire to create "a world founded upon four essential human freedoms. The first is freedom of speech and expression ... The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way ... The third is freedom from want ... The fourth is freedom from fear – anywhere in the world".<sup>30</sup>

Whilst there can be no doubting that, compared to Hitler's New Order, these were indeed very solid principles to work towards, simply agreeing to the American ideals does not seem to have taken a great degree of thought. Fortunately, more thought went into how to realise these ideals, and Eden went on to discuss what was envisioned in a practical sense by freedom from want. This vision foresaw the economic re-organisation and rebuilding of Europe, a Europe to be helped by international finance organisations, and, most importantly, a united Europe working with the aid of the British Empire and the USA to rebuild itself as an entity.<sup>31</sup> Here Eden was not thinking solely about the restoration of one or two countries, but of the continent as a whole, as he saw this as the only way in which any of the ideals could be achieved. It is worth noting that, whilst the measures

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<sup>29</sup> Eden, A. *Freedom and Order, Selected Speeches 1939-1946*, (London, 1947), Eden's mansion House Speech, 29 May 1941, p. 107.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 107-108.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 108-111.

would allow Germany to play its part, they, along with political and military measures decided at the peace, would be designed to “prevent a repetition of Germany’s misdeeds”.<sup>32</sup> Thus we can see that already there was some thinking within the Foreign Office that looked towards the post-war future of Europe, and whilst mainly following the American ideals, there was at least thought as to how these could be practically achieved. Considering Europe was enveloped by the Cold War in the wake of the Second World War, it is unsurprising that this is not regarded as particularly important, barely getting a reference in his biographies or his memoirs, but it is hard to say that the Europe that developed, the European Economic Community and eventually the European Union, share nothing in common with the ideas set forth in this speech.

There was little time to build on this thinking, however, as events in the Middle East, and particularly the threat to Egypt caused by the arrival of German aircraft in Syria, were to cause the British a diplomatic headache with the French. So far, the Free French had been unable to take an active part in the war effort, despite de Gaulle’s suggestion in April that Free French forces should occupy Beirut, Damascus and the aerodrome at Rayak to remove the Vichy element, prevent German support of the new regime in Iraq and use of Syrian facilities.<sup>33</sup> Whilst his foresight was impressive, his timing was less so, as Eden decided that they should not go ahead with this plan at the time, though the arrival of the German aircraft led to its reconsideration. Spears commented from the, now–threatened, Cairo that “We are surely not going to allow the Germans to take over Syria by default”,<sup>34</sup> and Churchill noted, despite the launch of the German assault on Crete earlier that same day, that “we must go in”.<sup>35</sup> For Eden, this meant foreign policy concerns had become overpowered by the military necessities of the situation, and rather than improving relations with Vichy, Britain was now

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, p. 110.

<sup>33</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 244.

<sup>34</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/27323, Spears to Morton, 18 May 1941.

<sup>35</sup> Colville, J. *The Fringes of Power: Downing Street Diaries 1939-1955*, (London, 2005), 20 May 1941, p. 336.

planning for an active military campaign against them. Despite Wavell's heavy burden defending Crete and planning a counter offensive against Rommel, he was tasked with assembling a force which, along with six battalions provided by the Free French, would essentially carry out de Gaulle's proposal to take Damascus and Beirut, thus removing German and Vichy interest in the area and allowing the Free French to gain control of an important part of the French Empire. The offensive against Syria began on 8 June,<sup>36</sup> and though the campaign was short, it was politically damaging.

That the Syrian campaign involved direct fighting between British and Free French forces on one side, and Vichy French forces on the other made it a political nightmare. Fortunately, the campaign was short lived, as the Vichy army did little more than slow down the British and Free French advance, thus minimising the political fallout, but it was enough to force serious questions about the conduct of the war, as well as cause a drop in de Gaulle's prestige. That the British had made important strategic gains deflected some of the heat from the issue, and the recognition that the Vichy troops, stuck between a rock and a hard place, were simply doing their duty, helped make the campaign seem less horrendous from the British point of view. For de Gaulle, the fact that the Free French had been involved caused a problem, as the Vichy representatives were unwilling to negotiate with his Movement, and thus the peace was concluded between Vichy and Britain, minimising the gains of the Free French. The involvement of the Free French also failed as a recruiting tool as, rather than being seen to be France taking the fight to the enemy, de Gaulle was seen as responsible for a "fratricidal French conflict",<sup>37</sup> pitting Frenchmen against Frenchmen. Consequently, only one in seven French soldiers joined the Free French Movement after the campaign, the rest being repatriated, with an increased sense of Anglophobia. Unfortunately, the difficulties of resourcing the Syrian campaign had a cumulative effect on Wavell, who found himself weakened in his preparations for Operation Battleaxe.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Gilbert, *Finest Hour*, p. 1102.

<sup>37</sup> Mangold, *Britain and the Defeated French*, p. 77.

<sup>38</sup> Battleaxe was Wavell's counter offensive against Rommel, launched 15 June 1941, Gilbert, *Finest Hour*, p. 1112.

Ultimately, the struggle in Syria, and the inability to defend Crete was frustrating Churchill, and talk of replacing the General began. In fact, so frustrated was Churchill, that he made the claim that "the Middle East had been very badly managed. If he could be put in command there he would gladly lay down his present office".<sup>39</sup> The claim appears to have been serious, as his Private Secretary, John Colville, noted in his diary that he would "even renounce the cigars and alcohol!"<sup>40</sup>

It was the Syria campaign and its outcomes which set the scene for relations between Britain and the Free French for the next few months. De Gaulle, having suffered politically, had major concerns over the campaign and the terms of the armistice. In late June, whilst the campaign was still ongoing, he criticised the Middle East Headquarters over its conduct, believing they saw the Syrian campaign as a "tiresome and unnecessary military commitment; whilst he regarded it on the much higher level of international politics and the whole future of Anglo-French relationship".<sup>41</sup> He believed that Free French needs were being ignored, and that the action taken was to meet British interests. This train of thought continued after the conflict, when he was highly critical of the armistice terms, especially as British troops were left in occupation in Syria. In a message to Churchill de Gaulle commented that he and the Free French "consider this convention as basically opposed to military and political interests of Free France ... and in its form extremely painful for our dignity".<sup>42</sup> At a meeting with Churchill in September this criticism continued, but fortunately the personal relationship between the two men meant Churchill was able to calm de Gaulle and reassure him that Britain sought "no selfish advantage, pursued no Imperial ambitions in Syria", and that they had "no desire what ever to supplant France".<sup>43</sup> It is interesting to note how different personnel led to different outcomes, as a few days later de Gaulle spoke with Eden along the same lines, but was much less inclined

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<sup>39</sup> Colville, *Fringes of Power*, 25 May 1941, p. 338.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, 25 May 1941, p. 338.

<sup>41</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/15A, Lampson to FO, 29 June 1941.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*, Lampson to FO, 21 July 1941.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*, Meeting between Churchill and de Gaulle, 12 September 1941.



to agree with Eden, despite being told much the same as he had been by Churchill.<sup>44</sup>

One thing Eden took from these conversations was an admiration for the General's spirit and tenacity, and he acknowledged that this was part of what helped de Gaulle keep the flame of France alive. Eden also commented that "As the war unfolded we were to have experience enough of de Gaulle's tenacity. If it made him seem contumacious, especially to our American allies, perhaps we should have learnt from it. Some of the faults of later years might have been avoided if we had shown more of the same spirit".<sup>45</sup> This was clearly Eden writing with hindsight, but as we shall see, such ideas were also held, if not ultimately pressed, by Eden at the time.

The replacement of Wavell by General Sir Claude Auchinleck in July<sup>46</sup> was accompanied by political change. Churchill's old friend and liaison with de Gaulle, Edward Spears, had complained about lack of coordination between the military and political spheres, and it was decided to create a Minister of State in the Middle East, with full authority to co-ordinate the activities there.<sup>47</sup> The man selected was Major Oliver Lyttelton, then President of the Board of Trade, whose friendship with Churchill ensured he had his confidence, and whose hard work and dynamism endeared him to Spears, who noted that his arrival "transformed the whole scene".<sup>48</sup> Other changes were also afoot, as a set of reforms, commissioned by Eden and presented by Sir Malcolm Robertson,<sup>49</sup> recommended the amalgamation of the Consular Service with the Foreign Office and Diplomatic Services, and the introduction of a broader system of entry and increased grants and allowances.<sup>50</sup> It was hoped that these changes, along with Eden's proposed pension plan, would enable the Foreign Office to recruit the best people and

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<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, Meeting between Eden and de Gaulle, 19 September 1941.

<sup>45</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 250.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 250-251.

<sup>47</sup> Spears, *Fulfilment of a Mission*, p. 21.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*, p. 21.

<sup>49</sup> Malcolm Robinson was the Former Ambassador in Buenos Aires.

<sup>50</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 257.

maximise their potential. Whilst some of the plans could not be implemented during the war, they were approved, and Eden began preparations for a White Paper on the issue, which came before Parliament in January 1943. All this, it was hoped, would allow for the improvement in diplomatic relations by improvement of personnel. The suggestion does not seem a bad one, as the ability to utilise the best personnel to the best of their potential should have meant a reduction in chaos and confusion that often hampered diplomatic relations. The necessity for this was born out by a telegram from Lyttelton which warned that de Gaulle was playing off the multiple parties in the Middle East as a result of the poor communications and slow decision making process, and that, if left unchecked, "Spears and my position becomes compromised".<sup>51</sup>

The final personnel change was the removal, by Vichy, of Weygand, who had been used as the American justification to continue their policy of aid to North Africa, as he was seen as a block on Vichy from within, having spoken against the Paris Protocols, and protested about the supply of French war material from North Africa to Germany.<sup>52</sup> His removal suggested German pressure had finally been felt at Vichy, and should have been the catalyst for a strong policy of support for the Free French. Whilst the initial American response to suspend economic assistance to North Africa gave some hope, this was short lived, and they soon made excuses to continue the supply of aid. The Foreign Office was relatively unmoved by the news, having "never set much hope on Weygand",<sup>53</sup> and didn't see the situation as being radically altered. The pro-active changes in personnel looked to be a necessary way to try and improve the situation, though their success would only be visible in time. The limited reaction to Weygand's dismissal in Britain suggests that the policy of collaboration was coming to an end, and Churchill's comment

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<sup>51</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/15A, Telegram from Lyttelton via Lampson to FO, 17 November 1941.

<sup>52</sup> See Chapter 5 of Thomas, *Britain and Vichy*,

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*, p. 115.

that "it is now or never with the Vichy French, and their last chance of redemption"<sup>54</sup> supports this.

So it seems that, as the end of 1941 approached, little had been achieved in improving Anglo-French relations. The attempts to further the Free French Movement by involving them in the Syrian campaign backfired, as it reduced de Gaulle's prestige, and that of the Movement, and failed both as a recruiting tool and an attempt to increase control in North Africa for the Free French. The attempt to negotiate with Vichy and bring them on-side had many stumbling blocks, the most obvious one being the American insistence that supplies to Vichy were the best way to bring them over to the allies, and unfortunately even the removal of Weygand failed to change the American policy. The attempts to change personnel had limited success, as some of the proposed reforms would not come into effect until after the war, though the change of military command was supposed to provide renewed impetus in Britain's war effort. The creation of a Minister of State in the Middle East was the most positive personnel change, aimed at improving the co-ordination of both political and military policy, though it appears the practicalities of multiple people with responsibility in the Middle East was also a downside, as it still resulted in confusion and slow communications, a situation which could be exploited by de Gaulle. As shall be seen below, however, a possible explanation for the limited and unsuccessful efforts to resolve the French situation was the fact that much of Britain's political energy was being focused on the change in the diplomatic and military alignment that came as a result of the Russian entry into the war.

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<sup>54</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, C-129x 20 November 1941 quoted in Kimball, W.F [Ed.]. *Churchill & Roosevelt, The Complete Correspondence: Volume I. Alliance emerging, October 1933-November 1942*, (Princeton, 1984), p. 269-270.

'A favourable reference to the Devil'

Despite their best efforts, the British initiative to warn Russia of the German danger had thus far been met with indifference, and was considered an attempt to embroil Russia in an unnecessary war with Germany.<sup>55</sup> In order to hide any idea of collaboration with the British, Russia embarked upon a period of 'appeasement' towards Germany in an effort to maintain peace. One such act was the Soviet-Japanese neutrality pact of April 1941, which provided that the two powers would "undertake to maintain peaceful and friendly relations between themselves and mutually to respect the territorial integrity and inviolability of the other contracting party".<sup>56</sup> This, and the ceremony surrounding the visit of Japanese Foreign Minister Matsuoka, was designed to show that Russia was moving closer towards the Axis, a view confirmed by Matsuoka when meeting the German Ambassador in Moscow, Count Friedrich von der Schulenburg, after its conclusion.<sup>57</sup> Conversely, Maisky attempted, unsuccessfully, to convince Eden the pact was simply an extension of the Soviet desire "not to be drawn into hostilities"<sup>58</sup> and did not mean Russia was being drawn towards Germany, making Eden suspect that Maisky was not fully informed of Soviet policy.<sup>59</sup> After this, it seems that the telegram affair and the changed attitude of Moscow meant that Eden had, for the time being, decided to stop chasing after Russia, feeling that "if the Russians made no approach after my conversation with Maisky, this would show that they were not yet prepared to revise their policy towards Germany".<sup>60</sup>

That Eden made this decision seems to show a degree of foresight, as the prevailing attitude in Russia during April and May was one of conciliation towards Germany, making it difficult for the British to improve relations. The continuing activity of concession prompted Cripps to note that these actions "seem to point on giving in to German pressure. We all feel pretty certain this country

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<sup>55</sup> Roberts, *Soviet Union*, p. 135.

<sup>56</sup> Degras, *Soviet Documents*, Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact and Joint Declaration, p. 486.

<sup>57</sup> Sontag and Beddie, *Nazi Soviet Relations*, Telegrams from Schulenburg to the German Foreign Office, 13 April 1941, pp. 322-324.

<sup>58</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/24B, Eden to Cripps, 16 April 1941.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 265.

will go to the very furthest limits possible to avoid war".<sup>61</sup> After a difficult period where Russia was solely concentrating on Germany, the increasing evidence of an impending German attack on Russia led to the decision that a final attempt to improve relations should be made, and that Cripps should return home for consultation.<sup>62</sup>

This decision was made partly for consultation, but also because many in the Foreign Office felt Cripps had become too inconsistent with his policy attitude, which was seen as contradictory to the Department's view. Cadogan commented that "it cannot be good that we take one line while our Ambassador takes two or more others in Moscow".<sup>63</sup> Cripps returned to England in June, which caused concern in Moscow as Rudolph Hess, Hitler's deputy, had flown to Britain in May on an ill-fated peace mission. Stalin feared that Cripps' withdrawal meant Britain was planning to sign a peace agreement with Germany, an idea Cripps encouraged in warnings to Vyshinsky and Molotov during April. Maisky was also worried by this, and urgently asked to see Eden and Sir Walter Monckton, Director-General of the Ministry of Information and a close friend of Cripps, to discuss this issue. Eden assured him that Cripps had been asked to "come home for a brief spell for consultation . . . it was our habit to seek to maintain contact with distant Embassies in this way"<sup>64</sup> and Monckton assured him that Cripps "had not contemplated returning finally to this country".<sup>65</sup>

Desirous of making a final attempt to improve relations, Eden held frequent meetings with Maisky to update him on intelligence reports. On 2 June he informed Maisky that "Germany was making considerable concentrations of land and air forces against Russia".<sup>66</sup> Maisky accepted this, though did not believe that Germany would actually attack Russia, suggesting "it would be a very big

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<sup>61</sup> Gorodetsky, *Stafford Cripps*, 10 May 1941, p. 105.

<sup>62</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 266, TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/24B, Eden to Cripps, 5 June 1941.

<sup>63</sup> FO 800/279, Cadogan's minute 28 April 1941 on Sargents' Memorandum on Cripps' behaviour as Ambassador in Moscow, 26 April 1941, quoted in Ross, *FO and the Kremlin*, p. 72.

<sup>64</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/24B, Eden to Cripps, 5 June 1941.

<sup>65</sup> Gorodetsky, *Stafford Cripps*, Letter from Monckton to Lady Cripps, 6 June 1941, p. 108.

<sup>66</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 266.

undertaking, the Soviet army was well equipped and would not have to fight with sticks, as it did last time".<sup>67</sup> He asserted that Germany had never fought large armoured divisions, and its ten armoured divisions could face up to fifteen Russian armoured divisions, though Eden was sceptical of this figure.<sup>68</sup> Maisky displayed confidence in the Russian ability to defend in the unlikely event of a German attack, and had good reason for this, as Russian military combat strength had seen a 280% increase since 1939.<sup>69</sup> It had also increased its military manpower from 2 million to over 5 million, from under 100 divisions to over 300.<sup>70</sup> Thus on the eve of war, the Russians were confident that Germany would not attack, but equally confident that if they did, they would be more than capable of defending themselves. This helps explain why, during June, the British were unsuccessful in attempts to bring Russia closer, despite the continued presentation of intelligence information, as Russia felt no need of an alignment which might provoke a German attack. In a telegram to Roosevelt, Churchill informed him that "From every source at my disposal, including some most trustworthy, it looks as if a vast German onslaught on Russia was imminent".<sup>71</sup> Even though the two were not allied, the British were showing a genuine concern at the German troop build-up and honestly felt that it was important to warn Russia, not just as a sign that the British were not out to see the Soviets destroyed, but also because it would earn them goodwill with the Soviet leadership for making such an effort. Unfortunately the Russians denounced the warnings as "clumsy fabrications",<sup>72</sup> still believing Britain was trying to bring them into an unnecessary war. The one ray of light was the conclusion of an agreement over the Baltic sailors, and by 20 June preparations were complete for them to be dispatched to the Soviet Union. However, by the time Maisky received his final instructions, the Soviet Union was at war with Germany.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> *Ibid*, p. 267.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*, p. 267.

<sup>69</sup> Roberts, *Soviet Union*, p. 139.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid*, p. 139.

<sup>71</sup> CCA, Churchill Papers, CHAR 20/39/127, Churchill to Roosevelt, 15 June 1941.

<sup>72</sup> Degras, *Soviet Documents*, Soviet denial of reported threat, 13 June, 1941, p. 489.

<sup>73</sup> Maisky, *Memoirs*, pp. 150-151.

Early on the morning of Sunday 22 June, just as Cripps had predicted the day before,<sup>74</sup> and with the accuracy of movement and aims he had predicted as early as March 1941,<sup>75</sup> Germany invaded the Soviet Union. Colville received the news, and immediately informed the guests staying at Chequers, noting in his diary that this “produced a smile of satisfaction on the faces of the PM, Eden and [John] Winant”.<sup>76</sup> At mid-day, Molotov made a broadcast informing Russia about the attack, which came with no declaration of war, another Cripps prediction,<sup>77</sup> and placing the blame on Germany for their aggressive and “bloodthirsty”<sup>78</sup> actions. Maisky referred to the German actions as “sheer banditry”,<sup>79</sup> and told Eden he hoped there could now be an understanding between the two countries.<sup>80</sup> That evening Churchill made a speech that had taken so long to compose it was not ready until twenty minutes before it was due to be delivered. This meant neither the War Cabinet, nor Eden had reviewed it.<sup>81</sup> The day before, Churchill had remarked to Colville that “he will go all out to help Russia”,<sup>82</sup> and later stated that “he had only one single purpose – the destruction of Hitler – and his life was much simplified thereby. If Hitler invaded Hell he would at least make a favourable reference to the Devil!”<sup>83</sup> In his speech he made several favourable references to Russia, more so than Eden had contemplated,<sup>84</sup> but he never referred to the Russians as allies, a proviso given to him by Eden and the Chiefs of Staff.<sup>85</sup> His speech allayed the Russian fear that Britain would sign a separate peace with Germany, and helped to boost morale in Britain and confidence in Churchill’s

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<sup>74</sup> Gorodetsky, *Stafford Cripps*, Extract from Maisky’s Diary entry for 21 June 1941, p. 112.

<sup>75</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/26518, Cripps to FO and attached minutes, 24-28 March 1941.

<sup>76</sup> Colville, *Fringes of Power*, 22 June 1941, p. 351.

<sup>77</sup> Gorodetsky, *Stafford Cripps*, Extract from Maisky’s Diary for 18 June, 1941, p. 112.

<sup>78</sup> Degras, *Soviet Documents*, Extracts from Molotov’s broadcast about the German invasion, 22 June 1941, p. 491.

<sup>79</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 270.

<sup>80</sup> Maisky, *Memoirs*, pp. 157-158.

<sup>81</sup> Colville, *Fringes of Power*, 22 June 1941, p. 351. See also Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, Editors note to entry 22 June 1941, p.389.

<sup>82</sup> Colville, *Fringes of Power*, 21 June 1941, p. 350.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid*, p. 350.

<sup>84</sup> Carlton, *Churchill and the Soviet Union*, p. 84.

<sup>85</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/29560 N3056/3014/38, quoted in Editors text, Gorodetsky, *Stafford Cripps*, p. 114.

Government. It also provided a clear and undeniable aim, to beat Germany and support Russia. Despite the argument made by Rothwell, that "never can two countries have become allies under less amicable circumstances than Britain and the Soviet Union in June 1941",<sup>86</sup> allies they had become, although not yet in name, and thanks to Eden's efforts in the preceding months, the circumstances were more amicable than Rothwell may have liked to admit.

The fact Russia had suddenly been brought in on the British side required a major rethink in Anglo-Soviet relations. Britain had to go from viewing Russia as a potential enemy to virtually an ally over the course of a weekend, and this required new diplomatic, military and economic strategies. One of the first agreements concluded was the provision of military equipment to aid Russia in their defence against the German assault. Despite experiencing a rapid, if brutal, technological advance under the leadership of Stalin, Russia was still behind her western counterparts, and so the British thought they could gain cheap goodwill in Russia by giving supplies, information about new military designs, and details of German aerial tactics, having experienced these first hand. In July Cripps had an interview with Molotov, and his report repeatedly stressed the need for maintaining a stream of good quality information, noting that "we must go all out even if we think that there is some risk involved ... if we want the Russians to fight our battle all out".<sup>87</sup> The fact that there was a continued supply of information, alongside an exchange of military missions, suggests that Britain was committed to the Russian cause after it had passed its initial danger period following the invasion. Maisky commented to Eden that he was "very glad we had acted so promptly in the despatch of our missions to Moscow",<sup>88</sup> especially compared to his experience two years previously during the negotiations for an Anglo-Soviet alliance. The history of slow progress in relations was one that was going to be hard to overcome, but the fact Britain had acted quickly, thus straying from their

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<sup>86</sup> Rothwell, V. *Britain and the Cold War 1941-1947*, (London, 1982), p. 74.

<sup>87</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/24B, Cripps to FO, 2 July 1941.

<sup>88</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/29466, Eden to Cripps, 30 June 1941.



traditional speed of diplomacy, certainly presented the appearance that they were sincere in their desire to assist Russia. This attitude wouldn't be surprising, as it was in Britain's best interest to maintain the Russian resistance, as the more time and energy Germany spent fighting Russia was breathing space for Britain, but not everyone was initially convinced that the resistance would hold out.

As part of the co-operation between the two powers, and as a method of improving relations and testing the apparent sincerity of the British, Stalin suggested at a meeting with Cripps in early July that a Joint Declaration should be issued. He felt that, without this, "co-operation was not possible", and suggested that it should be of a "purely general nature", under the two headings of mutual help and no separate peace.<sup>89</sup> Whilst Cripps initially thought this might be difficult, the terms don't appear to have been that controversial and later in the same meeting he suggested that "His majesty's Government were wholly determined upon both these points".<sup>90</sup> When put before the War Cabinet, this was seen as an unobjectionable solution; not least because Churchill had decided the night before that it should be accepted, subject to approval from the Dominions.<sup>91</sup> Neither Churchill nor Eden made much of this in their post-war writing, but the diaries of Cadogan and Harvey suggest this was a more contentious issue than Eden or Churchill made out. Cadogan notes that, in a conversation with Eden, Sir Orme Sargent, the Under-Secretary of State of the Foreign Office, and Butler, he was "in favour of giving them all they want - no haggling. Winston wants to do the same and to send a personal message to Stalin. A. against that".<sup>92</sup> Interestingly, Harvey wrote the day before that "A.E. again pressed P.M. for more support to be given to Russia"<sup>93</sup> but the next day wanted to restrain Churchill from sending an impetuous message to Stalin. Harvey suggests that "A. is having some difficulty with the P.M. who likes to take all the decisions and get all the credit!",<sup>94</sup> a suggestion backed up by a minute sent by Eden to Churchill on his proposed

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<sup>89</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/29467, Cripps to FO, 8 July 1941.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> Harvey, *War Diaries*, 9 July 1941, p. 17.

<sup>92</sup> Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 9 July 1941, p. 392.

<sup>93</sup> Harvey, *War Diaries*, 8 July 1941, p.16.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 July 1941, p.17.

personal telegram to Stalin, where Eden showed clear signs of frustration with the meddling of the Prime Minister. He commented that "I do not want you to become involved in the day to day details of diplomacy ... this is beneath Prime Ministers!"<sup>95</sup>

Whilst the proposal of a joint declaration was relatively innocuous, it is interesting that it caused a disagreement between Eden and Churchill over the protocol and procedure of the conduct of foreign policy. Ultimately, Eden backed down and Churchill's personal message was sent. "Winston insisted, and the sheep baa'ed in chorus"<sup>96</sup> remarked Cadogan at his Foreign Secretary's inability to stand against Churchill. This would not be the only time Eden and Churchill would have such a disagreement. After a brief exchange of drafts, a satisfactory text was achieved, and Cripps was authorised to sign it, much to his delight. The agreement, signed on 12 July, was regarded as being the "foundation stone in the system of Anglo-Soviet relations during the Second World War"<sup>97</sup> and for Cripps its signature allowed him to reflect that "I feel at last that I have accomplished something worthwhile".<sup>98</sup> The main terms were that neither country would sign a separate peace treaty with Germany, and both countries would offer each other any mutual assistance and support possible, though the wording was careful to avoid any specific quantification of assistance. Perhaps Churchill failed to mention this in his writing as wanting to go all out to help Russia would go against his presentation of the importance and inevitability of the Anglo-American special relationship, and Eden's neglect possibly stems from the fact he was generally more favourable towards Russia, and didn't want this appearance and distinction from Churchill blighted by revelations that he tried to restrain offers of support. The truth may never be known, but it is an interesting historical conundrum.

Whilst there was no formal quantification of assistance at this point, it was felt that Churchill's message to Stalin in his initial reaction to the German invasion

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<sup>95</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/29467, Eden minute to Churchill, 9 July 1941.

<sup>96</sup> Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 9 July 1941, p. 392.

<sup>97</sup> Maisky, *Memoirs*, p. 166.

<sup>98</sup> Gorodetsky, *Stafford Cripps*, 12 July 1941, p. 125.

(codename Barbarossa) was sufficient evidence of Britain's level of commitment.<sup>99</sup> Indeed the Russians took it to mean that Britain would go all out, and within a month both Maisky and Stalin were making demands for Britain to open a Second Front in Western or Northern Europe against Germany to relieve some of their burden.<sup>100</sup> This issue was one that would re-appear many times, and Churchill noted in his memoirs that "the Russian pressure for the establishment of a Second Front was initiated at the very beginning of our correspondence, and this theme was to recur throughout our subsequent relations".<sup>101</sup> Whilst pressing firmly for a Second Front, Stalin also made demands for the use of British troops on the Russian front, but Eden had reservations about offering this level of assistance. Not only were there severe resource and shipping limitations on the amount and type of aid that Britain could supply, there was also a significant unwillingness, born out of a sense of hypocrisy, to aid Russia when Britain had been left alone during the previous year. A telegram from Cripps suggesting Russia thought Britain was standing back and resting<sup>102</sup> received the angry reply from Eden that "They certainly have no right to reproach us. They brought their own fate upon themselves ... We were left alone for a whole year [...] If we had been invaded and destroyed in July or August 1941 [sic], or starved out this year in the Battle of the Atlantic, they would have remained utterly indifferent ... We have done our very best to help them at the cost of deranging all our plans for rearmament ... We will do anything more in our power that is sensible, but it would be silly to send two or three British or British-Indian divisions into the heart of Russia to be surrounded and cut to pieces as a symbolic sacrifice".<sup>103</sup> Eden was not alone in this view, as Churchill noted that "Up to the moment when the Soviet Government was set upon by Hitler they seemed to care for no one but themselves ... Now, having been deceived and taken by surprise, they were themselves under the flaming German Sword. Their first impulse and lasting policy was to demand all possible

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<sup>99</sup> Churchill's broadcast, 22 June 1941, quoted in Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, p. 331-333.

<sup>100</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/24B, Eden to Cripps, 7 July 1941 and Stalin to Churchill, 20 July 1941.

<sup>101</sup> Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, p. 343.

<sup>102</sup> TNA, Prime Ministers Papers, PREM 3/395/6, Cripps to Prime Minister, 26 October 1941.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid*, Eden to Cripps, 28 October 1941.

succour from Great Britain and her Empire".<sup>104</sup> Whilst spiteful, it was a valid argument for not providing the level of assistance the Soviet Government demanded, as it would have been no concern to Russia if Britain had been defeated in 1940 or 1941, yet now they expected Britain to risk their own survival and war effort by supplying and even fighting alongside the Russian armies. Supply convoys and fighter squadrons were sent to Russia, as well as American aid shipped via Britain, so clearly such sentiments had only a minor effect on the aid sent. Churchill noted that "there was little we could do, and I tried to fill the void by civilities",<sup>105</sup> as what little supplies could be sent due to the difficulties of both supply and shipping were not enough to quench the Russia thirst for assistance.

The balance of international relations was about to be upset, however, as on 12 August 1941 the Atlantic Charter was signed, and this would cause significant problems for Anglo-Soviet relations. Upon his return to the Admiralty Churchill struck up a unique relationship and correspondence with Roosevelt, as evidenced by three substantial volumes of Kimball's *'Complete Correspondence'*. It was possibly as a result of this relationship that Churchill was, as Charmley suggests, a "rare-bird"<sup>106</sup> in British ruling circles. Unlike Eden and his Department, Churchill showed great enthusiasm for America, and was seemingly unconcerned at the growing British dependence on the United States and Roosevelt. It was with this spirit that Churchill accepted the offer to meet Roosevelt in August 1941. Churchill took with him his personal staff, military advisors and Cadogan,<sup>107</sup> and the party arrived at the rendezvous, Placenta Bay, on 9 August 1941. Though Cadogan suggests much of Churchill's time on the voyage involved playing Backgammon, he does note that on one occasion he had to draft something about the Far East for Churchill.<sup>108</sup> After naval courtesies had been exchanged, the two parties had their

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<sup>104</sup> Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, p. 338.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid*, p. 345.

<sup>106</sup> Charmley, *End of Glory*, p. 458.

<sup>107</sup> For a full list see Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, pp. 380-381.

<sup>108</sup> Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 8 August 1941, p. 397.

first meeting, and were straight to business. Churchill records that Roosevelt wanted to draw up “a joint declaration laying down certain broad principles which should guide our policies along the same road”,<sup>109</sup> and the next morning dictated his ideas for these in broad terms to Cadogan, who then managed to make a draft of both, and have them approved by Churchill.<sup>110</sup> These drafts, which would form the basis of the joint declaration known as the Atlantic Charter, were written by Cadogan, but in his memoirs Churchill doesn’t acknowledge this, instead suggesting the draft was “my text” and commenting that “I am glad it should be on record that the substance and spirit of what came to be called the “Atlantic Charter” was in its first draft a British production cast in my own words”.<sup>111</sup> Whilst Churchill amended Cadogan’s draft, it seems unfair that there is no reference at all to Cadogan in Churchill’s records of the proceedings.

The first draft of the Charter laid out the five articles covering no territorial aggrandisement; no territorial changes against the wishes of the people; the right of people to choose their government; fair and equitable distribution of produce; and peace and security free from fear and armaments.<sup>112</sup> Roosevelt, after seeing this, proposed the addition of two new clauses, encompassing safety of the seas and oceans and the abandonment of force and the disarmament of nations.<sup>113</sup> He also proposed an amendment to the British fourth article, which was initially unacceptable, but Churchill notes that he gave a compromise wording that would, he hoped, be acceptable to the War Cabinet. Though they did not accept this, and indeed offered their own draft, Churchill didn’t press the matter, since Roosevelt had accepted his other amendments, and the Cabinets insertion of an article on social security.<sup>114</sup> So it was that, with only a minor snag over some wording, which was quickly overcome, the Atlantic Charter was signed on 12 August 1941.

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<sup>109</sup> Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, p. 382.

<sup>110</sup> Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 10 August 1941, p. 398.

<sup>111</sup> Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, p. 385 and p. 386.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 385-6 – there are many detailed reproductions of the clauses, so they have been simplified to avoid unnecessary repetition.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid*, p. 386.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 392-393.

That the process was not a difficult one is shown in Cadogan's diary, as only on 10 August does he mention drafting something, and only twice more does he mention the draft Charter, one was a quick reference to the fact he had the amended texts agreed with Sumner Welles, the U.S. Under-Secretary of State, and a second to the fact they were confirmed before being signed.<sup>115</sup> It could also have been because there was nothing in the text that was seen as controversial. Harvey felt it a "terribly woolly document full of all the old clichés of the League of Nations period",<sup>116</sup> and Eden, although not mentioning it in his memoirs, commented that he was "chilled with Wilsonian memories".<sup>117</sup> Charmley offers the amusing critique that it "amounted to little more than a declaration from a conference of bishops that they were against sin".<sup>118</sup> Whilst that may have been the case, it was the impact of the document, rather than its content, which was to cause concern. Churchill believed that it would herald American entry into the war, an illusion Roosevelt did little to dispel, but also that its clause on self-determination did not apply to the British Empire. The Foreign Office, however, were concerned that Roosevelt was trying to "put the USA on top", with a view to "monopolise the limelight of the peace".<sup>119</sup> Whether this was the case only time would tell, but the signature of this document was taken as evidence of the need to start thinking as a Department when it came to foreign policy, especially in terms of long-term policy. It also meant that they had imposed upon them a framework for the conduct of the war and the peace, which they would have to act within, thus further restricting their freedom of action.

These realisations were to become painfully clear over the next few months. In what was the biggest sign of the new found Anglo-Soviet co-operation, in September Churchill sent the Minister of Supply, Sir William 'Max' Beaverbrook, to Moscow for fact finding and to hold high level discussions with Stalin. He was

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<sup>115</sup> Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 10 and 12 August 1941, pp. 398-401.

<sup>116</sup> Harvey, *War Diaries*, 12 August 1941, p. 31.

<sup>117</sup> Eden's diary entry, 21 July 1941, quoted in Dutton, *Eden*, p. 148.

<sup>118</sup> Charmley, *End of Glory*, p. 460.

<sup>119</sup> Harvey, *War Diaries*, 12 August 1942, p. 31.

accompanied by Averell Harriman, Roosevelt's special representative in London, and General Hastings Ismay, Chief Staff Officer to Churchill, and was tasked with coming to an agreement with Stalin on what assistance the Soviet Union required. Britain faced many difficulties in providing the level of assistance Russia was expecting, and Cripps felt his limited understanding of the military situation was hampering relations, so it was also hoped that this mission would allow for higher level strategic discussions to take place between high ranking officials who had up-to-date knowledge of British military resources, strategy and capability.<sup>120</sup> Though Churchill makes no note of it in his memoirs, the idea for this originated from a conversation between Cripps and Harry Hopkins, Roosevelt's special emissary to Churchill, with Cripps noting in his diary that "we agreed upon the way the matter was to be handled. He will see both the Prime Minister and the President and will tell them my views as well. I have suggested that it would be a good thing for me to go home and then come out again in the position of a member of the cabinet with the added authority not to stay but to settle up the future plan of help with some representative of the president".<sup>121</sup> Thus Cripps was achieving something else useful, as his suggestion to go home and return in a different capacity, albeit not taken up, was followed to the extent of sending someone, along with an American representative, with authority to discuss Russian needs and establish ways of meeting them.<sup>122</sup>

Harriman and Beaverbrook arrived in Moscow in one piece on 29 September, despite a close encounter with Russian anti-aircraft fire, after which Beaverbrook joked that "we do not recommend any more anti-aircraft guns for Russia!"<sup>123</sup> Despite hard bargaining and argument over specific details, an agreement was eventually reached, though Cripps noted that "the eventual lists were agreed but that does not mean that we have promised anything like all they wanted".<sup>124</sup> Cadogan commented on Beaverbrook's return that "Max gave a light hearted

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<sup>120</sup> TNA, Prime Ministers Papers, PREM 3/395/6, Cripps to Eden, 26 October 1941.

<sup>121</sup> Gorodetsky, *Stafford Cripps*, 1 August 1941, p. 138.

<sup>122</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/3A, Churchill's letter to Stalin, 21/9/41.

<sup>123</sup> Gilbert, *Finest Hour*, pp. 1200 and 1207.

<sup>124</sup> Gorodetsky, *Stafford Cripps*, 2 October 1941, p. 176.

account of his Moscow mission which, as I know from my sources, was a complete newspaper stunt. He *is* a scamp!".<sup>125</sup> Unsurprisingly as it was his mission, and he was one of the main exponents of aid to Russia in Government, Beaverbrook was upbeat about the negotiations, suggesting that "the entire success of the Agreement is due to the enthusiasm which the Russians have shown as the negotiations have turned out to their liking ... The Russians are deeply grateful and absolutely confident. I am satisfied that we have a faithful friend now".<sup>126</sup> The agreement set out that Russia would receive monthly supplies, either from Britain or America, of large amounts of war material. This included 1,800 British hurricanes and spitfires, 900 American fighters and 900 American bombers, 1,500 naval guns and eight destroyers by the end of 1941, as well as a monthly supply of 1,000 tanks, 300 anti-aircraft guns, 300 anti-tank guns and 2,000 armoured cars.<sup>127</sup> It will be seen later in this study whether or not this planned program of supply was a success, but its creation suggests that Britain was now planning for a longer term Russian resistance, and the conversations acted as a good stepping stone to improving relations.

On the political side, Cripps complained that he had not received a report from Beaverbrook, and it seems part of the reason for this was that little was actually discussed. The records that Beaverbrook eventually sent Cripps show that the talks on the first and second days were largely confined to supply, though on the first day there was a debate about peace terms which centred on the Atlantic Charter. This was generally agreed as a basis for peace, though Stalin raised the question of reparations from Germany, which Beaverbrook dodged by restating Churchill's rhetoric that we must win the war first.<sup>128</sup> The most interesting political point discussed was Stalin's suggestion of extending the existing agreements to a full alliance for the war and the post-war, Beaverbrook said he was in agreement

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<sup>125</sup> Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 13 October 1941, p. 408.

<sup>126</sup> TNA, Avon papers, FO 954/3A, Beaverbrook to FO, 2 October 1941.

<sup>127</sup> 'Secret', 'Moscow Conference, 1941', 'Naval Supply Committee, Report', 2 October 1941: CAB 99/7, quoted in Gilbert, *Finest Hour*, pp. 1210-1211.

<sup>128</sup> TNA, Prime Ministers Papers, PREM 3/395/6, Beaverbrook to Cripps, 2 November 1941.



and Stalin felt that the Soviet Government favoured the proposals.<sup>129</sup> There was, however, no formal agreement on whether this should be taken forward, and Cripps' telegram to Eden after he received Beaverbrook's report (on 2 November, a full month after the talks concluded) suggests that they were not, as he states with annoyance that "I am amazed that these most important conversations should now be reported to me for the first time and that apparently little notice has been taken of them by anyone at all".<sup>130</sup> Whilst in general this may have been true, Eden does suggest in his memoirs that "I took up Stalin's mention of a treaty of alliance and told the ambassador that I would be glad to hear any Soviet proposals".<sup>131</sup> That Cadogan, Harvey, Cripps and Maisky fail to mention this in their diaries and memoirs begs the question of authenticity of this action by Eden, but the archival documents suggest that Eden was not just adding in some credit for himself out of hindsight, but had actually raised this issue with Maisky, and Folly notes that Eden raised this issue with the War Cabinet on 13 October.<sup>132</sup> That Stalin had raised the point about the future relations between the two countries, and had only been met with a non-committal statement about winning the war, had also annoyed Cripps, and he was to make this issue one of the recurring themes of his telegrams over the following months.

It can, therefore, be seen that, whilst not necessarily friendly with Russia, the necessity of having to work together was starting to bring greater co-operation between the two powers, as they had to put historic differences behind them in favour of the greater aim of winning the war. Whilst it could be argued that Churchill's rhetoric about winning the war was right as the two powers were now working together in pursuit of the common aim of defeating Germany, it is doubtful whether relations would have been as cordial without the background work of the Foreign Office whilst Russia was still a neutral party. It is worth noting though that the increase in British efforts to improve relations with the Soviet

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<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, Cripps to Eden, 5 November 1941.

<sup>131</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 278.

<sup>132</sup> Folly, M, *Churchill, Whitehall and the Soviet Union, 1940-45*, (Basingstoke, 2000), p. 33.

Union was a clear sign of change, as even though the two powers needed to work together, that alone was no guarantee that they actually would. At many points it could be seen that, because Russia had largely ignored British needs between 1939 and 1941, the British had an argument for ignoring Russian calls for help, but the fact they chose not to do this certainly suggests a shift in the mindset of the Foreign Office. The sending of the military mission, the speed of which was commended, as well as the Beaverbrook and Harriman mission, suggests a clear change of the attitude from 1939 where they were reluctant to negotiate, and eventually sent a delegation without any authority. As 1941 was coming to an end it seems that Britain had gone some way to placate the Soviet Union, though there was clearly room for improvement. It also seems that, due to the scale of the difficulties in dealing with Russia, it is not surprising that relations with the French may have taken a back seat.

## 5) An Eventful Winter

By the winter of 1941, British foreign policy was still dominated by the need to survive and, if possible, to win the war. To this end, relations with three countries were central. If America could be persuaded to enter the war, all would be changed. Russia had entered the war, and that had changed a great deal. Finally France, Britain's original ally, although now split between two competing groups – Vichy and the Free French – remained a constant concern. All three nations would be critical to the British war effort, and also to Foreign Office attempts to begin shaping the post-war world. In the months surrounding the drama of Pearl Harbour, it was Anglo-Soviet relations which occupied Eden's attention; but the credit for one of the most significant developments of this period, his mission to Moscow, lies, in the main, elsewhere.

The Cripps–Harriman idea led to Beaverbrook's mission to Moscow, and it was this visit which served as Eden's cue to step into the spotlight. During discussions, Stalin raised the topic of future relations; questioning Beaverbrook both on peace terms, and the possibility of extending the Anglo-Soviet agreement into a military and political alliance, "not only for war, but for post-war as well".<sup>1</sup> This theme was to be the central pillar of Eden's relationship with both Maisky and Cripps over the following months. Cripps' indignation at being kept in the dark over this issue, a not uncommon complaint by the man regarded as "a lunatic in a country of lunatics" by Churchill,<sup>2</sup> led to Eden becoming increasingly frustrated with his ambassador.<sup>3</sup> That said, Cripps' insistence on raising this topic, and his lengthy telegrams detailing his views on the future shape of Anglo-Soviet relations and post-war Europe, helped keep this item at the front of Eden's mind. Gradually this determination, with pressure from others such as Beaverbrook and Maisky, began to influence Eden's thinking. By early November he was informing

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<sup>1</sup> TNA, Prime Ministers Papers, PREM 3/395/6, Eden to Cripps, 2 November 1941.

<sup>2</sup> Colville, *Fringes of Power*, 12 December 1940, p. 309.

<sup>3</sup> For example TNA, Prime Ministers Papers, PREM 3/395/6, Cripps to Eden, 5 November 1941 and Eden to Cripps, 10 November 1941.

Cripps that he “hoped to visit Moscow in the near future”,<sup>4</sup> when just weeks previously he had ruled out such a visit, stating that there was no reason for any greater effort from Britain.<sup>5</sup> Cripps’ insecurity on being left out was not uncommon, but not always without reason, as he was often ignored by Molotov and others in Moscow, and though thought of as a lunatic, when there was a potential challenge to Churchill’s leadership in 1942 his name was raised as a serious contender. In this case he had been kept informed, so had little reason to protest. Gorodetsky suggests “the initial idea of sending Eden to Moscow was to keep Cripps quiet”,<sup>6</sup> a view he may have derived from Harvey’s diary,<sup>7</sup> but which Eden scouted in his memoirs, where he wrote “there had never been any question” of him going to Moscow to keep Cripps quiet and that “we thought that it would on the whole be better that Cripps should stay”.<sup>8</sup> Churchill’s contemporary message to Cripps stating that “I am sure it would be a mistake from your point of view to leave your post and abandon the Russians and the Soviet cause with which you are so closely associated”<sup>9</sup> appears to confirm the view that Eden’s visit had a wider purpose. That said, it could also have been an indication that this wider purpose was to impose some more balanced and less ideologically driven policy than Cripps had been able to achieve. Churchill sent a personal telegram to Stalin, informing him of the intention to send Eden to Moscow in the near future to discuss “every question relating to the war” and “the whole of this field [post-war organisation] with you”.<sup>10</sup> With the dubious assistance of an excess of “long, querulous and argumentative”<sup>11</sup> telegrams from Cripps, the Foreign Office had already begun working on the possibility of Anglo-Soviet talks, and a memorandum was quickly produced detailing the likely political and military points which could be discussed, alongside the likely

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, Eden to Cripps, 10 November 1941.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, Eden to Cripps, 28 October 1941.

<sup>6</sup> Gorodetsky, *Stafford Cripps*, editors text, p. 212.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, and Harvey, *War Diaries*, 21 November 1941, p. 65.

<sup>8</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 282.

<sup>9</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/29471, Churchill to Cripps (unsent) 15 November 1941, and Gilbert, *Finest Hour*, Churchill to Cripps, 16 November 1941, p. 1236.

<sup>10</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/29472, Churchill to Stalin, 21 November 1941.

<sup>11</sup> Harvey, *War Diaries*, 21 November 1941, p. 65.

sticking points. It also included a memorandum for communication to the Soviet Union, and a proposed joint declaration. The most interesting part of this document is the Cabinet memorandum setting out Eden's views. This suggests Eden felt the post-war focus was to be on Germany; that it was necessary to keep the Americans informed but at arms length; and that Britain should abide by the Atlantic Charter and make no agreement with Russia regarding territorial change.<sup>12</sup> It is interesting that some of the points considered essential by Cripps in his messages were included in this memorandum, despite being ignored or dismissed when they were originally received.<sup>13</sup>

But by the time Eden got to the USSR, the global situation had been transformed by the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour. Against the advice of the Cabinet, Churchill set off for America to construct a grand military alliance, a task which would henceforth dominate his every waking moment. Eden, by contrast, found himself with the difficult task of trying to respond to Soviet suspicions of Britain, and the need to respond to Stalin's territorial ambitions. As something of a "prima donna",<sup>14</sup> Eden was not best pleased at his mission being upstaged, and he was worried lest Churchill return from America with some new commitments, made with limited or no consultation with the Cabinet.<sup>15</sup> He was also concerned that any agreements made with the United States could erode his control over British foreign policy. In his memoirs, Eden reproduces a telephone conversation with Churchill, who defended his trip by stating that "the emphasis of the war had shifted".<sup>16</sup> Although subsequently saying Eden's trip was still important because of the need to consult "our two great allies",<sup>17</sup> it is hard not to wonder whether the simple phrase was a signal to Eden that, no matter what happened in Moscow, with America in the war, it would be of little consequence. Eden's own

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<sup>12</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/29472, Eden's memorandum to the War Cabinet, 29 November 1941.

<sup>13</sup> Including the need to deal with Russia's advanced ideas on the post-war settlement, their particular interest in the Baltic and the issue of reparations/restitution from Germany. TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/29471, Cripps to FO, 20 November 1941.

<sup>14</sup> Carlton, *Eden*, p. 190, Harvey, *War Diaries*, 29 December 1941, p. 81.

<sup>15</sup> Carlton, *Eden*, p. 191, Dutton, *Eden*, p. 188.

<sup>16</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 286.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, p. 286.

comment that “before, we had believed in the end but never seen the means, now both were clear”<sup>18</sup> could also suggest his resignation to the reality that, despite his best efforts, any results would be overshadowed by the fact America was seen as the deciding factor in victory.

By his own admission, Eden arrived in the Soviet Union somewhat dejected.<sup>19</sup> His past experience of negotiations with the Russians, coupled with the telegrams from Cripps complaining of their increasingly impossible demands, did not fill him with much hope that his visit would be satisfactory, and now he had the added pressure that, with Churchill off to America, his visit needed to achieve something meaningful, else it risked being eclipsed. It was in part because of this that Eden had an idea for his visit and that was to create a so-called Volga Charter, an Eastern equivalent of the Atlantic Charter, which would set out the principles of Anglo-Soviet co-operation, their joint vision for the conduct of the war and for the future peace requirements. Although an ambitious project, it was not out of the question. Cadogan was in charge of the project, and before leaving London had drafted a charter which was approved by Eden, though overruled by the Cabinet and Churchill as too detailed. The eventual document was so diluted that Cadogan considered it “as thin as restaurant coffee”,<sup>20</sup> containing only simple statements that the two Governments would work together against Germany both during and after the war; would adhere to the Atlantic Charter; and would make no effort to discuss post-war territorial change.<sup>21</sup> Having weakened the Volga Charter and restricted Eden’s freedom of negotiation with the Atlantic Charter, Churchill, with the Cabinet, and the Chiefs of Staff, also made sure there would be no offer of troops for Russia. This decision made Eden question the validity of the trip, and almost led to its postponement, but for the influence of Beaverbrook.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, p. 286.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, p. 287.

<sup>20</sup> Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 28 November 1941, p. 414.

<sup>21</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/29472, Draft Joint Declaration, contained in Annex II of Eden’s memorandum to the War Cabinet, 29 November 1941.

<sup>22</sup> See Harvey, *War Diaries*, 2 and 3 December 1941, pp. 68-69, Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 4 December 1941, pp. 415-416 and Eden’s diary, 3 December 1941, quoted in Eden, *Reckoning*, pp. 283-284.

His friendship with Churchill made Beaverbrook a good ally for Eden, as he was sympathetic towards Russia, and shared Eden's mindset regarding the need to do more to help them. He used the experience of his discussions with Stalin to insist that he would "much prefer"<sup>23</sup> the provision of machines to men, and, upon Churchill's agreement, this issue was re-examined. The eventual outcome gave Eden one strong card to play in the negotiations, being allowed to offer "the placing of a strong component of the Air Force, say 10 squadrons, on the southern flank of the Russian armies".<sup>24</sup> Whilst this was dependent on British victory in the ongoing operations in Libya, it proved sufficient to re-assure Eden that his mission was worthwhile.

On top of these external restrictions, there were other limiting factors. Eden's own thinking, as seen from his Cabinet memorandum, particularly his commitment to the Atlantic Charter, narrowed the scope of the discussions he could hold. It was also unfortunate that the telegram, sent by Churchill to Stalin, had been drafted by Cadogan, so his own deputy had put him in the position of discussing a subject that had only just begun to be considered. The archive files suggest that it was only in response to telegrams from Stalin that the Department began to realise the need for a broader discussion. One particular telegram, noting the need for a "definite understanding" on both war aims and plans for the organisation of peace, as well as an "agreement" on military assistance against Hitler,<sup>25</sup> received comments from all ranks within the Office, with Cadogan noting the need to "discuss all these matters".<sup>26</sup> Thus it seems that, with these limitations, the idea of a charter on general principles was sensible, as it would not require Eden to go beyond his remit, would put Anglo-Soviet relations on the same formal footing as Anglo-American relations, and would, to an extent, disguise the fact

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<sup>23</sup> Eden's diary, 3 December 1941, quoted in Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 284.

<sup>24</sup> TNA, Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/20/21, War Cabinet Meeting, 6 December 1941, directive from Churchill to Eden.

<sup>25</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/29471, Stalin to Churchill, 8 November 1941.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, Cadogan's comments, 19 November 1941.

that the British had no set ideas with which to meet Stalin regarding the organisation of peace.<sup>27</sup>

So Eden was going with a plan which seems to have fitted the small window within which he could negotiate. He was accompanied by Cadogan, who, based on his past success, was most likely to be able to achieve a draft charter that would prove satisfactory to all parties. Harvey was also in the party, though Cadogan was concerned about his influence on Eden, as he was strongly in favour of working with the Russians, and his diary entries during the trip give clear evidence of this.<sup>28</sup> Cadogan was more ambivalent and, despite maintaining his long standing opinion of the uselessness of Russia, provided balance and grounding to the group, a quality for which he has been greatly extolled.<sup>29</sup> The addition of Maisky, and later Cripps, to this grouping meant that the rational thought of Cadogan was, on paper, outnumbered by 'ideological' impetus, though initially this did not affect Eden's judgement during the early talks. There are many accounts of varying detail of the negotiations, so it would be superfluous to offer another overview.<sup>30</sup> However, an examination of the terms offered by both parties reveals much about the areas which would cause tension between the two unlikely allies throughout the rest of the war – and beyond

### A Piercing, Icy Blast

Upon arrival, the draft declaration was discussed amongst the British delegation and, owing to the influence of Cripps, (considered an "infernal nuisance"<sup>31</sup> by Harvey) was amended into an agreement, something considered more acceptable to Soviet sensibilities. The revised draft dropped the reference to the July agreement, and added three new clauses concerning economic and social

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<sup>27</sup> Folly, *Churchill, Whitehall*, p. 37

<sup>28</sup> Harvey, *War Diaries*, 7 to 29 December 1941, pp. 70-81.

<sup>29</sup> See Neilson and Otte, *The PUS*, pp. 234-264, Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 285.

<sup>30</sup> James, R.R. *Anthony Eden*, (London, 1986), pp. 256-260, Woodward, L. *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War, Volume II*, (London, 1971), pp. 220-237, Thorpe, D.R. *Eden: The Life and Times of Anthony Eden, First Earl of Avon, 1897-1977*, (London, 2003), pp. 267-269.

<sup>31</sup> Harvey, *War Diaries*, 16 December 1941, p. 74.



post-war reconstruction, post-war economic assistance and an undertaking not to sign any secret treaty which may affect post-war reconstruction.<sup>32</sup> This draft seems to have met everything the British wanted at this time, and was not dissimilar to the terms of the Atlantic Charter, although it lacked one or two of the more idealistic points. In agreement form it also seemed likely to satisfy Russian requirements, save for being an actual treaty. Maisky's memoirs indicate he was shown Stalin's two proposed treaties before the first meeting, and felt they could "serve as a basis for negotiations", and that "it will not be particularly difficult to come to an agreement".<sup>33</sup> At the first meeting, the British agreement was presented to Stalin, who gave no reaction, but agreed that Eden could take his two draft treaties and marry the agreement to them.<sup>34</sup> Aside from discussion on a secret protocol, which would have resulted in British recognition of the 1941 Soviet frontiers, the meeting went smoothly, and there was a reasonable chance of an agreement being reached. Despite Harvey's enthusiasm for the "most successful start"<sup>35</sup> to the talks, Eden and Cadogan both had concerns over the secret protocol. Whilst discussed, but deferred during the meeting on the grounds that Eden couldn't agree without first consulting the Cabinet and America, Cadogan noted that "S. [Stalin] indicated his ideas of future frontiers, which would raise a lot of questions"<sup>36</sup> and Eden felt that "Stalin's suggestions for this secret protocol showed me that the hope we had held in London, of being able to confine the discussion of frontiers to the general terms of the Atlantic Charter, had been in vain".<sup>37</sup> Eden was in general agreement with most of Stalin's other proposals and, when studying Stalin's drafts the next day, Cadogan noted that there was "nothing much wrong with them".<sup>38</sup> Stalin's military treaty was short, and didn't go beyond the British agreement. Its articles provided for an alliance and military

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<sup>32</sup> TNA, Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/20/39, Record of Eden's mission to Moscow, British Draft Declaration, 16 December 1941.

<sup>33</sup> Maisky, *Memoirs*, p. 231.

<sup>34</sup> TNA, Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/20/39, Record of Eden's mission to Moscow, Record of interview between Eden and Stalin, 16 December 1941.

<sup>35</sup> Harvey, *War Diaries*, 16 December 1941, p. 74.

<sup>36</sup> Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 16 December 1941, p. 421.

<sup>37</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 289.

<sup>38</sup> Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 17 December 1941, p. 421.

assistance between the two parties; agreements that neither party would negotiate with an aggressive German Government or sign a separate peace, and that neither contracting party would enter into any coalition against the other. The post-war treaty was even shorter, and its articles noted that the two powers would act by mutual agreement on matters relating to post-war organisation, and that they would take all steps possible to prevent Germany violating the peace.<sup>39</sup> When compared to the document, there was nothing in either of the Soviet treaties which would have taken the British beyond their agreement and, aside from Eden needing approval from the Cabinet, there looked nothing to stop the two countries reaching an accord.

In fact, all the British needed to do was turn the treaties into agreements, and they could have been signed there and then. This they did, with the re-drafted military agreement differing little from Stalin's treaty. The post-war agreement, however, added a new article recognising the Atlantic Charter commitments; a detailed article on post-war reconstruction, the principles of non-aggrandisement and non-interference in the internal affairs of others; and an article on post-war economic assistance, though none of these were opposed to any views Stalin had expressed during the first conversation.<sup>40</sup> This effort suggests the British, while wanting an agreement with Stalin, were trying to ensure the views of America were represented, and also attempting to ensure the post-war commitment of Russia to maintain a balance of power in Europe.

This work had been in vain, however, as Stalin, despite initially commenting that it was "interesting",<sup>41</sup> soon began discussing the recognition of the Soviet frontiers, which proved to be the sticking point and main focus of the remainder of the conversations. Whilst known before Eden's visit that Stalin wanted to discuss this,<sup>42</sup> there was no prior indication that he had a detailed plan, and Eden had no authority to make a fixed commitment on the issue. Stalin was insistent on

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<sup>39</sup> TNA, Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/20/39, Record of Eden's mission to Moscow, Stalin's draft political and post-war treaties, 16 December 1941.

<sup>40</sup> TNA, Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/20/39, Record of Eden's mission to Moscow, British re-draft of political and post-war agreements, 17 December 1941.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, Record of interview between Eden and Stalin, 17 December 1941.

<sup>42</sup> See n.25.

the issue, however, and it took great effort from Eden to convince Stalin that he couldn't give a definite answer to these questions now, but would consult the Government and work hard to get a favourable one as soon as possible. At this point Stalin reconsidered the British agreements, but aside from suggesting that some reference to frontiers should be made in the post-war agreement, made no other comment, so it is hard to tell whether or not he agreed with their content. It was at this point that the British delegation began to realise the extent of the difficulty that Britain would face in dealing with Russia. Both Harvey and Cripps suggested that it would be difficult, if not impossible to continue to refuse the Russian demands, with Cripps, in another piece of exemplary foresight, accurately predicting the difficulties to come, commenting that "We are already too late, I fear, to get any sort of arrangement other than that which they are demanding. This will lead to the greatest difficulties with America ... I don't see what we can do but agree on the boundaries which they insist upon keeping, but before we come to that there will be a most difficult period in our relations".<sup>43</sup> Eden had stated to Stalin that "I would like to meet you" over the territorial question, and when Stalin suggested that the Soviet Union might soon occupy the Baltic, responded that "If you were to do so no one would be more delighted than myself".<sup>44</sup> These statements suggest that Eden was, at least on a personal level, sympathetic towards the Soviet demands, and indeed he may have made the latter remark out of a growing realisation that the Soviet Union occupying the Baltic countries would have negated the problem of recognising the frontiers.

It is unfortunate that the remaining meetings were to hinge on the territorial issue. The terms of the agreements were only considered towards the end of the second meeting, but there was little objection to them, and Eden took account of the only comment on content by Stalin, and included a reference to the frontier question, though worded so that consultation on these would be part of the peace

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<sup>43</sup> Gorodetsky, *Stafford Cripps*, 18 December 1941, pp. 223-224.

<sup>44</sup> TNA, Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/20/39, Record of Eden's mission to Moscow, Record of interview between Eden and Stalin, 17 December 1941.

settlement.<sup>45</sup> To supplement this he drafted a letter to Stalin, proposing the initiation of tripartite talks between Britain, the Soviet Union and America at the earliest opportunity on the whole issue of the Soviet frontiers. He also accommodated Maisky's concern over wording, removing the reference to 'no aggrandisement and no interference in the internal affairs of others' in the hope of placating Stalin.<sup>46</sup> Thus in seeking agreement, Eden was willing to sacrifice two key principles, and go beyond his instructions by giving Stalin a reference to frontiers and proposing a tripartite conference. "For none of this", notes Carlton, "did he have authority from London".<sup>47</sup> It was during the third meeting that real difficulty arose, as after agreeing to some minor amendments, Stalin proposed adding to the post-war treaty that the powers would work together after the war "with full regards to the interests of both parties in their security as well as to the interests of the U.S.S.R. in the restoration of frontiers violated by Hitler's aggression".<sup>48</sup> It was this phrase, which Stalin revealed later to mean the frontiers violated in June 1941, which was to be the nail in the coffin for the negotiations. Despite all the previous protests from Eden, Stalin was still asking the impossible, and was determined to gain agreement on this point, even at the expense of the general agreements. It was consequently suggested that Eden should return to London and carry out his promise with regard to the frontiers before there was any further discussion. Eden noted that the meeting "proved completely abortive and I was considerably irritated at what I thought Stalin's unreasonable attitude".<sup>49</sup> For Eden to state this about the man he had extolled in 1935 for being "well-informed at all points that were of concern to him"<sup>50</sup> and having "a remarkable knowledge and understanding of international affairs",<sup>51</sup> suggests that either Stalin really wasn't interested in anything other than his own frontiers, or

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<sup>45</sup> TNA, Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/20/39, Record of Eden's mission to Moscow, Eden's redraft of Article 1, 18 December 1941.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, Eden's redraft of Article 4, 18 December 1941.

<sup>47</sup> Carlton, *Eden*, p. 192.

<sup>48</sup> TNA, Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/20/39, Record of Eden's mission to Moscow, Record of interview between Eden and Stalin, 18 December 1941.

<sup>49</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 297.

<sup>50</sup> Eden, A. *The Eden Memoirs: Facing the Dictators*, (London 1962), p. 153.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*, p. 156.

that he had, on this point at least, lost his grip on international affairs. It could also have been that Eden was simply not very good at negotiating, though given any agreement on any point, no matter how small, would have needed reference to the Cabinet, any lack of ability on Eden's part was probably down to having no hand to play. The extent to which either of these assessments is correct is hard to determine. Stalin was certainly insistent on the Soviet frontiers, but eventually agreed that Eden was not simply obstructing, but was asking to discuss the issue with the people who could make the decision, and he showed both an interest in and understanding of the British military position and British restrictions regarding a Second Front.

It is hard to know whether Stalin realised he had gone too far, or if the complaints session in Eden's room or Cripps's long discussion with Molotov actually had any effect, but at the next meeting there was considerably less argument with regards to frontiers, and more understanding from both sides of the others position. In an effort to get agreement, Eden proposed signing both the documents originally drafted by Stalin and to give Stalin the letter regarding tripartite conversations. He also proposed that they could, upon his return, be transformed into full treaties after securing the consent of the Dominions.<sup>52</sup> Unfortunately, Stalin rejected this idea, and suggested the postponement of the signature until Eden could consult both the British and Dominion Governments, feeling that "if the treaty is signed in London in two or three weeks' time, it will come to much the same thing"<sup>53</sup> as if it was signed there and then, which Eden was not authorised to do. Stalin's desire for treaties forced him to concede that, to get this wish, he had to allow Eden to proceed correctly, which Eden had promised to do, and this concession prevented a breakdown in the negotiations.<sup>54</sup> It also seemed like he had begun to realise the difficulty of not only Eden's but Britain's position as a whole, suggesting that "as regards your repeated references to the necessity... to consult the United States Government, I must confess that I

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<sup>52</sup> TNA, Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/20/39, Record of Eden's mission to Moscow, Record of interview between Eden and Stalin, 20 December 1941.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

had overlooked this fact and had believed your Government to have more freedom of action in these matters".<sup>55</sup> Considering the situation in which he found himself, Eden probably agreed whole heartedly with that sentiment.

Both parties were disappointed not to reach agreement in Moscow, though it was Stalin, not Eden, who complained that "I should perhaps have been in a position to sign these agreements [...] if we had not had these discussions about the frontier",<sup>56</sup> as if forgetting that it was he, not Eden, who insisted on repeatedly raising this topic, and that his determination to discuss treaties meant Eden couldn't sign the agreements. Had he followed Eden's suggestions, the conversations could have produced two signed agreements, whose content would have covered virtually all the demands of both parties, with Stalin in possession of a letter from Eden pledging his support and assistance in bringing about a positive resolution to the frontier issue. Harvey believed that "if Stalin could sign our proposed agreements, it would be fairly easy for A.E. to move Winston to next stage of getting the Cabinet to agree to get Roosevelt to tackle the whole question".<sup>57</sup> Though this idea was hopeful, it did not seem illogical, and looks to have been the best option for Stalin to get what he wanted given Eden saw the agreements as "a first step to getting the further agreements which you want".<sup>58</sup> The requirement to put the question to Roosevelt, however, adds weight to Eden's concern about the dependence on America, and suggests this alliance was already preventing Britain from conducting its own foreign policy affairs.

At the end of the conversations it was decided that a communiqué would be issued so that Eden would not leave empty handed, and "recognising failure" as Cadogan put it, a "short draft of usual colourless communiqué" was prepared.<sup>59</sup> It is worth noting that this would essentially be the 'Volga Charter' Eden had initially hoped to sign, so whilst no further agreement had been reached, Eden would have at least achieved his original goal. In fact, the result was better than

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> Harvey, *War Diaries*, 18 December 1941, p. 77.

<sup>58</sup> TNA, Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/20/39, Record of Eden's mission to Moscow, Record of interview between Eden and Stalin, 20 December 1941.

<sup>59</sup> Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 20 December 1941, p. 422.

the British delegation could have hoped, as Maisky had been tasked with drafting the Soviet version of the communiqué,<sup>60</sup> and managed to achieve a document that was approved by Stalin, and “longer and actually more satisfactory”<sup>61</sup> than the British draft, and was quickly accepted by Eden. The British delegation were impressed with the contents of the Soviet draft, with Cadogan commenting that it was “much better” than hoped.<sup>62</sup> The fact Eden’s draft does not appear to be reproduced, even in the documents relating to the Moscow conversations, makes it hard to tell how much longer and more satisfactory the Soviet draft was, though as it was quite short, the British draft really must have been short and colourless. Despite the positive response of the British delegation, it seems to have fallen short of the credentials they imbued upon it. Those of a more ideological persuasion, such as Harvey and Cripps, suggested that it “contained all about war and post-war collaboration which had been contained in the two agreements”<sup>63</sup> and that “it goes almost all the way in binding us to post-war collaboration”.<sup>64</sup> What it actually did was state that there had been an “exhaustive exchange of views” (presumably in both depth and tiresomeness), which had provided: an “identity of views” relating to the conduct of the war, insofar as both parties thought Hitler should be defeated and it would be beneficial to prevent future German aggression; “important and useful material, which will facilitate a further elaboration of concrete proposals” regarding post-war organisation of peace, to the extent that one side had concrete proposals over which it would not budge, the other had no proposals, and both sides realised from the material gathered that this outcome was unlikely in the near future; and a “new and important forward step towards closer collaboration”, if only because neither side had really achieved anything from the talks, and thus there would need to be more in the future in

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<sup>60</sup> Maisky, *Memoirs*, p. 232.

<sup>61</sup> TNA, Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/20/39, Record of Eden’s mission to Moscow, Eden’s overview of the proceedings, 25 December 1941.

<sup>62</sup> Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 20 December 1941, p. 422.

<sup>63</sup> Harvey, *War Diaries*, 21 December 1941, p. 78.

<sup>64</sup> Gorodetsky, *Stafford Cripps*, 24 December 1941, pp. 226-227.

order to come to a formal agreement.<sup>65</sup> Nowhere did it mention that the two parties had agreed to do anything about these points, and its only similarities to the draft agreements were the inclusion of the statements about Germany. It seems that, expecting failure, those in Moscow got caught up in the excitement of the moment when they actually came away with something. Barker suggests that the British delegation were not particularly successful in their negotiations, and were taken in by Stalin's negotiating tactics. He offered them "first, a pleasing warmth (so thawing his visitors defences); next, a piercing, icy blast; finally, a moderate glow, so that the visitor left grateful for small mercies".<sup>66</sup> This appears accurate, as the first meeting was considered to have gone well; the second and third meetings Stalin was forceful and demanding, with a strength of argument that not only irritated the British delegation, but also saw them begin to think his views were correct and his demands necessary; and then a final meeting where he made some concessions which looked of greater significance than they were, followed by a pleasant celebratory meal to make the trip appear better in hindsight than was the case. This was a tactic he was employ in future negotiations, with both the British and many other countries.

### Stepping Stones

So does this mean the mission was a failure? This is hard to answer, though in the broad sweep of history the fact no formal agreement was reached could be enough evidence to condemn the visit as a failure. This is the picture given in the secondary work, as there are more examples of works which either suggest the mission was a failure or offer no opinion on the matter than works that felt it was a success. When examined in closer detail, however, a different picture emerges, and one that is significantly more flattering of Eden. To say the mission failed because no agreement was reached disregards the serious restrictions that were

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<sup>65</sup> TNA, Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/20/39, Record of Eden's mission to Moscow, Russian draft communiqué, 20 December 1941.

<sup>66</sup> Barker, *Churchill and Eden*, p. 235.



placed on Eden both before, and during, his visit, as even his authority to offer the RAF squadrons was withdrawn part-way through. It also ignores Eden's own aim, which was to achieve a Volga Charter, not an alliance or other formal agreement. Eden had a very limited scope, both on what could be offered and what could be accepted, so limited results were to be expected. That these limited results were achieved should highlight Eden's diplomatic skill and ability to negotiate from a position of weakness. Instead they are often taken to suggest the whole mission was in vain. Dutton's suggestion that "neither Eden's assurance to Churchill that his mission had been a success nor his description of the talks to the press as full, frank and sincere reflected reality"<sup>67</sup> is too critical, and suggests that only grand achievements are worthy of being termed successes – though as there was no grand achievement that came out of the visit by this scale it would be deemed a failure, even if the small achievements were recognised. The talks were often tense, heated arguments or filled with historic suspicion, though this was because they covered many topics; both parties spoke frankly to each other; and, on Eden's part at least, were carried out with sincerity. The communiqué pledged that the two countries would fight on together against Germany and collaborate during and after the war, and whilst not exactly ground-breaking, was a sign of collaboration closer to what Eden had envisioned than Stalin, as it was not a treaty, and did not mention the 1941 frontiers. Whilst the talks produced no agreement, they had served a different purpose, and that they were conducted, albeit by chance, alongside Churchill's talks in Washington can be seen to represent the "importance Britain attached to Anglo-Soviet solidarity".<sup>68</sup> Churchill himself wrote to Eden that he was "where I want him"<sup>69</sup> and later wrote that he should "not be disappointed if you are not able to bring home a joint public declaration . . . I am sure your visit has done the utmost good".<sup>70</sup> Other than Eden not being able to consult Churchill, it is unlikely that this coincidence had any effect in Moscow, though it is not beyond reason to think that, if nothing else, it

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<sup>67</sup> Dutton, *Eden*, p. 189.

<sup>68</sup> Thorpe, *Eden*, p. 268.

<sup>69</sup> Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 8 December 1941, p. 417.

<sup>70</sup> Barker, *Churchill and Eden*, p. 235.

would show the Russians that the British were not ganging up with America and leaving them to fend for themselves. The press reports after the mission stated the importance of the talks in this regard, although *The Daily Mail*, *The Telegraph* and *The News Chronicle* all reported that the conversations were parallel too or a part of the conversations in Washington, which was of course not the case.<sup>71</sup> Whilst the British press was, to some extent, restricted in some aspects of what it could publish regarding Anglo-Soviet relations, the Russian press was free to be as critical of the west as it wanted, but its coverage of the talks was equally positive. The extent of positive press coverage, both in Britain and in Russia, highlights another success, and that was the fact that Eden's visit, despite Harvey's fears, had not been forgotten about in the wake of Churchill's visit to Washington. Consequently the visit was seen as a stepping stone for better things, and the information gathered allowed the British to understand the Soviet position, both politically and militarily, as well as their aims and requirements. Knowing what the Russians wanted made it significantly easier to prepare for future talks, and gave the Foreign Office a target to work towards. The delegation went to Moscow with only sketchy ideas about any post-war aims, and came back with a fresh outlook, and what was to become the new policy of the Foreign Office, defining the British war and post-war aims outside of defeating Hitler. Cripps recalled that, whilst "I took rather too tragic a view of the failure to get an agreement" there was an upside, especially as far as he was concerned, that "the Cabinet will have to really get down to thinking about the post-war settlement".<sup>72</sup> It would appear that Cripps was, yet again, displaying a sense of foresight that probably should have been taken more seriously than it was. Individually these were small scale results, and thus easily overlooked. Equally, the small scale and lack of historical significance they receive suggests that Eden and his mission had, in fact, not really managed to achieve anything, and that perhaps it was a rather pointless endeavour. When combined, however, they helped to significantly improve

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<sup>71</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/32874, Daily Mail, Telegraph and News Chronicle articles of 29 December 1941.

<sup>72</sup> Gorodetsky, *Stafford Cripps*, 24 December 1941, p. 227.

Anglo-Soviet relations, to define what the Foreign Office wanted to do, and give them a reality check on its imminent necessity. Though the achievement is still overlooked in this respect, as it doesn't fit easily within the Churchill narrative, in the examination of Eden's policy efforts it was significant, as it provided an important catalyst for the bold, imaginative, and at times highly controversial foreign policy that was to develop over the next two years.

## **6) Between a Rock and a Hard Place**

The Moscow Conference had highlighted the tensions between Soviet and British aims, along with the serious gaps in the British ideas, and this need to clarify their own war aims meant the Foreign Office was set on a new footing. The fact it almost hadn't taken place because of Churchill's view that America's entry into the war should be the top priority, however, was a sign of things to come. Before leaping headlong into 1942, it is worth reflecting for a moment on the other conference that occurred at this time, and examining its impact on foreign policy.

Churchill heard the news of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour on 7 December, whilst listening to the radio with Winant and Harriman, though the news didn't initially register. He called Roosevelt for verification, and heard the most welcome comment that "We are all in the same boat now".<sup>1</sup> He thus set to work re-assembling the Members of Parliament, as well as drafting an official declaration of war to Japan. In *'The Grand Alliance'* he notes that "no American will think it wrong of me if I proclaim that to have the United States at our side was to me the greatest joy ... at this very moment I knew the United States was in the war, up to the neck and in it to the death. So we had won after all!"<sup>2</sup> As part of his impulsive response to the news he began planning to leave for America to hold another conference with Roosevelt. Despite the objections and efforts of Eden and the Cabinet he informed Roosevelt of his desire to meet to "review the whole war plan in the light of reality and new facts".<sup>3</sup> After haggling over safety concerns and the date of the conference, Churchill set off for Washington, and the Arcadia Conference.<sup>4</sup> Eden was on his way to Moscow, but Churchill decided to allow Eden's mission to continue, though there would have been time to turn him back

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<sup>1</sup> Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, p. 538.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 539.

<sup>3</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 9 December 1941. Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, p. 541.

<sup>4</sup> Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, p. 542.

had the situation required it, feeling that “his mission was all the more important” given the new circumstances.<sup>5</sup>

The details of the Arcadia Conference are covered elsewhere,<sup>6</sup> but what matters here are its implications for British foreign policy. The most significant public result was the Declaration by the United Nations, issued on 1 January 1942, and signed by the 26 allied Nations ranged against Fascism and Hitlerism. Its clauses regarding no separate peace, co-operation between the signatories and full employment of resources, as well as continuing adherence to the Atlantic Charter ideals, bound the allied powers in a unity of purpose, as well as in ideals.<sup>7</sup> Whilst there can be no doubting the significance of this document, the most crucial result from the conference was Churchill’s success in ensuring the United States did not confine themselves to pursuing a purely Pacific policy. Admittedly Hitler’s confusing decision to declare war on America on 11 December helped matters. Charmley suggests this not only saved Churchill from seeing Britain left high and dry while America exacted revenge on Japan, but also avoided embarrassing Roosevelt, who had announced that America must follow a Germany first strategy, and would have struggled to maintain this line without any aggression from Germany.<sup>8</sup> Churchill’s success also came from his preparation during his voyage, drawing up three detailed memoranda outlining his views. Entitled ‘The Atlantic Front’, ‘The Pacific Front’ and ‘The Campaign of 1943’, they are all fully reproduced in *‘The Grand Alliance’*, and cover pretty much any avenue the discussions could take. From a British perspective, the key was in ensuring a practical and helpful American focus on Europe, and Churchill’s Atlantic Front memorandum appears to have achieved this, noting the importance of the supplies and of the defeat of Germany to the overall war effort to defeat the Axis powers.<sup>9</sup> Roosevelt concurred, later suggesting that there might be “unfortunate

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, p. 553.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, Chapters 34-36, Kimball, *Alliance emerging*, pp. 292-325, Charmley, *End of Glory*, Chapter 42, pp. 475-488.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.un.org/en/aboutun/history>.

<sup>8</sup> Charmley, *End of Glory*, p. 475.

<sup>9</sup> Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, p. 574.

repercussions”<sup>10</sup> if they let down Russia. Unfortunately for the Foreign Office, this feeling did not extend to territorial change. Conscious of his host’s sensibilities, not to mention the creation of his desired ‘Grand Alliance’, the ground work for which would be undone if accepted, Churchill refused to put the issue of the Soviet frontiers to Roosevelt, informing Eden that it would be “inexpedient” to raise this issue even informally at this time.<sup>11</sup>

The close link between Churchill and Roosevelt had ensured active American engagement in Europe, so as far as Churchill was concerned his policy was coming to fruition, but the cementing of ties led to further restrictions on the freedom of action of the Foreign Office, who found this neither practical nor helpful as they were forming a policy of their own which put British interests, particularly in Europe, above the military interests of the Churchill-Roosevelt alliance. Eden’s assessment that “I accepted the fact that the United States must in time become the dominant partner in Anglo-American councils ... The balance of power between us brought its problems. How to handle our relations with Soviet Russia, the policy to be followed towards de Gaulle, and the future of the British Commonwealth presented varying facets almost daily ... With our other major ally the path was rougher. Though Soviet Russia’s immediate interests in the war were the same as ours, in the peace they might conflict with what we and much of the world thought right. It was this contingency that I wished to guard against, if I could”<sup>12</sup> was written with hindsight, but there is solid grounding to the words, and they reflected the struggle he faced for the remainder of the war. These themes were mirrored in a diary entry by Harvey which highlighted the impotency of the British position. “As between Russia on one side, who thinks she is doing all the fighting against the Germans, and America, who thinks she can dictate the peace on the other, poor H.M.G. are going to have a difficult time. We shall be in trouble with both. We must take a realistic view of Russia’s claims, but we must somehow avoid a collision with U.S.A. who mean so much for supplies

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<sup>10</sup> TNA, Cabinet Papers, CAB 120/26, Arcadia report – White House Conference, 12 January 1942.

<sup>11</sup> Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, p. 560.

<sup>12</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, pp. 316-317.

now and post-war reconstruction after".<sup>13</sup> Ever the Russophile, Harvey was clearly emphasising this particular area to illustrate British difficulty, but his concerns were not dissimilar to those of Eden and others. Even de Gaulle, who was as much a hindrance as a help for the allies, recognised the British problem, and noted that "From now on, the British will do nothing without Roosevelt's agreement"<sup>14</sup> This statement would ring true in the near future. Despite comments like these, this concern does not appear to translate into the secondary work. Only Thorpe suggests that British thinking at the time was wary of America, stating that "Eden's attitude to America was equivocal: the common language should not delude the British into believing that the Americans also had common interest. He was wary of the price the Americans might eventually extract from Britain for their support".<sup>15</sup> Since returning as Foreign Secretary Eden had experienced the problem of differing American interests, and did not share Churchill's sentiment of "comradeship in the common cause of great peoples who speak the same language, who kneel at the same altars and, to a very large extent, pursue the same ideals".<sup>16</sup> It is unfortunate that the three areas Eden highlighted, France, Russia and the future of the British Commonwealth, were the areas around which the Foreign Office policy was based, but also where their success was to be most restricted by the primacy given to the American alliance. A subject for a different project, perhaps, is whether the price Britain had to pay for American support, and as a result of American interest, was the dismantling of its Empire, and whether Eden chose the word 'Commonwealth' rather than 'Empire' consciously to reflect this.

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<sup>13</sup> Harvey, *War Diaries*, 7 January 1942, p. 85.

<sup>14</sup> Mangold, *Britain and the Defeated French*, p. 140.

<sup>15</sup> Thorpe, *Eden*, p. 270.

<sup>16</sup> Churchill's Christmas Eve speech, cited from the President's personal file, Franklin D Roosevelt Library in Bercuson, D.J. and Herwig, H.H. *One Christmas in Washington: Churchill and Roosevelt forge the Grand Alliance*, (London, 2006), p. 156.

'Teapot Tempests'

This divergence of attitudes became problematic over the “teapot tempest”<sup>17</sup> - the occupation of the Islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon on Christmas Eve 1941.<sup>18</sup> The Islands, situated off the Newfoundland coast, were French territory under Vichy control, and were of interest for their location and their powerful radio transmitter, which could be used for hostile spying or propaganda purposes. De Gaulle, with Foreign Office support, proposed rallying the Islands in October,<sup>19</sup> and by early December everything was in place. Approval was granted by Churchill, who authorised Halifax to consult the Americans.<sup>20</sup> The Americans rejected this plan, as they were working on their own deal with the Islands' Governor on the wider issue of neutralisation of French territory in the Western Hemisphere.<sup>21</sup> Despite being ordered to cancel the mission, and agreeing to do so,<sup>22</sup> de Gaulle ordered Admiral Muselier, the Commander-in-Chief of the Free French Naval forces, to occupy the Islands anyway, in response to a suggestion that Canadian technicians would take over control of the radio station, which he saw as foreign intervention in French affairs. The occupation resulted in a Vichy colony peacefully rallying to the Free French with a 90 percent majority vote in a plebiscite.<sup>23</sup> This would have passed off smoothly as a minor allied victory had it not been for the Americans. On Christmas Day the “passionately anti de Gaulle”<sup>24</sup> Cordell Hull, the U.S. Secretary of State, released an admonishing statement which claimed the “action taken by the *so-called* Free French ... was an arbitrary action contrary to the agreement of all parties concerned [Hull's italics]”.<sup>25</sup> This statement shows the difference in policy, and how out of step Hull was with public opinion. The British didn't see any problem with the event, and the American press led a

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<sup>17</sup> Kimball, *Alliance emerging*, editors text, p. 324.

<sup>18</sup> Mangold, *Britain and the Defeated French*, p. 141.

<sup>19</sup> Barker, *Churchill and Eden*, p. 50.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, p. 50.

<sup>21</sup> Mangold, *Britain and the Defeated French*, pp. 141-142.

<sup>22</sup> Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, p. 591.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, p. 591.

<sup>24</sup> Jenkins, R. *Churchill, a Biography*, (London, 2001), p. 676.

<sup>25</sup> Hull's Christmas Statement, reproduced in Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, p. 591.



wave of criticism against the “treason”<sup>26</sup> of the “so-called Secretary of State”.<sup>27</sup> Halifax telegraphed Eden that “There is no doubt that the State Department lost their temper at the outset and although the temperature is now lower their position ... does not alter”.<sup>28</sup> In a message to Churchill, Eden noted the difficulty of removing de Gaulle and the likely adverse effect on British public opinion were a settlement reached which appeared to “victimise a population for its loyalty to the Allied cause”.<sup>29</sup> Whilst Roosevelt was initially happy, as he was often want to, to “sit back and watch the State Department getting into trouble”,<sup>30</sup> with Hull threatening resignation and the tempest close to overflowing from the teapot he changed course, followed by Churchill, fearing damage to his new alliance. Having sent Eden a draft statement intended to defuse the situation,<sup>31</sup> which Eden considered inadequate to safeguard Free French interests,<sup>32</sup> Churchill sent further instructions. The new statement allowed the Islands to remain ‘French’, but demilitarised them, and did not leave them directly under Free French control.<sup>33</sup> The message also set Eden the daunting, and personally unwelcome, task of forcing de Gaulle’s acceptance. Churchill recognised that the State Department’s line was digging them a bigger hole in the face of American public opinion, and never stated that the Free French were in the wrong or acting against British interests, but felt that letting such a minor event obstruct the greater picture and his new alliance was “intolerable”.<sup>34</sup> Despite protests that this would be a “bitter blow not only to General de Gaulle, but also to public opinion in this country”,<sup>35</sup> Churchill was insistent, and Eden confronted de Gaulle. As expected, he refused the communiqué, and failed to understand why the British were following an American policy clearly aimed at “Establishing a protectorate over the Vichy

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<sup>26</sup> New York Post, 25 December 1941, reaction to Hull’s statement, quoted in Bercuson and Herwig, *One Christmas*, p. 161.

<sup>27</sup> Jenkins, *Churchill*, p. 676.

<sup>28</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/31872, Halifax to FO, 2 January 1942.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, Eden to Churchill, 4 January 1942.

<sup>30</sup> Barker, *Churchill and Eden*, p. 51.

<sup>31</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/31872, Churchill to Eden, 4 January 1942.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, Eden to Churchill, 4 January 1942.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, Churchill to Eden, 12 January 1942.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>35</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 65/25/4, War Cabinet Conclusions, 12 January 1942.

Government".<sup>36</sup> Despite Eden's best efforts, de Gaulle was unwilling to compromise to save Hull from embarrassment, but eventually agreed to examine the communiqué with the FNC and provide a reply. At no point did Eden defend the Americans, nor suggest de Gaulle was in the wrong or responsible for reconciliatory action, implying he believed that there was nothing wrong with the situation as it stood. Eventually, a revised communiqué was approved by Eden and de Gaulle which allowed the Islands to remain French; under control of a pro-Free French consultative council, with the Vichy administrator removed; with a reduction of the naval forces but not total disarmament; and receiving economic assistance.<sup>37</sup> This did, however, have three secret clauses, which ensured a continuing military presence on the Islands, that the Free French Administrator would remain and that the consultative committee would be under control of the FNC, essentially making the main communiqué redundant.<sup>38</sup> Churchill, upon receiving these terms, was "very angry" and felt Eden had "failed lamentably",<sup>39</sup> though by the time he put the communiqué to Roosevelt he had softened, and felt the terms were "not too bad".<sup>40</sup> When de Gaulle subsequently met Churchill, however, he suffered a "torrent of indignation"<sup>41</sup>, which sparked a bitter argument over who represented France. Eventually de Gaulle conceded to consult the FNC about removing the secret clauses, which the Americans would not accept.<sup>42</sup> All this was in vain, however, as the State Department were unaware of the compromise communiqué, and Hull, who had caused the chaos in the first place, was on holiday recovering from illness, so the issue remained unresolved.

This incident sheds interesting light on the contrasting foreign policy views of the British and the Americans, and also on the continued tussle between Churchill and Eden for control of British policy. Initially, Churchill felt the issue

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<sup>36</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/31873, Eden's Memorandum to the Cabinet on St. Pierre and Miquelon, 16 January 1942.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Draft of communiqué, telephoned to Churchill on 14 January 1942.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*, Eden's record of his conversations with Churchill, 14 January 1942.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, Eden's record of his conversations with Churchill, 15 January 1942.

<sup>41</sup> Mangold, *Britain and the Defeated French*, p. 142.

<sup>42</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/31873, Record of conversation between Eden, Churchill and de Gaulle, 22 January 1942.

was unimportant, explaining to de Gaulle that he “had not originally himself been against a Free French occupation of the Islands”,<sup>43</sup> a stance which had been shared by Eden. Unlike Eden, however, Churchill was more easily swayed by the Americans than his own colleagues, and told de Gaulle that “the moment President Roosevelt had raised strong objection it was merely foolish to hamper the great alliance through which the war would be won”.<sup>44</sup> This statement clearly showed that Churchill was not only willing to ignore the advice of the War Cabinet and his Foreign Secretary, but also public opinion and his own personal opinion so as not to risk the American alliance, in whose basket all his eggs were placed. It is hard to see how any of this constitutes Eden ‘failing lamentably’, as defending British foreign policy interests would not count as failing when compared to his job description. The fact Churchill criticised Eden for standing by British policy in a situation advantageous to the British suggests that the bigger failing was Churchill’s, as he ignored existing policy commitments, and the advice of his War Cabinet, who had based their decisions on military advice and public opinion, in order to get Hull out of a hole of his own digging. Also concerning for Eden was, as de Gaulle criticised, that the British “attached so much importance to giving satisfaction to the United States”.<sup>45</sup> Eden was wary of the consequences of trying to ensure American approval of British policy, especially in areas of particular British interest, and was uncomfortable with the amount of control over foreign policy held by Churchill. Whilst Rothwell argues Eden was prepared to support de Gaulle in part because America supported Vichy,<sup>46</sup> it was a British war aim to restore France (represented in Britain’s eyes by the Free French Movement), and thus not unreasonable for the Foreign Secretary to support the party with whom agreements were held. Another concern, raised by David Reynolds, was that the Anglo-American alliance was not so much an alliance between countries,

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<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, Eden’s Memorandum to the Cabinet on St. Pierre and Miquelon, 16 January 1942.

<sup>46</sup> Rothwell, *Eden*, pp 81-82.

but between Churchill and Roosevelt.<sup>47</sup> Eden was apprehensive about allowing Roosevelt “to determine the foreign policy of the British Empire”,<sup>48</sup> the likely outcome as he saw it of this style of Anglo-American alliance. Whilst difficult to say that there was a definite idea within the Foreign Office of an independent foreign policy, it seems clear from the attempts to back the Free French, even against America, that they saw the need for one. The coming months would see this policy develop, and the events outlined proved to be a microcosm of a broader attempt to define British policy outside of American influence.

The ‘teapot tempest’ was not the only source of friction with the French during early 1942. De Gaulle continued to be a thorn in the side for the British, especially in relation to the FNC.<sup>49</sup> When Muselier returned to England and learnt of the difficulties caused by the affair, he became increasingly critical towards de Gaulle,<sup>50</sup> and relations between the two men deteriorated. Muselier subsequently left the Committee, though retained his command of the Free French Naval forces. Eden, having been involved in the creation of the FNC, tried to smooth things over, though de Gaulle responded angrily to this un-necessary intervention in French internal affairs. The British insistence that Muselier should be reinstated increased his frustration, and the meeting led to an impasse, with Eden complaining that de Gaulle’s dictatorial nature was damaging to the British and the Free French, and de Gaulle criticising Eden for thinking that he harboured any greater ambitions than simply running the Free French Movement.<sup>51</sup> When the two met the following day Muselier had been removed as Commander-in-Chief by de Gaulle,<sup>52</sup> leading Eden to inform him that the Cabinet wanted Muselier to remain in his post, and this was a matter far more important than French internal

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<sup>47</sup> Reynolds, D. *Britannia Overruled: British Policy and World Power in the Twentieth Century*, (Harlow, 2000), p. 143.

<sup>48</sup> Charmley, J. *Churchill’s Grand Alliance: The Anglo American Special Relationship 1940-1957*, (London, 1995), p. 49.

<sup>49</sup> Established with British sponsorship in September 1941, it was hoped that by positioning de Gaulle in a committee that had control over the Free French Movement, rather than having him as the sole leader, he could be kept under closer control.

<sup>50</sup> Mangold, *Britain and the Defeated French*, p. 143.

<sup>51</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/8A, Record of meeting between Eden and de Gaulle, 5 March 1942.

<sup>52</sup> Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 7 March 1942, p. 440 and Harvey, *War Diaries*, 8 March 1942, p. 107.

politics.<sup>53</sup> Once again, de Gaulle took offence, thinking this was an internal matter. As he felt the matter settled he turned a cold shoulder to Eden's vague threats that "certain measures" might have to be taken against him.<sup>54</sup> Another stalemate developed, though this was broken on 19 March 1942, as the British were forced to withdraw their support from Muselier when he called for the French Navy to go on strike.<sup>55</sup>

Whilst again showing himself difficult to work with, de Gaulle's position vis-à-vis France meant he could, just, get away with these actions, so long as fortune continued to favour him. As with St. Pierre and Miquelon, de Gaulle was aided in his efforts by Eden, who was tasked with confronting the General; on this issue, however, he did not share the view of the Cabinet. In the meetings between the two, Eden was trying to avoid implementing the Cabinet decisions, and gave de Gaulle as much opportunity as possible consider the British request in its true light, rather than assuming it an act of interference and rejecting it out of hand.<sup>56</sup> He also indicated that whilst the Cabinet wanted immediate action from de Gaulle or they would revise their agreements, he "wished to avoid" this situation and pleaded with de Gaulle to prevent this happening.<sup>57</sup> Eden was not alone in his reluctance to antagonise or over-rule de Gaulle. A memorandum received from Neville Lytton<sup>58</sup> highlighted the position of de Gaulle relative to France, and notes in particular that he was the man who represented "all honour-loving French people" and was a "courageous ally to Great Britain", yet also highlighted how badly the British seem to treat him compared to Pétain, suggesting this was an intolerable situation that needed to be halted.<sup>59</sup> Harvey wrote that de Gaulle was "the only leader of the Free French" despite being "a most difficult man and

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<sup>53</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/8A, Record of meeting between Eden and de Gaulle, 6 March 1942.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> Mangold, *Britain and the Defeated French*, p.144.

<sup>56</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/8A, Record of meeting between Eden and de Gaulle, 6 March 1942.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, Record of meeting between Eden and de Gaulle, 10 March 1942.

<sup>58</sup> Former Major in the British Army with significant experience of France, was suggested as a liaison between de Gaulle and Peake.

<sup>59</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/8A, Memorandum by Neville Lytton on Pétain and de Gaulle, 1 April 1942.

almost intolerable to work with ... We cannot afford to get rid of him".<sup>60</sup> This was indicative of Foreign Office sentiment, as although de Gaulle was obstinate, argumentative, temperamental and intolerable, there was no alternative Free French leader, nor was the prospect of dealing solely with Vichy a palatable one. Thus once more Eden stood by his ally, when others would have become too frustrated and potentially cut the ties between Britain and the Free French Movement, as indicated by the warnings and threats Eden was meant to deliver to de Gaulle from the War Cabinet.

### Policy or principle?

Whilst the Foreign Office was having one of its "periodical bust-ups"<sup>61</sup> with de Gaulle and seeing its relations with the Free French deteriorating further, it was at least making progress in its relations with the Soviet Union. After his relatively successful visit to Moscow, difficult though some of the conversations with Stalin had been, with Eden now working on gaining Soviet frontier recognition as a step towards an Anglo-Soviet treaty there looked a great deal of promise. Unfortunately, appearances can be deceiving, as the Russians were soon to discover. While in Moscow, Eden gave the impression that this was all just a matter of formalities, and would quickly be resolved, but the reality was very different. His initial impetus was for a two pronged approach, putting the subject to Churchill and Winant in the hope that one or both would put the British case to Roosevelt, but his enthusiasm was diminished by Cadogan, who minuted that Churchill would "quite possibly refuse" to raise the issue in Washington, and thus felt it safer for Eden not to proceed on his own "without further discussion with the P.M.". <sup>62</sup> Eden took heed of the advice, asking the Department to send the

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<sup>60</sup> Harvey, *War Diaries*, 8 March 1942, p. 107, He writes almost the exact same thing to Eden on 10 March, *Ibid*, p. 108.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid*, 8 March 1942, p. 107.

<sup>62</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/32874, Minute by Cadogan on proposed telegram to Churchill and note to Winant, 4 January 1942.

telegram to Churchill, but hold the note for Winant.<sup>63</sup> No indication is given as to why he did this, so it can only be assumed that he either felt Cadogan had proposed the most sensible course of action, or that he also thought the initial approach to Churchill would likely fail. Having submitted his report of the mission to the War Cabinet, no recommendation of further action was made, despite Eden's suggestion that "this question of frontiers would have to be considered by the War Cabinet".<sup>64</sup> His reluctance to proceed without approval from Churchill could suggest a lack of conviction to his task, but the fact he was willing to take immediate action to deal with the issue makes this seem unlikely, especially as he was taking his own initiative after receiving no recommendation from the War Cabinet, and he probably suspected this was a battle that would take more than one telegram to resolve, as indeed was the case.

His telegram to Churchill was passionate and reasonable, detailing logical reasons for accepting the Soviet demands, noting where merit lay and not ignoring possible difficulties. He tried to present a workable solution that could just about be acceptable to all parties, including a means of working within the Atlantic Charter, and earnestly appealed for Churchill to discuss the issue in Washington.<sup>65</sup> Churchill's response, whilst accepting that some discussion was necessary, was unequivocal in its attitude to Eden's request: "there must be no mistake about the opinion of any British Government of which I am the head; namely, that it adheres to those principles of freedom and democracy set forth in the Atlantic Charter".<sup>66</sup> This did not deter Eden, who began drafting a lengthy memorandum which he produced at the War Cabinet meeting on 5 February. This covered two main topics, how to build post-war co-operation with Russia and how to deal with the 1941 frontier question, and recommended the War Cabinet allow Halifax to lay out the British problem in Washington after considering what form this presentation should take. The memorandum set out what Eden saw as

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<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*, Minute by Eden to Cadogan, 5 January 1942.

<sup>64</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 65/29/1, Eden's report on his Moscow Mission to the War Cabinet, 1 January 1942.

<sup>65</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/32874, Eden to Churchill, 5 January 1942.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*, Churchill to Eden, 8 January 1942.

the likely shape of post-war Europe, and suggested that co-operation with the Soviet Union was necessary as a counterweight to a German resurgence, and to minimise any threat from a potentially strong Russia taking advantage of a weak Europe. In effect co-operation was necessary to ensure a post-war balance of power in Europe, no matter how strong or weak any of the given powers may have been. It also noted the difficulty of bringing America and Russia together on the issue, but thought that where possible tri-partite decisions should be made.<sup>67</sup>

As to the frontiers, this was more complicated, though Eden suggested that the Russian demands were “very reasonable” considering what they could have requested; that agreement could aid the British in achieving a balance of power in Europe (albeit one directed against Germany); that mollifying Russia on this issue could ease her passage into the conflict with Japan, thus helping the American war effort; and asserted that a lack of British acquiescence could not affect Russia's post-war frontiers one way or the other: “if she is in occupation of the territory involved at the end of the war, neither we nor America will turn her out”.<sup>68</sup> He also set out the difficulties that would be faced, specifically with the Atlantic Charter although he suggests some ways to work round this, and of gaining agreement by Stalin of anything less than his demands. To complete the memorandum he included some *quid pro quo*'s which could be used as bargaining chips with Stalin, as well as alternate plans that could be more palatable to the United States should they be unwilling to recognise the frontiers. These included the Soviet acquisition of bases in the Baltic countries or Soviet control of foreign relations and defence of these states, with the suggested *quid pro quo*'s including Soviet acquiescence in British acquisition of bases in Europe, as well as Soviet agreement to various statements about collaboration, confederations and non-interference in the affairs of other states.<sup>69</sup>

When discussed by the War Cabinet, the proposal met with mixed opinions. Beaverbrook championed the cause, arguing effusively for the urgent necessity of

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<sup>67</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/21/28, Eden's memorandum on 'Policy Towards Russia', 28 January 1942.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*



accepting the Soviet demands, subject to receiving American views, and stating that history gave many examples of times when the British had been less than efficient at acceding to Russian requests.<sup>70</sup> Eden, more moderately, argued that the wider perspective of improving Anglo-Soviet relations outweighed the distaste some may have felt at the frontier recognition, and that it was in the broader interests of the whole war effort to put the case for accepting the demand for their recognition to the United States.<sup>71</sup> Herbert Morrison, the Home Secretary, and Archibald Sinclair, Secretary of State for Air, also weighed in, suggesting the principle of self-determination should not be too rigidly applied, that post-war agreement with Stalin was imperative, and that, assuming the war was won, Stalin's forces would be occupying these areas anyway.<sup>72</sup> Only Clement Attlee, The Lord Privy Seal, spoke against the plan, suggesting it could endanger the causes for which the British were fighting and could open the floodgates to more unpalatable Russian demands, a course he felt was "both wrong in itself and inexpedient".<sup>73</sup> Churchill reserved himself to stating that all these matters should be settled at the Peace Conference, but that for now the issue was how to put the matter to the United States, and that he preferred a balanced statement. This was to be the eventual result, with Eden tasked with drafting a telegram to Halifax containing the balanced statement, as well as the alternate plans. Given the suggested action at the end of Eden's memorandum, this was almost the result he was looking for; the only point missing was, in reality, a clear indication to the Americans that on balance the Cabinet favoured accepting the Soviet demands. This result was not enough for Beaverbrook, who presented a paper at the following War Cabinet meeting detailing the urgent need to agree to Stalin's demands, and thus put forward a strong case to the United States on these lines.<sup>74</sup> This was, however, overlooked, as the draft telegrams to Halifax were approved, and were dutifully despatched the following day.

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<sup>70</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 65/29/11, Record of the debate on Eden's 'Policy Towards Russia' memorandum, 6 February 1942.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/22/1, Beaverbrook's note on 'Russia', 7 February 1942.

Despite the initial objection and disapproval from Churchill, Eden's persistence, combined with his balanced, logical and wide-reaching memorandum to the Cabinet, left little room for successful and coherent counter argument, so it is not surprising that he received enough Cabinet support to force the pace of the issue. Churchill had acknowledged that something should be said to Roosevelt, but did not want a proposal submitted to America that stated Britain favoured accepting the Soviet demands. Thus the result being a balanced statement appears a workable compromise, allowing the Cabinet to say they had discussed the issue whilst allowing Churchill to appear to stand by the Atlantic Charter. Eden suggests that this was a success, and showed that the Cabinet had "resolved our differences",<sup>75</sup> in reality, the result was actually quite disappointing. Of the sixteen present at the meeting<sup>76</sup> only seven made contributions worthy of being minuted. Of these, only Attlee argued against the proposal; Churchill subtly suggested his opposition; Eden and Beaverbrook argued the case, supported by Morrison and Sinclair, with Bevin's contribution only a question for clarity on Stalin's demands. There is also a note that "several ministers ... favoured giving the United States some indication of how our minds were moving",<sup>77</sup> in other words that the United States should be told Britain favoured accepting the proposals. The balance of opinion, and the range of support from both Conservatives and Labour alike, suggests the debate should have ended in something more than a draw.<sup>78</sup> Though Churchill fails to mention this debate in his writings, in general the fact is picked up in the historiography that a good number of the War Cabinet supported Eden, though this is not always represented as a success, and as seen, support was one thing, being able to act was quite another.

Obtaining agreement to put the problem before Roosevelt was a success, especially given Churchill's earlier comments, and meant the task of resolving the

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<sup>75</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 320.

<sup>76</sup> 14 MP's, Cadogan and the Secretary, Edward Bridges - TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 65/29/11, Cabinet Conclusions, 6 February 1942.

<sup>77</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 65/29/11, Record of the debate on Eden's 'Policy Towards Russia' memorandum, 6 February 1942.

<sup>78</sup> Barker, *Churchill and Eden*, p. 237.

problem had moved on to its next step. The telegrams sent to Halifax gave no sense of Eden's strong personal opinion, or that of the majority of Cabinet, but equally gave little indication of what the British required, prompting a vague reply from Halifax.<sup>79</sup> After consulting Roosevelt and Welles, Halifax informed Eden that the President thought "we might both assure Stalin of our general purpose",<sup>80</sup> and Welles, whilst acknowledging the "necessity of recognising Stalin's case for reassurance about security" preferred "building [the] new world on principle".<sup>81</sup> This response, whilst unhelpful, could have been used by Eden to convey that no real objections had been made, save for needing to consider the Atlantic Charter. Unfortunately, he was to receive news the next day that, after a joint discussion between Roosevelt and Welles, Roosevelt felt the suggestions could not be reconciled with the Atlantic Charter, "and that it was premature to attempt detailed treatment of the problem".<sup>82</sup> To add insult to Eden's injury, Roosevelt also proposed that he should seek a direct resolution of the issue with Stalin. The Cabinet's response was not promising. Churchill suggested that it was best to let Roosevelt proceed so as not to offend him, and the Cabinet offered no other proposals, simply postulating that it was Britain, not America, with whom Stalin wanted to deal.<sup>83</sup> Eden's proposal, which was accepted, was to present a memorandum to Winant that he could discuss with Roosevelt, raising concerns over this procedure, and pushing for tripartite discussions in London, though accepting they would have to let Roosevelt pursue his course if he chose to do so.<sup>84</sup> Whilst Winant did, unsuccessfully, put the British case to Roosevelt, Eden managed to convince Churchill to move to the next step. By taking advantage of Britain's difficult political situation, its military misfortunes in the Far East, and highlighting the danger of Britain being left out of a Soviet-American bargain,

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<sup>79</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/22/26, Eden to Halifax on behalf of the War Cabinet, 10 February 1942.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid*, Halifax to Eden, 19 February 1942.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid*, Halifax to Eden, 20 February 1942.

<sup>83</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 65/25/14, Record of debate on procedure for continued negotiations with Stalin, 25 February 1942.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid*, and TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 65/25/25, Record of discussion on Eden's memorandum to Winant, 25 February 1942.

Eden persuaded Churchill to send a personal appeal to Roosevelt.<sup>85</sup> Whilst this was also unsuccessful, it was an impressive feat that Eden had finally converted Churchill, and removed him as a barrier to acceptance of the Soviet demands. The difficulty for Eden was resolved when Roosevelt went ahead with his direct approach to Litvinov. The Americans were prepared to offer little more than words, and the approach was rebuffed by Stalin, who informed Roosevelt that they had “taken note of his communication”.<sup>86</sup> The way was, therefore, clear for Eden to proceed without the need to worry about the Americans, as the Soviets had shown no interest in dealing through Roosevelt, and the Americans had agreed on the need for Soviet security, just not the method being employed.<sup>87</sup> Pressure from Maisky and increased support from the Government convinced Eden that the time was right to “risk ruffling the Anglo-American relationship in the interests of what he saw as compelling British interests”.<sup>88</sup> Thus, on 27 March 1942, he informed Maisky and Sir Archibald Clark Kerr, who had replace Cripps as Ambassador in Moscow, that Britain was prepared to enter negotiations with the Soviet Government, and conclude a treaty,<sup>89</sup> and these negotiations will be examined in the next chapter. Eden’s championing of this cause will also be explored in greater detail, and in the wider context of the thesis concerning a broader foreign policy.

### Persona Grata?

With Eden attempting to improve relations from London, there was also a change of personnel in Russia. After many threats to return home, based on the widening difference of his views to those of the Government, a difference not unknown to the Russians;<sup>90</sup> and an increasing sense of frustration at what he felt a

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<sup>85</sup> Dutton, *Eden*, p. 192, Carlton, *Eden*, pp. 194-195, Barker, *Churchill and Eden*, p. 238.

<sup>86</sup> TNA, Avon papers, FO 954/25A, Eden to Clark Kerr, 23 March 1942.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid*, Eden to Clark Kerr, 17 March 1942.

<sup>88</sup> Dutton, *Eden*, p. 193.

<sup>89</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/25A, Eden to Clark Kerr, Report on conversation with Maisky, 27 March 1942.

<sup>90</sup> Gorodetsky, *Stafford Cripps*, editors text, p. 233.

futile task even in the best of circumstances, Cripps was finally relieved of his post in Moscow. Having been ignored on several occasions by Molotov and Stalin, he was left out of the Beaverbrook negotiations, generally sidelined whilst Eden was in Moscow, and his standing was so low that Stalin made no effort to say goodbye or see him off.<sup>91</sup> Despite thanking the Russians for their generous and friendly treatment in his public farewell, he had, in reality, lost his standing as *persona grata*, and was looking forward to returning home. He was replaced by seasoned diplomat Sir Archibald Clark Kerr, who had served most recently and with great popular acclaim in China, so much so that he was elevated from KCMG to GCMG.<sup>92</sup> Though technically a promotion, the role of Ambassador to the Soviet Union was one Clark Kerr found particularly isolated and dull, especially after his experience in China, where he had plenty to do and was not surrounded entirely by the “diplomatic circus”.<sup>93</sup> He struggled to adapt to his new life of “isolation”,<sup>94</sup> cut off from the world entirely by comparison to his former experience, and initially found little to do. Despite this, and an unsuccessful appeal to Cripps for advice on dealing with the difficulties,<sup>95</sup> Clark Kerr soon began to leave his mark on Anglo-Soviet relations. After a month in Russia, he was finally invited to Moscow to meet Stalin and Molotov, who had remained there in the face of the German assault, just as he himself had done in Chungking against the orders of His Majesties Government.<sup>96</sup> He proved an instant hit with Stalin, forming a bond with him that Cripps could only have dreamt of, though as ever with Anglo-Soviet relations, luck played its part. Clark Kerr was being taken through the Kremlin when the air-raid warnings sounded, and clumsily accepted the invitation to join Stalin in the air-raid bunker. Thus his first meeting was not a procedural presentation of credentials, but a shared human experience of sheltering from a

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<sup>91</sup> Gorodetsky, *Stafford Cripps*, 27 December 1941 to 2 January 1942, pp. 230-231 and 8 January 1942, p. 235.

<sup>92</sup> <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32422?docPos=1>.

<sup>93</sup> Gillies, D. *Radical Diplomat: The Life of Archibald Clark Kerr, Lord Inverchapel, 1882-1951*, (London, 1999), p. 125.

<sup>94</sup> TNA, Inverchapel Papers, FO 800/300, Letter from Clark Kerr to Eden, 27 April 1942.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid*, Clark Kerr to Cripps, 26 April 1942 and Cripps's reply on 12 June 1942, which contained no advice for Clark Kerr except to wait it out.

<sup>96</sup> Gillies, *Radical Diplomat*, p. 113.

German air-raid, and consequently a more genuine and non-political meeting of men rather than politicians or diplomats. The tone of the conversation attests to this, with Clark Kerr and Stalin amicably discussing pipe tobacco, sex and methods to keep one's wives in line (a rather sensitive subject for Clark Kerr).<sup>97</sup> Whilst this was not necessarily Ambassadorial, the light hearted discussion meant Clark Kerr and Stalin developed a bond more akin to friends than colleagues. The same could not be said with Molotov, however, whom he referred to as "bootfaced"<sup>98</sup> and with whom he felt there was little chance for "personal harmonies".<sup>99</sup> Vyshinsky fared better, on a personal level at least, as he was considered to be "agreeable and friendly",<sup>100</sup> though it was felt that, through him, "nothing fundamental can be done".<sup>101</sup> As a mark of the good personal relations cultivated he received of a gift of tobacco from Stalin, and was honoured by Vyshinsky holding a dinner party for the British Embassy staff, two events which were without precedent,<sup>102</sup> and perhaps a sign that the Russians were more willing to deal with the new Ambassador.

It is interesting that relatively little attention has been paid to the significance of this change. Perhaps it is felt Churchill's comment that "when so much was being done by direct communication between me and Stalin ... the functions of an Ambassador become increasingly separated from the scene of decisive business"<sup>103</sup> was an accurate reflection on the idleness of the post. Maybe the distance shown by the Russians themselves to Cripps was taken to suggest disdain for the post itself. Whatever the explanation, which seems, unfortunately, hard to find, the lack of coverage suggests that the replacement of Cripps was not significant. Eden fails to mention Clark Kerr until July 1942, despite discussing the possibility of Cripps joining the Government in February.<sup>104</sup> Likewise Cadogan first mentions him in July after receiving a telegram from the Ambassador urging a meeting between

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<sup>97</sup> *Ibid*, p. 125.

<sup>98</sup> TNA, Inverchapel Papers, FO 800/300, Clark Kerr to Cripps, 26 April 1942.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid*, Clark Kerr to Warner, 11 June 1942.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid*, Clark Kerr to Cripps, 26 April 1942.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid*, Clark Kerr to Warner, 11 June 1942.

<sup>103</sup> Churchill, W.S. *The Second World War, Volume IV: The Hinge of Fate*, (London, 1985), p. 56.

<sup>104</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 338 and p. 321 respectively.

Stalin and Churchill.<sup>105</sup> Churchill makes a reference to the fact he was being appointed, though made no other comment on the matter,<sup>106</sup> and Harvey mentions his appointment, but only after his first meeting with Molotov and Stalin.<sup>107</sup> Maisky makes no reference to him at all. The story continues in the secondary work. D.R. Thorpe makes a solitary and apparently incorrect reference to Clark Kerr, stating he was appointed due to his success quelling Stalin's Second Front demand during Eden's mission to Moscow, despite no reference in the documents or any other works of him being involved.<sup>108</sup> Other examples include Dutton and Rothwell, whose works on Eden fail to reference the Ambassador; Carlton, who doesn't mention him until 1944;<sup>109</sup> and Charmley, who doesn't reference him until Churchill's meeting with Stalin in August 1942.<sup>110</sup> Only Folly mentions the new Ambassador with any level of regularity, and considered his appointment to be an "inspired" choice by the British.<sup>111</sup> It could be suggested that this lack of coverage was due to the difficulties faced in the post, or that Clark Kerr was a singularly uninspiring Ambassador and, therefore, not worthy of any discussion. What makes these two suggestions rather unfounded are, firstly, the number of references these same works make to Cripps;<sup>112</sup> secondly, the widely acknowledged support Clark Kerr held in China; and thirdly, the number of unprecedented gestures made by the Soviets towards Clark Kerr. This suggests that, for some unknown reason, historians have largely decided to overlook the arrival of a man who was to play a key role in relations between two major countries during the war, and whilst an in-depth discussion on this as a historical phenomenon is beyond the remit of this thesis, it is important to mention to highlight, to an extent, the neglect shown to the idea of foreign policy and diplomatic relations during this period by 70 years of history.

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<sup>105</sup> Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 30 July 1942, p. 464.

<sup>106</sup> Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p. 56.

<sup>107</sup> Harvey, *War Diaries*, 22 March 1942, p. 112.

<sup>108</sup> Thorpe, *Eden*, p. 269.

<sup>109</sup> Carlton, *Eden*, p. 233.

<sup>110</sup> Charmley, *End of Glory*, p. 509.

<sup>111</sup> Folly, *Churchill, Whitehall*, p. 40.

<sup>112</sup> There are almost 30 references to Cripps between May 1940 and February 1942 in Maisky's memoirs.

On the face of things, 1942 brought with it a great deal of promise. Churchill's hopes of an American entry into the war had been realised, Eden had finally met Stalin and begun the process of treaty negotiations, and although the French were still causing trouble, progress in two areas out of three wasn't bad. Churchill's American adventure managed to ensure a Europe first policy, as well as the signature of the United Nations Declaration, and he had high hopes that this would be the moment where the tide swung away from Germany. The positive appearance was, however, a mask for more difficulties under the surface. Relations with France were steadily declining, causing several threats of resignation, and showed no real prospect of improving in the near future. The only real consolation being that Eden was standing by de Gaulle in an effort to preserve the British position in the face of American contradictions and collaboration with Vichy. Relations with Russia were, for the first time, showing real signs of improvement. Whilst there was annoyance on the Russian side by British delays, the reassurances that discussions were being held, and that Eden's promise was being upheld, generally allowed for good working relations whilst the British sought a suitable resolution, at first to everyone's satisfaction, but finally concluding that it was their own policy that should take precedence over American idealism. The Russians also had a British Ambassador with whom they felt they could work, so as 1942 proceeded there looked a good chance that, having won over Churchill and largely nullified American concerns, Eden could make progress on a treaty with Stalin. On the French side, however, he faced the prospect of yet more difficulty with de Gaulle, and probably more arguments with Churchill for standing by this rather irritating ally, but then nobody said diplomacy was easy.



## 7) Two Steps Back, One Step Forward

In retrospect, 1942 would be the year which saw the 'end of the beginning', but its early months were hard ones for the British, with defeats in the Far East and the Middle East doing nothing to boost either morale or prestige. Churchill faced up to mounting criticism in the House by calling for a vote of confidence, which was conducted in euphemistic language. Rather than saying what they meant, that they had no confidence in Churchill himself, his opponents concentrated on the anomaly of his being Prime Minister and Minister of Defence. It was suggested that someone of his stature, holding both these offices, could lead to something more akin to absolute rule within the War Cabinet than was desired.<sup>1</sup> It was also argued that, due to the perceived failings of supply provision and distribution, changes were required to resolve this problem, the popular suggestion being for a Minister of Production,<sup>2</sup> something that was already under consideration.<sup>3</sup> After three days of discussion, the debate wound up and the Vote of Confidence proceeded, resulting in an overwhelming majority of four hundred and sixty four to one being returned. Had the debate been held a few weeks later when the full implications of the situation in the Far East were realised it could certainly have delivered a different verdict but, as it was, confidence was bestowed upon the Churchill Government to continue its "vigorous prosecution of the War".<sup>4</sup>

Whilst changes were under consideration, the debate highlighted their requirement, and Churchill proposed the inclusion of Cripps, who had received a "tumultuous reception"<sup>5</sup> upon his return from Russia, and whose public profile continued to rise amidst public speeches and radio broadcasts. His inclusion in the War Cabinet was something that the public were also coming to expect, and Churchill, feeling him qualified for the role, offered him the post of Minister of

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<sup>1</sup> Hansard, Series 5, Vol. 377, cc. 569-690. Statements by various Members of the House, 27 January 1942.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, pp 54-55.

<sup>4</sup> Hansard, Series 5, Vol. 377, c. 1019. Resolution of the Motion of Confidence, 29 January 1942.

<sup>5</sup> Gorodetsky, *Stafford Cripps*, Epilogue, p. 236.

Supply, an offer that would also allow him to promote Beaverbrook to Minister of Production.<sup>6</sup> As the post would be subservient to Beaverbrook's, and would not offer a War Cabinet seat, Cripps declined, thinking he would not be able to perform the role successfully.<sup>7</sup> Thus no change occurred, but the fall of Singapore, which Eden noted both "shocked and grieved the country",<sup>8</sup> brought the conduct of the war under renewed criticism, and thus changes had to be made.

Eden was summoned to see Churchill on 16 February, and after several days of discussions a new War Cabinet was announced.<sup>9</sup> Creating it, however, was not straightforward. Something Churchill fails to mention, which Eden notes in his diary, was that he was offered the Leadership of the House of Commons, but having delayed his response to think it over for a couple of hours, found the post had meanwhile been offered to Cripps, who wanted to accept it if Eden approved.<sup>10</sup> Eden was unimpressed, and when he met Churchill he put forward the case for him being Leader of the House, particularly noting support from Beaverbrook, but Churchill dismissed this, stating that Eden was "a doer not a talker".<sup>11</sup> Churchill makes no reference to these discussions, instead suggesting he talked through his idea with Attlee, who approved of Cripps becoming Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House in exchange for Attlee's acquisition of the Dominions Office and the role of Deputy Prime Minister.<sup>12</sup> The important change, aside from those outlined, was the resignation of Beaverbrook. To Churchill he cited ill health,<sup>13</sup> to Eden the lack of support for Russia and the failure to deal with the 1941 frontier question and, coupled to this, the promotion of Attlee (the reason, in his eyes, Russian policy never materialised).<sup>14</sup> His resignation was a blow to Churchill, as he was a long time friend and political ally, and Churchill hoped to have him

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<sup>6</sup> Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p. 57.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, p. 63.

<sup>8</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 320.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, p. 321.

<sup>10</sup> Eden's diary, 18 February 1942, in *Ibid*, p. 321.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, p. 321.

<sup>12</sup> Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p. 70.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, p. 74.

<sup>14</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 954/25A Letter from Beaverbrook to Eden explaining his resignation, 3 March 1942.

back after a stint in America to return to health.<sup>15</sup> It was also a blow for Eden, as whilst Beaverbrook could be frustrating, his support for the Russian cause made him a useful ally in Cabinet. It was Beaverbrook who had pushed for a re-consideration of sending Eden to Moscow empty handed, and Beaverbrook who had led the charge in Cabinet and argued alongside Eden for a positive British decision on the frontier issue. His relationship with Churchill meant he was able to persuade him to change course, to the benefit of both Eden for his mission to Moscow, and his Department's attempts to consider and construct a foreign policy, based around strong, friendly relations with the Soviet Union. His successor was Oliver Lyttelton. The reshuffle brought in new personalities, and although reduced in number, its political bias largely remained the same. Whilst Beaverbrook had gone, Cripps was in, so Eden would still have one strong ally when it came to pressing the Russian cause, and Lyttelton was a respected and loyal colleague who had recent experience dealing with foreign policy, giving a potential ally for Eden when discussing broader considerations, though as a right-wing Tory was unlikely to provide much assistance where Russia was concerned.

The reshuffle was accompanied by rumours of a formal challenge to Churchill's leadership. Whilst no challenger emerged, it is interesting to examine this because of the rumoured candidates. Maisky asked the question "Who can possibly replace Churchill if he resigns?" and followed immediately with the answer "Two names are widely circulated: Eden and Cripps".<sup>16</sup> As one of the prominent members of the Cabinet, and leader of one of the most important departments, it was natural that Eden's name should be put forward, and his anti-appeasement reputation and his popularity with the public would have made him seem a viable candidate. Cripps was unquestionably the man of the moment, though his support was more temporary than Churchill's, he was outside party, so would be seen as a national rather than party appointment, and was an intelligent political thinker and good orator. Eden was unofficially regarded as Churchill's

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<sup>15</sup> Gilbert, M. *Winston S. Churchill, Volume VII: 1941-1945, Road to Victory*, (London, 1989), pp. 63-64.

<sup>16</sup> Maisky's unpublished diary, 18 February 1942, quoted in Gorodetsky, *Stafford Cripps*, p. 236.

successor, and the debate over who was to be Leader of the House could have really been about who was being groomed to be the next Prime Minister.<sup>17</sup> Eden recalls dining with Churchill and Brendan Bracken, the Minister of Information, and Winston suddenly stating “that if anything happened to him I should have to take over”.<sup>18</sup> This nomination of Eden as heir was noted by Harvey, who suggested that Eden “is now in position we want him as recognised No. 2”.<sup>19</sup> The fact that Eden was de facto Churchill’s heir could certainly be a reason why there was difficulty gaining agreement on the Cabinet, and why there was concern over Cripps gaining the Leadership of the House. The position of Churchill’s number two could also be why Eden did not put his head above the parapet and formerly challenge Churchill, thinking in the long run the Leadership of the party and the Government would be his if Churchill stepped down or suffered ill health. Cripps’ inclusion in the new Cabinet may have prevented his threat, as he would have appeared greedy if, after being offered Leader of the House, he held out for the Premiership, which had recently won a Vote of Confidence in Parliament. It is interesting that the two contenders have common features. Both were younger than Churchill and carried popular support; both felt improved relations with and support of Russia would be beneficial to the British war effort; both had argued for the acceptance of the Russian frontier demands, to improve relations and out of strategic realism; and both (although Eden only recently) were thinking about what lay ahead for Britain, and wanted to set the groundwork for a foreign policy that could carry Britain through the war and into the post-war world. It is pure conjecture to state that, from a foreign policy point of view, this indicated a more idealistic Britain and a desire to look beyond the present war effort, but it is interesting that both these ‘candidates’ shared these common perspectives, which were at odds with Churchill’s but aligned to the vision Roosevelt would develop, and the leadership of either could have produced a significantly different future for Britain than the one Churchill was to bring about. When examined from

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<sup>17</sup> A concern raised by Eden that Harvey noted in his diary, Harvey, *War Diaries*, 18 February 1942, p. 98.

<sup>18</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 281.

<sup>19</sup> Harvey, *War Diaries*, 29 November 1941, p. 67.

hindsight a case could easily be made that this was simply an ideological shift, and one that was resigned to the fact that giving in to Stalin was easier than standing against him. Though Cripps was undoubtedly pro Soviet, the Foreign Office as a whole were not, despite favouring working with Russia, so Eden was unlikely to pursuing this course on ideological grounds. Equally, it would be hard to level a pro-soviet charge at Roosevelt, who was soon to propose similar policy lines as Cripps and Eden had been suggesting.

In terms of policy towards the USSR, the British had decided that they were prepared to negotiate a treaty with Russia without American backing, though they were by no means excluding America. Alongside informing Maisky and Clark Kerr, another telegram was despatched to Halifax, asking him to make one final effort to get the President to understand the British position.<sup>20</sup> Although this yielded no change of attitude, it did suggest that America was, reluctantly, prepared to acquiesce in the British decision to make a deal with Stalin, based on the acceptance of the 1941 frontiers.<sup>21</sup> Having resigned his cabinet post, Beaverbrook had been sent to America to try and smooth out the Russian treaty question, under the guise of recovering from his asthma.<sup>22</sup> Though this was the disclosed rationale for the visit, there were rumours of Beaverbrook scheming to take over the Washington Embassy, a position he had been offered and had accepted in September 1941, but the Americans failed to respond to the suggestion, so there could have been more to the mission than the select few who knew of its existence believed.<sup>23</sup> Being a strong supporter of the Russian cause, and having successfully dealt with the supply issue in Moscow, he was certainly suitable for such a mission, and despite the difficult situation he was able to leverage some flexibility in the American attitude. Having seen Roosevelt, he informed Churchill that they had devised a suitable plan and that details would be received through

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<sup>20</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/23/24, Eden to Halifax, 26 March 1942, produced as part of Eden's Memorandum to the War Cabinet on Proposed Anglo-Soviet Treaty, 5 April 1942.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, Halifax to Eden, 1 April 1942, produced as part of Eden's Memorandum to the War Cabinet on Proposed Anglo-Soviet Treaty, 5 April 1942.

<sup>22</sup> TNA, Prime Ministers Papers, PREM 3/399/8, Churchill to Stalin, 20 March 1942.

<sup>23</sup> Roberts, *Holy Fox*, p. 290.

Halifax.<sup>24</sup> This was news to the Foreign Office, with Cadogan commenting that they had received “another extraordinary telegram from the Beaver ... it talks of a ‘plan’ – apparently in connexion with the Stalin demands. *We’ve* had no ‘plan’”.<sup>25</sup> The ‘plan’, which followed from Halifax, was the insertion into the political treaty of a clause allowing for the emigration of people who wanted to leave the Baltic countries over which Russia would gain control.<sup>26</sup> Despite any possible intrigues surrounding the post of Ambassador, Halifax informed the Foreign Office that “Max has been most helpful and we have worked together in complete harmony. The main question in which you have been interested here these last days would have been much more difficult but for his independent contribution. Tell Prime Minister”.<sup>27</sup> The telegram was unusual as Halifax and Max did not get on, the latter was critical of the former's religion<sup>28</sup> and was part of the intrigue to remove Halifax from the Foreign Office in late 1940,<sup>29</sup> not to mention that Beaverbrook was not ‘independent’ on this issue, having a very particular “obsession”<sup>30</sup> for the Russian issue. Given Halifax's good relations with the State Department and Roosevelt it is hard to see that the more difficult personality of Beaverbrook would make a positive difference, but a difference he made. Given his desire for a Second Front, perhaps he convinced the President that it was better to acquiesce to the agreement of the Russian frontiers than risk having to be part of an early Second Front in Europe, but we may never really know what led to Roosevelt's change of stance. Clearly Churchill felt Beaverbrook had been the catalyst for this success as, in May 1942, he again offered him the position of Ambassador. Beaverbrook accepted, as now did Roosevelt, though the plan was never implemented, much to the relief of the Foreign Office. Cadogan's reaction was “Ye Gods!!!”,<sup>31</sup> whilst Harvey described it as “dreadful” and “calamitous”.<sup>32</sup> He also noted that Eden

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<sup>24</sup> TNA, Prime Ministers Papers, PREM 3/399/8, Beaverbrook to Churchill, 1 April 1942.

<sup>25</sup> Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 3 April 1942, p. 445.

<sup>26</sup> TNA, Prime Ministers Papers, PREM 3/399/8, Halifax to FO, 1 April 1942.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, Halifax to FO, 3 April 1942.

<sup>28</sup> Roberts, *Holy Fox*, pp. 273-280.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, p. 192.

<sup>30</sup> Harvey, *War Diaries*, 21 March 1942, p. 112.

<sup>31</sup> Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 15 May 1942, p. 452.

<sup>32</sup> Harvey, *War Diaries*, 12 May 1942, p. 123.

feared Churchill's plan was for Halifax to go to India, with Beaverbrook to replace him, and that Eden was not keen on this arrangement.<sup>33</sup>

With the American position tentatively resolved, Eden constructed a plan for the proposed treaty, which he presented to the War Cabinet on 8 April. He proposed to use the treaty drafts discussed in Moscow as a starting point, and negotiate updated terms through Maisky, attempting to include the American suggestion for population emigration.<sup>34</sup> This was agreed by the War Cabinet, as was the proposal to invite Molotov to visit London to conduct the signature of the agreement.<sup>35</sup> With the procedure agreed, Eden consulted Maisky, who was receptive to the planned procedure and Eden's requirement to make some amendments to the drafts.<sup>36</sup> The drafts submitted by Eden to Maisky as the opening salvo were the ones that he had come close to signing in Moscow, but with several alterations.<sup>37</sup> The new political draft was both longer and broader in scope. In addition to the Articles already contained in the draft treaty from Moscow (on the Atlantic Charter, acting by mutual agreement in the post-war world, and the prevention of future German aggression, all of which were subject to minor alterations of wording), a lengthy preamble was added; the Article covering European reconstruction was split, with an additional Article created covering the separate nature of the Polish frontier question; a new Article was added encompassing the American suggestion about population emigration; the Article from the military agreement which ruled out participation in alliances or coalitions directed against the other power was added, along with a lengthy Article detailing the ratification process.<sup>38</sup> Given the significance of Poland to the

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<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 122-123.

<sup>34</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/23/24, Eden's Memorandum to the War Cabinet on Proposed Anglo-Soviet Treaty, 5 April 1942.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/25A, Eden to Clark Kerr, 8 April 1942. Drafts contained in TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/23/24, Annex II and Annex III of Eden's Memorandum to the War Cabinet on Proposed Anglo-Soviet Treaty, 5 April 1942.

<sup>37</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/32879, This file contains Memoranda by Warner, Dew and Dixon, as well as a minute from Malkin to Warner and a telegram from Smuts to Eden, all discussing different aspects of the treaty prior to Eden submitting the draft to Maisky. April 1942.

<sup>38</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/25A, Eden to Clark Kerr, 13 April 1942. Record of Conversation with Maisky, and enclosures containing the treaty drafts, and notes on how they differ from the Moscow drafts.

British they were keen to make sure this remained a separate issue, so it is not surprising that a clause was added to try and ensure this. The incorporation of the American clause shows how much the British still wanted to appease America, as the emigration of the population from his new territories would not have been something Stalin would have been keen to agree to. With these clauses Britain was trying to safeguard her own position on the one hand, whilst safeguarding American public opinion on the other. The military draft remained essentially the same, save for one Article being moved to the political treaty, and minor additions recognising the United Nations declaration and an agreement not to negotiate a separate peace with any allies of Hitler.<sup>39</sup> Nothing controversial here, as Russia had subscribed to the United Nations declaration, and had already agreed in principle to the no separate peace clause. Eden noted that Maisky “did not take any strong objection to any of the modifications we suggested, nor even our new clause”.<sup>40</sup>

Unfortunately, this lack of objection was not to last as Maisky returned with what Eden called a “catechism” on the drafts, though the record of the conversation sent to Clark Kerr suggests it was not too bad, and that Eden was even able to get a pleasing response to his suggestion that everything possible should be done to help the Poles.<sup>41</sup> Whilst continued negotiations made little progress, positive news was received that, after initially declining the invitation, Molotov would travel to London in the near future to resolve the “fresh divergencies of opinion” raised by the new drafts, and “dispose of all the matters which stand in the way of the signing of the agreements”.<sup>42</sup> During April it was discovered that Roosevelt had invited Molotov to Washington to discuss “a very important military proposal”,<sup>43</sup> and suggested that Molotov, who had accepted, would visit Washington first, and then continue on to the United Kingdom.<sup>44</sup> Could this have been the real plan that Beaverbrook and Roosevelt had concocted?

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<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, Eden to Clark Kerr, 13 April 1942. Record of Conversation with Maisky.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, Eden to Clark Kerr, 16 April 1942. Record of Conversation with Maisky.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, Stalin to Churchill, 23 April 1942.

<sup>43</sup> Roosevelt to Stalin, received 12 April 1942, in U.S.S.R. Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Ed.]. *Correspondence: Between Stalin, Roosevelt, Truman, Churchill & Attlee During WWII*, (Hawaii, 2001), p. 23.

<sup>44</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/25A, Roosevelt to Churchill, 23 April 1942.



Roosevelt sought Churchill's opinion but Churchill was spared a confrontation with Roosevelt by Stalin, who confirmed that Molotov would come to London first, then go on to Washington.<sup>45</sup> With this settled, although no date yet agreed, Maisky presented Eden the Soviet drafts.

The military draft was the same as the British draft, though dropped the reference to the United Nations on the grounds that the treaty would go further, and thus the reference was unnecessary, which Eden accepted.<sup>46</sup> It was the terms of the political draft that were likely to cause trouble, but while there were difficulties they appear, from studying the drafts, not to have been too severe, despite the impression given in Llewellyn Woodward's official history.<sup>47</sup> Although the Soviet draft contained only a simple reference to the Atlantic Charter, and omitted the suggestion of working in mutual agreement "in concert with the other states concerned", neither change was opposed by Eden.<sup>48</sup> The Articles preventing future German aggression; ruling out participation in alliances or coalitions directed against the other powers; ensuring post-war economic assistance and ratification were all untouched.<sup>49</sup> So far, five of the eight articles had been agreed with relative ease, and there is evidence to suggest that the difficulty in getting agreement on the other, more controversial, Articles was not sufficient to prevent progress. The Soviets wanted their original reconstruction Article, and to omit the reference to the Polish question, preferring to deal with the issue by an exchange of notes,<sup>50</sup> and by "mutual agreement between the two countries' friendly allied relations".<sup>51</sup> Whilst this was not objectionable to the British in one sense, it did exclude them from determining the future of Poland, something which would become an issue in a later meeting with Maisky. The wording changes meant the clause now related to the restoration of Soviet frontiers, and also to Soviet interests in

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*, Stalin to Churchill, 23 April 1942.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, Eden to Clark Kerr, 1 May 1942, Soviet Draft Military Treaty.

<sup>47</sup> Woodward, *British Foreign Policy, Vol. II*, pp. 246-249.

<sup>48</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/25A, Eden to Clark Kerr, 1 May 1942, Soviet Draft political Treaty.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*, Eden to Clark Kerr, 1 May 1942, Soviet Draft note to Eden on Poland.

territories violated by Hitler's aggression.<sup>52</sup> Maisky admitted this meant a further undertaking for Britain, and Eden commented that he would have to discuss this issue, but did not openly reject the change.<sup>53</sup> This just left the American clause, but this was, predictably, rejected by the Soviets. Maisky argued that, as far as Russia was concerned, the issue was already resolved, especially in regard to the Baltic States, as plebiscites had already been held.<sup>54</sup> He could also have argued that, as this was a treaty between Britain and Russia, there was no requirement for a non-signatory power to have any of its needs represented. Eden informed Maisky that this was "disappointing", and that it was "important ... to take account of American opinion", despite the fact the Americans were not in support of the negotiations.<sup>55</sup> He did not, however, say it was imperative that such a clause were to be included, just that it was desirable, again not entirely closing the door on the Soviet proposal. The discussion then turned to the duration of the treaty, which the Russians were happy to leave up to the British to determine, and the insertion of a secret protocol. This caused some controversy, as it called for British recognition of Russian pacts of mutual assistance with Finland and Roumania, which guaranteed the independence of these States, in exchange offering Russian recognition of similar British pacts with Belgium and Holland.<sup>56</sup> Eden noted that this was a new proposal, though again did not reject the idea out of hand, giving further hope that an agreement could be forthcoming. The War Cabinet were unhappy with the Soviet drafts, however, and advised Eden to "draw up a reasoned reply" which should "not state, in terms, that we were not prepared to make any further concession; but it should set out in detail the reasons why we felt unable to make concessions beyond the position set out in the draft Treaty prepared by the Foreign Secretary".<sup>57</sup> Whilst Eden was open to negotiation and concession to the Soviet Union, the Cabinet were not, and so Eden was left in the awkward position of arguing the Cabinet line, despite not personally objecting to the Russian

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<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*, Eden to Clark Kerr, 1 May 1942, Soviet Draft political Treaty.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*, Eden to Clark Kerr, 1 May 1942, Report on Conversation with Maisky.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>57</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 65/30/8, Cabinet Conclusions, 4 May 1942.

suggestions. With the War Cabinet's attitude being stiffer than his own, Eden continued to argue unsuccessfully with Maisky throughout May, and it was not until the arrival of Molotov that any progress was made.

During the negotiations Cadogan, who was not exactly in favour of the Russian treaty in the form being discussed, suggested that there should be "some alternative form of Treaty - mutual guarantee, or something"<sup>58</sup> that could be put to the Russians to save haggling over the same points in the existing treaty, a draft of which was circulated to the War Cabinet on 22 May, though not discussed.<sup>59</sup> This treaty was quite clever, as it avoided anything the British or the Russians were unhappy with in the other drafts, yet retained all the points where there had been little or no disagreement: its Preamble covered working with the United Nations and within the Atlantic Charter framework, preventing future German aggression and mutual assistance if one of the signatories were to be attacked by a third power; Part One of the treaty encompassed the main points from the military draft, with both powers pledging military assistance and support against the Axis powers, as well as the intention not to sign a separate peace; Part Two covered the points of agreement from the political draft, with the parties agreeing to provide each other post-war economic assistance, to collaborate in the post-war reconstruction of Europe, to follow the principles of no territorial aggrandisement and non intervention in the internal affairs of others, and that neither party would join an alliance or coalition directed against the other.<sup>60</sup> Additionally, Part Two added articles covering the parties desire to associate with other like-minded States and adopt common proposals to ensure the preservation of peace and the prevention of renewed German aggression, agreement to work together if either party became involved in another conflict, and the duration for the treaty, which was set at twenty years.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 5 May 1942, p. 450.

<sup>59</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/24/28, 18 May 1942, Eden's Memorandum on Negotiations, and CAB 66/24/48, 22 May 1942, Eden's revised Memorandum on Negotiations.

<sup>60</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/24/48, 22 May 1942, Draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance, contained in Eden's revised Memorandum on Negotiations.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

Molotov arrived in Britain on 20 May, and took up residence at Chequers, the country house available to Prime Ministers, which Maisky noted was a sign of utmost respect, as only the highest of visitors stayed there.<sup>62</sup> There are many summaries of the negotiations between the British delegation headed by Eden and the Russian delegation headed by Molotov, so there seems little point offering a further one,<sup>63</sup> especially as the disagreements were similar to those seen between Eden and Maisky. As with the discussions with Maisky, the military draft saw minimal amendments and swift agreement, but the political draft was where the difficulty lay. The important point to look at here is Eden. He was not opposed to many of the Soviet proposals for changes, but had to stand by the Cabinet's decision not to concede any further ground. This dichotomy continued while negotiating with Molotov. When discussing the American clause on transfer of population, Eden states that it was the position of His Majesty's Government to have such a clause, but then states that he was not bound to any particular form of words,<sup>64</sup> suggesting that he was happy for the article to be as vaguely defined as the Soviets wished, so long as it was there. When discussing Poland, a similar picture can be seen, as on the one hand Eden is noting that the position of His Majesty's Government with respect to its agreements with Poland must be safeguarded as part of the treaty, whilst also stating that he was not opposed to the issue being dealt with outside of the treaty. He also suggested that he would be happy to see the proposed compensation of Poland by giving it territory from East Prussia,<sup>65</sup> something that had not been discussed by the War Cabinet. Having failed to gain agreement on a treaty in Moscow, failed to come to terms with Maisky over the drafts, and now failing to reach agreement with Molotov, Eden attempted to rescue the negotiations that, since his return from Moscow, he had been trying to get the British into a position to hold, and successfully conclude, by putting forward his alternative Treaty of Mutual Assistance. Not having been

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<sup>62</sup> Maisky, *Memoirs*, p. 265.

<sup>63</sup> Works such as Woodward, *British Foreign Policy, Vol. II*, pp. 249-254, Maisky, *Memoirs*, pp. 265-267, Eden, *Reckoning*, pp. 327-330, SSW4, pp. 296-303.

<sup>64</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/24/50, Record of Second Conversation with Molotov, 21 May 1942 contained in Eden's Memorandum on Treaty Negotiations with the U.S.S.R. 25 May 1942.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

discussed by the War Cabinet, he had no authority to do this, making it another example of his differing attitude and desire to reach an agreement. This new proposal was received sceptically by Molotov, though after explanations from Eden he conceded that the new draft could be considered, and that he would transmit it to Moscow.<sup>66</sup> Eden agreed to this, and impressed upon Molotov the advantages of the new treaty, namely that it would circumnavigate the deadlock that was being experienced, would be something that could be agreed to without upsetting any other party and would put relations between the two powers on an "abiding footing".<sup>67</sup> Having initially only given it sceptical consideration, Eden's insistence that the difficulties over the political draft would cease to exist meant the Russian delegation gradually took more note of the Mutual Assistance Treaty, and his argument that it could be "signed now and no one in the world could have the slightest grounds for objection. It would be a buttress of the future peace of Europe and would not exclude discussion between us as allies, not only of the problems presented by Finland and Roumania, but of the future map of Europe and the economic problems of the post-war period. The treaty which he had offered would afford a strong foundation on which lasting friendship between the two countries could be built",<sup>68</sup> seems to have converted Molotov, as a draft was agreed the following day.<sup>69</sup> With Molotov awaiting instructions from his Government as to whether he could sign this new treaty, Eden informed the War Cabinet, and it took little to persuade them of the merits of this alternative proposal, which was "greatly to be preferred" to the previous drafts, and they encouraged its signature.<sup>70</sup> Later that evening, Molotov informed Eden of his authority to sign the Treaty, and this was duly concluded the next day.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/24/50, Record of Fourth Conversation with Molotov, 23 May 1942 contained in Eden's Memorandum on Treaty Negotiations with the U.S.S.R. 25 May 1942.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, Record of Fifth Conversation with Molotov, 24 May 1942 contained in Eden's Memorandum on Treaty Negotiations with the U.S.S.R. 25 May 1942.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, Record of Sixth Conversation with Molotov, 25 May 1942 contained in Eden's Memorandum on Treaty Negotiations with the U.S.S.R. 25 May 1942.

<sup>70</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 65/30/14, War Cabinet Conclusions, 25 May 1942.

<sup>71</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 329.

### Celebration

In “ceremonial circumstances ... amidst a vast concourse of photographers and film cameramen”<sup>72</sup> the Treaty of Mutual Assistance was signed.<sup>73</sup> Its signature was highly significant for several reasons. Not only had Eden brought a successful close to negotiations that essentially began in November 1941 with Stalin’s telegram about future relations and the shape of the post-war world, but he had done so in such a manner that Britain, Russia and America were all happy with the result. The alternative treaty contained no controversial reference to frontiers, population movements or Poland, yet the Russians felt it was “of very great value”,<sup>74</sup> and “of great importance in promoting friendly relations”<sup>75</sup> between the two powers. Given the American disapproval discussed previously, it is unsurprising they were relieved about the outcome, and Winant appears to have been instrumental in making the Russian delegation realise the difficulty of the American position had treaties been signed on the lines of the original drafts,<sup>76</sup> for which Eden noted in his diary that he was “much relieved”.<sup>77</sup> From the British viewpoint, congratulations were offered all around. Churchill noted that this was “a great relief to me and a far better solution than I had dared to hope”<sup>78</sup> and, according to Eden, stated that this was “much the biggest thing I [Eden] had done”.<sup>79</sup> The records of the War Cabinet meeting on 26 May note that “The Prime Minister said that the War Cabinet were greatly indebted to the Foreign Secretary for his skilful handling of the negotiations, and for the very satisfactory result which had been achieved”.<sup>80</sup> Harvey noted that he and Eden dined out at the Ritz in celebration, with Eden feeling “immensely relieved and satisfied, feels a good

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<sup>72</sup> Maisky, *Memoirs*, p. 267.

<sup>73</sup> The Anglo-Soviet Treaty for an Alliance and Mutual Assistance, signed 26 May 1942.

<sup>74</sup> Maisky, *Memoirs*, p. 267.

<sup>75</sup> Stalin to Churchill, 28 May 1942 in Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p. 304.

<sup>76</sup> Churchill to Winant, 4 June 1942, quoted in Gilbert, *Road to Victory*, p. 111.

<sup>77</sup> Eden’s diary 24 May 1942, in Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 329, Winant met Molotov during the evening, and it was after this meeting that he decided to look properly at Eden’s alternate treaty.

<sup>78</sup> Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p. 300.

<sup>79</sup> Eden’s diary 24 May 1942, in Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 329.

<sup>80</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB/65/30/15, War Cabinet Conclusions, 26 May 1942, Confidential Annex on U.S.S.R.

job of work done, his biggest day yet".<sup>81</sup> Cadogan offers a more sober assessment, suggesting this was "A very satisfactory ending to a long and tiresome and embarrassing exchange. Everyone pleased".<sup>82</sup>

This reaction suggests Eden was right to push the British Government to make concessions to Russia after his visit to Moscow. Admittedly, the new Treaty made these concessions unnecessary, but Eden would not have known that in early 1942. His championing of the Russian cause was ultimately pointless, but it is important to reflect on the reasoning behind this. Eden was concerned by Churchill's vision of a grand Anglo-American special relationship, believing that this in no way guaranteed common goals, principles or policy ideas. Success in negotiation with Russia opened up other avenues for British foreign policy. Not only did it offer a fall-back should the American Alliance prove unworkable or too restrictive, but it also meant that policy based on broad collaboration looked like a realistic option to pursue. He pushed the Russian cause to such an extent that he was able, after a few months of tough discussions, to win Churchill over so that he was no longer an obstacle to agreeing to the Russian frontier demands. Though the American position helped Eden with the Treaty as signed, it can be seen throughout the negotiations that, whilst wanting to upset America as little as possible, Eden was prepared to push on in Britain's interest and come to terms with the Russians on something that would have ultimately gone down badly in the United States. The fact Eden ignored Churchill's initial disregard for the issue, and continued to work on the problem also suggests another reason for him pressing this cause. This, simply, was that he was acting as Foreign Secretary, and in that capacity was pursuing what he, and his Department on the whole, felt was the right policy to pursue at the time. As Rab Butler put it, "our interests at the present moment lead us to come to an agreement with the Soviets that they may attain their 1941 frontier".<sup>83</sup> Aside from Cadogan, who is well noted as being against this impetus by Eden,<sup>84</sup> the Department were by and large in favour of

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<sup>81</sup> Harvey, *War Diaries*, 27 May 1942, p. 130.

<sup>82</sup> Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 26 May 1942, p. 455.

<sup>83</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/25A, Butler to Eden, 13 March 1942.

<sup>84</sup> See Neilson and Otte, *The PUS*, pp. 252-253.

making concessions to Russia, so it was only natural that the Foreign Secretary should be following this policy line.

We can see that this was clearly linked to Eden's wider views on the nature of British foreign policy. In the memorandum he put to the War Cabinet, discussed in the previous chapter, Eden had two clear thoughts. Firstly that the British wanted a balance of power in Europe, directed against Germany, both during and after the war, and that secondly, Britain was still to be conceptualised as a Great Power.<sup>85</sup> These two statements suggest that, in one sense, the Department had not lost its traditional outlook, as these terms were very much the traditional way of looking at the British position. As Rothwell put it, there was a "basic assumption that Britain was a Great Power with legitimate interests in the future of eastern Europe",<sup>86</sup> and though it may appear contradictory, it could be argued that Eden wanted to negotiate an agreement on the Soviet frontier demands as he felt this was Britain's best chance of exerting this influence, perhaps doubting Britain's capacity to do so after the war<sup>87</sup>, and the treaty, "by providing for mutual consultation, would allow Britain at least to claim a voice in the affairs of these countries".<sup>88</sup> Eden thought it would be sensible to settle for what was offered when the USSR was hard-pressed as, once her armies were west of the Oder River, she would be in a position to keep what she had seized.<sup>89</sup> Britain was not in a strong position at this point, however, with the reverses in North Africa, and the fall of Singapore, so whilst agreement with the Soviet Union became necessary to ensure the Russians didn't give up and sign a separate peace, it was also required to convince Russia that Britain wasn't going to do likewise. Dutton and Carlton clearly note the connection between the military situation and the Russian agreement. Dutton states that the disasters in the Far East helped swing the argument in Eden's favour, and that the agreement on Soviet frontiers was to be

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<sup>85</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/21/28, Eden's memorandum 'Policy Towards Russia', 28 January 1942.

<sup>86</sup> Rothwell, *Britain and Cold War*, p. 93.

<sup>87</sup> Dutton, *Eden*, p. 190.

<sup>88</sup> Rothwell, *Britain and Cold War*, p. 98.

<sup>89</sup> Dutton, *Eden*, p. 191.



coupled with a deal for Russian action against Japan.<sup>90</sup> Carlton, meanwhile, suggested that British weakness could lead to a potential Soviet-American bargain, or a separate German-Soviet peace, and that Eden presented Churchill with these two options as outcomes should Britain fail to secure agreement with Russia.<sup>91</sup> The military situation also concerned Churchill, who stated to Roosevelt that “the increasing gravity of the war has led me to feel the principles of the Atlantic Charter ought not to be construed so as to deny Russia the frontiers she occupied when Germany attacked her”.<sup>92</sup> The final point as to why Eden championed this cause can be seen in the terms of the treaties. Whilst in favour of accepting the Soviet frontier demands, the Foreign Office were turning their attention to the future of Europe, and this is where the balance of power thinking came in. The argument used repeatedly by Eden was that, assuming Germany was defeated, Britain and Russia would be the major European powers, and thus it would be they, along with America, who would be tasked with the reconstruction of Europe, and maintaining the peace.<sup>93</sup> On this basis, co-operation with the Russians was essential to preserve not only the British position, but also the position of Europe, and to ensure its reconstruction. This can be seen in the terms of the Treaty, with Eden arguing for clauses embodying mutual assistance, collaboration in organising the peace and association with likeminded states<sup>94</sup> all aimed at bringing long term collaboration and ensuring Britain would have some voice in the organisation of Europe during and after the War.

Eden was not so much championing the Russian cause for its own sake, so much as linking it to traditional balance of power ideas; if we add to it his support for de Gaulle, we see it for what it was – a kind of revised and revived Triple Entente. He was acting, as his predecessors had, on the assumption that there was an independent foreign policy to be had, and although the needs of allies had to be

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<sup>90</sup> *Ibid*, p. 192.

<sup>91</sup> Carlton, *Eden*, pp. 194-195.

<sup>92</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, C-40, 7 March 1942, quoted in Kimball, *Alliance emerging*, p. 394.

<sup>93</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/21/28, Eden’s memorandum ‘Policy Towards Russia’, 28 January 1942.

<sup>94</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/25A, Treaty of Mutual Assistance, 26 May 1942.

taken into account, in the end British interests were paramount. His new treaty was a step away from dependence on America in the sense that it gave some reassurance of future collaboration with Russia, which could have been useful were the Americans to withdraw from Europe after the war, as they had done in 1919. This episode also offers a glimpse of Eden's skill, as he was initially pushing a cause that lacked support outside his Department, but by exploiting the weak British military situation, as well as strategically arguing his case, he was able to convince the War Cabinet and later Churchill that his policy was correct. That the final Treaty meant this work was without result could make it seem like it had been in vain, but it is unlikely that any Treaty would have been agreed had the British not moved beyond their December 1941 thinking by the time Molotov arrived in London. Eden's hard work meant the British were in a position to sign a far stronger Treaty than they actually did, and it was only the Russian insistence over Poland that prevented them achieving what they had originally wanted. The Mutual Assistance Treaty was a success, but it is interesting how close the British came to signing away large chunks of Eastern Europe in an effort to prove their sincerity to Stalin. This quest to prove sincerity could again be attributed to British weakness, and that they felt the need to prove themselves as loyal allies who were going to be beneficial to the Soviet Union. The extensive history of poor relations between the two powers, and the well documented suspicion held towards the West by the Soviet Union would actually suggest the British were learning from experience, and realised they had to actively show they were breaking from the distance and hostility of past relations and were genuinely interested in co-operation. Looking back, given the historical developments, this would not be seen as a positive, but looking at the period and the efforts to develop and build plans for the future, co-operation with a power believed to be necessary for both victory and sustained peace looks a lot more like common sense than weakness.

## **8) Towards a Foreign Policy**

Eden and the Foreign Office were beginning to think in terms of future strategy and policy, and the signature of the Anglo-Soviet Treaty had gained them a foundation upon which this could be built. That is not to say relations became easier after the Treaty, but it provided a more positive footing, which was to prove beneficial when facing the strain on relations during the latter part of 1942. With the Russian pillar established, the Department should have been able to focus on the continuing predicament of supporting de Gaulle, despite his ego and challenging temperament, and attempting to improve relations with the Free French Movement. Unfortunately, military campaigns and American politics were both to have their influence here, with some potentially disastrous consequences. This chapter will investigate the political and military struggle for France that was ensuing in British policy overall, and between Churchill and Eden in particular, and examine the strains in Anglo-Soviet relations that led to an all or nothing visit by Churchill to try and prevent the collapse of the new alliance.

Having almost severed ties with de Gaulle after a series of 'teapot tempests', the last thing the Foreign Office wanted was another confrontation. Unfortunately, the increasing strength of Japan in the Far East, coupled with British dependency on naval convoys, meant their attention turned towards the Vichy colony of Madagascar, which they feared might be targeted by Japan as a potential naval base.<sup>1</sup> The British invasion of Madagascar, [codename Ironclad], in preparation since late 1941, intended the quick capture of key points on the island, giving Britain access to its resources, and preventing the Japanese taking the island, in particular Diego Suarez.<sup>2</sup> Despite proposing such an operation after Pearl Harbour,<sup>3</sup> and Churchill's initial enthusiasm for it,<sup>4</sup> de Gaulle was excluded from the planning, and Free French forces did not participate, as the British felt it

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<sup>1</sup> Woodward, *British Foreign Policy, Vol. II*, p. 326.

<sup>2</sup> Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, editors text, p. 449.

<sup>3</sup> Churchill, *Vol IV*, p. 198.

<sup>4</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/31897, Churchill to Ismay and Eden, 21 February 1942.

“undesirable that Frenchmen should fight against Frenchmen”.<sup>5</sup> The operation went ahead on 5 May, and by 8 May Diego Suarez had been taken after encountering slight resistance.<sup>6</sup> It is worth noting that this occurred without the initial backing of the United States, who were negotiating a trade agreement with Vichy African colonies whilst British planning for the operation was underway.<sup>7</sup> Despite being excluded, de Gaulle met Eden to discuss the events, although waited a week before doing so, and accepted the British justification and its associated assurance from Eden that the Free French should play a role in the administration of Madagascar.<sup>8</sup>

Sadly events were to delay this process, as the British contemplated halting the military operation and reaching a *modus vivendi* with the pro-Vichy Governor, which aroused de Gaulle’s suspicions of British designs on the French Empire. A communiqué from the United States noting that the island would be “restored to France [i.e. the Vichy Government] if its occupation were no longer essential to the common cause of the United Nations” increased his concern, and led him to believe that the whole *raison d’être* of the Movement was being undermined.<sup>9</sup> Having been excluded from the operation, and potentially having to swallow a British deal with Vichy, it is easy to see why de Gaulle felt he wasn’t being treated as an ally, and it is often credited to Eden that the issue did not cause a break between the two parties.<sup>10</sup> That said, given his previous conduct, aside from delaying meeting Eden, de Gaulle deserves credit for acting with some of the decorum and civility expected of someone leading an allied movement. This good behaviour may explain why the British issued a communiqué, citing the purpose of the operation, and acknowledging that the “French National Committee should

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<sup>5</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/8A, Eden to Peake, 11 May 1942, Record of Conversation with de Gaulle.

<sup>6</sup> Gilbert, *Road to Victory*, p. 104.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas, *The French empire at war*, pp. 141-143.

<sup>8</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/8A, Eden to Peake, 11 May 1942, Record of Conversation with de Gaulle.

<sup>9</sup> Woodward, *British Foreign Policy, Vol. II*, p. 328.

<sup>10</sup> Mangold, *Britain and the Defeated French*, p. 146, Thorpe, *Eden*, p. 275.

play its due part in the administration of the liberated French territory".<sup>11</sup> Whilst a break was avoided, tensions remained high.

Amazingly, de Gaulle's good behaviour continued, despite Eden failing to get his travel ban lifted. The justification that "events might arise at any moment, either political or military, in respect of which we might wish to consult him",<sup>12</sup> was not a strong, nor the real reason for him to remain, which was that Churchill harboured bad feelings towards de Gaulle, and believed that he would return to his Anglophobic rhetoric once abroad.<sup>13</sup> Whilst outwardly polite and accepting of these decisions, in private he was angry, and suggested to Catroux that he would contemplate breaking with the British and Americans should they again display such a lack of confidence in the Free French.<sup>14</sup> It was not until 13 June that the contents of this message were discovered, and Eden requested a meeting with him demanding an explanation. The meeting went well, with the two having a reasonable discussion about de Gaulle's message, and Anglo-Free French relations more generally, with Eden endeavouring to reassure de Gaulle that his suspicions were unjustified.<sup>15</sup> De Gaulle responded that his concerns mainly centred on the American attitude to the Movement and, interestingly, Eden did not disagree with any of the points raised by de Gaulle, but simply suggested that he was going about the relationship in the wrong manner.<sup>16</sup> Eden was, despite some frustrations, still on de Gaulle's side, especially in recognising that the American attitude was a significant problem, and the meeting concluded with de Gaulle agreeing to send a clarifying message to Catroux. It cannot yet be argued that Eden was sympathetic to de Gaulle because of a clear British foreign policy vision, but the developing vision of some form of renewed triple entente, combined with a balance of power intended to restrict Germany, certainly meant that tolerating de Gaulle was a necessity whilst there was no alternative opposition to Vichy.

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<sup>11</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/31900, FO to Dominion Governments, 13 May 1942.

<sup>12</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/8A, Eden to Peake, 4 June 1942, Report on conversation with de Gaulle.

<sup>13</sup> Mangold, *Britain and the Defeated French*, p. 149.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 149 and Woodward, *British Foreign Policy, Vol. II*, p. 336.

<sup>15</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/8A, Eden to Peake, 13 June 1942, Record of Conversation with de Gaulle.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

Unbeknown to de Gaulle, Eden had been attempting to improve the position of the Free French in America, something that should have been helped by the United States withdrawing its Ambassador to Vichy, and consequently re-thinking its relations with France. Only Woodward's official history discusses this process, though the documents used to support his discussion have proved impossible to find in the archives, so it is unclear how accurate his portrayal of the process is.<sup>17</sup> A series of telegrams between Halifax and Eden, as well as meetings between Halifax and Welles in Washington, resulted in a formula being reached which provided limited American recognition for the Free French Movement. This memorandum was given to de Gaulle on 29 June, and contained several phrases which would undoubtedly please him: recognition that Free France was undertaking active military measures against a common enemy; recognition of the role of de Gaulle and the FNC in keeping alive the spirit of France; realisation that the Movement was the symbol of French resistance and provision of assistance to the military and naval forces of Free France.<sup>18</sup> Eden noted that de Gaulle was "clearly gratified" by the memorandum and accepted it with considerable satisfaction on 9 July.<sup>19</sup> It seems strange this is overlooked, as de Gaulle's criticisms of the United States are often picked up, and the Americans had essentially performed a volte-face in their policy, having previously felt the Movement unimportant, with a leader Roosevelt saw as "tiresome and dangerous".<sup>20</sup> For de Gaulle this must have been seen as a step forward, not to mention a major ego boost, with the memorandum referring to the man who already felt himself "in the role of Joan of Arc"<sup>21</sup> as 'the spirit of France'. Unfortunately, as Eden and de Gaulle were soon to discover, American recognition did little to change their practical approach to France.

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<sup>17</sup> Woodward, *British Foreign Policy, Vol. II*, pp. 337-340. The closest estimate for these files is TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/France/1942.

<sup>18</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/8A, Eden to Peake, 29 June 1942, Record of conversation with de Gaulle and enclosed memorandum from Hull recognising the Free French.

<sup>19</sup> Woodward, *British Foreign Policy, Vol. II*, p. 340.

<sup>20</sup> Charmley, *End of Glory*, p. 512.

<sup>21</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/31873, Eden to Churchill, 20 January 1942.

From a foreign policy viewpoint this was an important development, as relations with France were a key area where the Foreign Office faced restrictions imposed by American policy. With the United States recognising de Gaulle, the door was open to try to strengthen the Movement as a whole, something considered key to the aim of collaboration with France in the post-war world, and work on their own policy ideas without having to consider Vichy or American reactions. Laval's return to power in the Vichy suggested there was little point attempting to pursue diplomatic relations, as "He has staked everything on a German victory, and will do all he can to bring it about",<sup>22</sup> an attitude reinforced by the American decision to cease formal relations with Vichy soon after. This step, and recognition of de Gaulle, should have removed the obstacles for Eden, but a new one had appeared - Churchill. Eden soon faced more than just a battle to increase support for de Gaulle, as the conflict escalated into one about the whole nature of Britain's French policy. Played out through the medium of War Cabinet memoranda and correspondence, this tactical duel was to highlight some serious differences in views within the British Government. Eden's memoranda outlined the increasing evidence of support for de Gaulle, particularly as the recognised head of the French resistance and as the likely leader of France after its liberation.<sup>23</sup> Churchill saw this as an "oblique attack on Roosevelt",<sup>24</sup> however, and presented his own memorandum praising the Vichy quislings.<sup>25</sup>

Certain phrases from Churchill's paper highlight the strategic division. The first was Churchill's assertion that Vichy was "the only Government which may perhaps give us what we wanted from France, namely, the Toulon Fleet and the entry into the French North African provinces. One has therefore to consider what, if any, are the chances of this. They do not seem to me entirely negligible".<sup>26</sup> This statement indicates that Churchill was willing to sacrifice politics in order to gain

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<sup>22</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/25/15, Eden's memorandum on Franco-German Co-operation in North Africa, 2 June 1942.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, Eden's memorandum on de Gaulle and French Opinion, 1 June 1942.

<sup>24</sup> Barker, *Churchill and Eden*, p. 59.

<sup>25</sup> Woodward, *British Foreign Policy, Vol. II*, pp 299-300, Thomas, *Britain and Vichy*, pp 134-5.

<sup>26</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/25/19, Churchill's memorandum on Franco-German co-operation in North Africa, 5 June 1942.

military advantages, however remote they may have been, but also suggests an ignorance regarding the attitude of a Government which had, as recently as May, ordered its troops to defend Madagascar by force against the British forces. With Vichy unwilling to hand over an island whose main value was a naval harbour, and American diplomacy unable to alter their attitude, it is hard to see how Churchill thought they might hand over their diplomatic ace card of the French fleet, not to mention also allowing allied forces entry into North Africa. Churchill's next concerning statement was that "from my own personal observation of what has happened, I do not feel that the Vichy Government have done anything more than was absolutely necessary" to avoid the installation of a German Gauleiter.<sup>27</sup> Churchill's comment implies that Vichy were the victims of the situation, and his observation that "they have borne Oran, Dakar, Syria, Madagascar, the British blockade and British air raids with the least possible show of anger"<sup>28</sup> almost suggests their attitude should be admired, and they should not be criticised. Such an attitude was not conducive with British policy, since Britain had maintained contacts with Vichy only at American insistence and had ended these when Leahy was withdrawn, and had focussed on de Gaulle and the Free French Movement as the preferred representatives of the French Resistance and the democratic post-war France. According to Churchill it was a "French conviction that they must not sever the future of France from the United States",<sup>29</sup> further evidencing his lack of grasp on the tactical situation, as Vichy had, realistically, outplayed the United States to gain supplies, without ceding anything in return. That Churchill associated the future of France with the United States and Vichy was worrying for Eden, as de Gaulle did not fit that vision, but led the French group whom Britain were fighting alongside, and had the potential to restore France to a useful strategic position after the war. Churchill's closing statement suggested that "I look forward to a time in the war ... when the great change of heart which has taken place in the French masses and the apparent certainty of an Allied victory

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*



will produce a sudden, decisive change in the action of the Vichy Government".<sup>30</sup>

This is concerning for two reasons. Firstly, it suggests Churchill thought the 'masses' were favourable to the Vichy regime; and secondly, he was willing to work with Vichy provided they switched sides before the end of the war. Though a good portion of France was under German control and there had been no mass exodus to the Free French, this did not mean the masses were tolerant of, if not pro-Vichy, and the evidence presented by Eden supported this. Likewise a statement that Axis collaborators would be considered as partners if they switched sides could have presented issues for the British Government, both with de Gaulle and the Governments in Exile.

Eden responded by submitting a draft memorandum to Churchill, highlighting the flaws of Vichy, the efforts they had undertaken to hinder the allied cause, and dismissing Churchill's thin hopes of a volte-face.<sup>31</sup> Churchill took this personally, and replied that he had been "a friend of France for thirty-five years" and had a "certain instinct" about them.<sup>32</sup> He felt it too easy to make a case against Vichy, who faced "unnatural conditions", and wanted to remind the Cabinet that Roosevelt and the Chiefs of Staffs shared his views, and would thus speak out against Eden if he brought the memorandum to Cabinet.<sup>33</sup> Despite attempting to soften the blow by suggesting that what really separated the two men was the emphasis of the argument,<sup>34</sup> it was the policy itself that caused the divide. Eden agreed, however, and submitted a more balanced memorandum to the Cabinet. He summed up his paper by noting that "the picture is thus exceedingly confused, and the wisest policy, as I see it, for us is to continue our efforts to bring as much as possible of France and the French Empire back into the war at our side; to support all the forces of French resistance, wherever they may be, and whatever their allegiance, without binding ourselves exclusively to any; to continue to support General de Gaulle; and at the same time to encourage him to

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<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> TNA, Prime Minister's Papers, PREM 3/186A/7, Eden's Draft Memorandum on French Policy, 11 June 1942.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, Churchill's minute to Eden, 14 June 1942.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

strengthen his organisation by the enlistment of such representative Frenchmen as he can persuade to come over and join him. By following this policy we should at the same time be best serving the war effort and making provision for our post-war relationship with France".<sup>35</sup> This conclusion throws up some interesting problems. The biggest one, given Eden's support of de Gaulle, was his acknowledgement of Churchill's view that any party that could bring part of France back into the war would be welcomed, and that allegiance did not matter. This is particularly surprising given the criticisms he had levelled at Vichy, and that he felt the best manner of getting the French Empire back into the war was under the Free French Movement. That he suggests Britain should not be bound to any party is also strange, as the British were already bound to the Free French, having recognised them as the resistance movement and, in the Foreign Office at least, it was tacitly acknowledged that they would likely play a leading role in post-war France. Barker notes that this was a series of "tactical moves in a duel between the two men" which "raised fundamental questions which were to be hotly disputed from *Torch* [in late 1942] until the liberation of France".<sup>36</sup>

His determination to argue the Gaullist case against Churchill's Vichy hopes shows Eden wasn't willing to sacrifice all British policy to military strategy, and could be viewed as a desire to see the two combined so that British strategy would advantage both the British war effort and the French party with which Eden envisaged future relations being conducted. This pattern can be seen throughout the tactical duel, where Churchill leapt to the defence of American policy with an almost glowing review of Vichy and their ability to help the allies militarily in the future, whilst Eden stood by British declared war policy and supported the Free French, using evidence and examples to highlight what he saw as errors in Churchill's judgement. With Churchill's statements lacking logic, it is no surprise Eden struck back to defend his corner, and it is clear that Eden was not going to suffer quietly whilst Churchill tried to stomp all over his foreign policy. In arguing for de Gaulle, Eden was once again acting as a British Foreign Secretary, thinking

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<sup>35</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/25/27, Eden's Memorandum on France, 8 July 1942.

<sup>36</sup> Barker, *Churchill and Eden*, p. 60.

about what was in Britain's policy interests and trying to defend it. Eventually Eden backed down, presenting a balanced overview of the situation to the Cabinet, though still highlighting the importance of de Gaulle and the concerns over Vichy. Whilst Churchill had won in one sense, that Eden's campaign against Vichy never fully reached the Cabinet, the end result was still favourable to Eden, as by backing down he had saved the face of both men, but his arguments had resonated, and the attitude of the Cabinet had shifted towards de Gaulle. Unfortunately, the main issue of directing foreign policy towards France had been swept under the table in an effort to maintain Government unity, and it was not long until it would flare up once more.

### The compact with the devil

The onset of Operation Torch returned to the fore de Gaulle's suspicions of the British carving up the French Empire, and the sacrificing of his Movement's objects and position for military gains. With the British having to undertake further military action to secure control of Madagascar, they hoped that the administration could be handed over to the Free French so they could prepare for this upcoming operation.<sup>37</sup> Unfortunately, de Gaulle had finally been allowed to travel, and was busy breaking the assurances given to Eden that he would behave.<sup>38</sup> Such action was causing the British to reconsider their stance about Fighting French<sup>39</sup> administration, and Eden had to be creative in resolving the situation. On 10 September he informed René Pleven and Maurice Dejean, the FNC Commissioners in London for Finance and Foreign Affairs respectively, that the British were to undertake further military action in Madagascar, and that de Gaulle's attitude meant the British were, presently, unwilling to offer the Fighting French the role of administering the territory.<sup>40</sup> This news shocked the two men,

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<sup>37</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/8A, FO to Washington, 22 August 1942.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, Eden to Peake, 28 July 1942, Record of conversation with de Gaulle.

<sup>39</sup> The Free French had changed their name to the Fighting French in July 1942.

<sup>40</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/8A, Eden to Rooker, 10 September 1942, Record of conversation with Pleven and Dejean.

but despite their protests, Eden held firm, suggesting that if de Gaulle returned immediately to London conversations could be resumed in order to proceed with the original plan. This would remove the problem of de Gaulle causing trouble abroad, and also minimise the disruption they would face if the Fighting French did not assume this responsibility. Eventually, they agreed to this proposal, and de Gaulle returned to London, to a somewhat hostile reception.

He was summoned to meet Churchill and Eden on 30 September, and was probably quite shocked to find that, for once, the two were taking the same line. Both were disappointed by his attitude in Syria, and his suggestion of British attempts to gain a preponderant position in the Middle East at France's expense, but both expressed their views differently. Churchill was more vocal and annoyed by the General's actions, whilst Eden was quieter and less hostile. Churchill's comments centred on the position and attitude of de Gaulle, and he repeated several times that "the great difficulty lay in working with General de Gaulle".<sup>41</sup> Eden, on the other hand, was less personal, talking about the position of the movement or British attitude more generally, and whilst not blaming de Gaulle for the difficulties in relations, suggested several times that the British had more trouble with the Fighting French than any other ally.<sup>42</sup> Whether by chance or by planning, they adopted an almost carrot and stick approach, with Churchill talking about opportunities or friendships that had been lost by de Gaulle's action,<sup>43</sup> and Eden discussing future potential relations if they could resolve the sources of tension. Both sides recognised that there were solutions to the problems, though as they differed over what the problems were, agreement was never reached as to solutions.<sup>44</sup> Only on the subject of the representation of France was there a difference between Churchill and Eden. Churchill openly stated that de Gaulle only represented one part of France. Though acknowledging this was "a very honourable part of France" which "represented the combatant sentiments and the main body of opinion", he noted that "there were other parts and aspects of France

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<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, Record of conversation between Churchill, Eden and de Gaulle, 30 September 1942.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*.

which might become more prominent".<sup>45</sup> On this topic Eden remained quiet, suggesting he did not share Churchill's view. De Gaulle, for his part, made no threats of resignation or of breaking with the British, and was prepared to accept the consequences of his action. Unfortunately, he was unwilling to do anything about rectifying the situation, and stuck to his guns over what he saw as "the diminution of the position of France".<sup>46</sup> The differences between Eden and Churchill are subtle, but important. Churchill was generally looking back or being critical, whereas Eden was being positive and looking to the future. De Gaulle was sensitive, so Eden perhaps realised that to dwell on the past would not help, and that de Gaulle needed support if the positive change needed was to materialise. Churchill's insistence on bringing up Vichy shows his unwillingness to stray from American policy, and whilst suggesting he was more open-minded about strategic possibilities, these were unlikely and narrow military advantages. Eden's political aim would have offered more military advantages for Britain, as well as ensuring it maintained control of its foreign policy.

Whilst the meeting was tense, the record of the conversation suggests Cadogan's description of it being a "pitched battle"<sup>47</sup> was somewhat embellished. Likewise Barker's contention that Churchill vehemently rejected de Gaulle's claim to be France<sup>48</sup> is overstated. The often repeated suggestion from de Gaulle's memoirs that Churchill was "bitter and highly emotional" and that Eden lost his temper both lack accuracy when compared to the record of the conversation.<sup>49</sup> Eden comes across as moderate and emotionally detached from the subject, and Churchill, famed for his emotional zeal, appears to have been quite balanced and restrained. Harvey's statement that Churchill was "frank but patient"<sup>50</sup> was more accurate than the traits attributed by de Gaulle, though given the content of the meeting, it is unsurprising he remembered it in an unfavourable light.

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 30 September 1942, p. 479.

<sup>48</sup> Barker, *Churchill and Eden*, p. 63.

<sup>49</sup> De Gaulle, C. *The Complete War Memoirs*, (New York, 1972), pp. 341-2.

<sup>50</sup> Harvey, *War Diaries*, 1 October 1942, p. 164.

The already strained relations were almost destroyed by future events. Despite the British victory in Madagascar, the allied invasion of North Africa [codename Torch] was now on the horizon, the details having been settled during Churchill's most recent visit to Washington in June, further staff talks in London in July, and correspondence between Churchill and Roosevelt over the summer.<sup>51</sup> The Operation, intended to gain control of French North Africa, went ahead on 8 November. By 12 November serious resistance had ceased, and the allied troops made good progress towards Tunisia, only thwarted by German reinforcements, whose arrival was not opposed by Vichy forces.<sup>52</sup> By December the British and Americans had taken military control of a large portion of North Africa, but efforts to ensure the political and administrative stability of these areas was not a straightforward process.

At Roosevelt's insistence, de Gaulle was to be kept in the dark, as he felt his inclusion would have an "adverse effect ... on our promising efforts to attach a large part of the French African forces to our expedition",<sup>53</sup> despite the desire of General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Commander of Allied Forces, to include de Gaulle in the planning of operations in Europe,<sup>54</sup> and Churchill's suggestion that he should be informed prior to the operation.<sup>55</sup> Due to Roosevelt's attitude, Churchill abandoned this line, accepting the Presidents "silly decision"<sup>56</sup> as Cadogan put it. Given his reaction to Ironclad, de Gaulle "surprisingly, took the right line"<sup>57</sup> when he lunched with Eden and Churchill and was officially told of the operation. Churchill's explanation of the nature of the operation, the American insistence on keeping de Gaulle in the dark, and the possible installation of General Henri Giraud as commander in North Africa were accepted, and de Gaulle made positive statements about the need to unify the French resistance.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Thomas, *Britain and Vichy*, p. 138.

<sup>52</sup> Woodward, *British Foreign Policy, Vol. II*, p. 360, Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, Chapter 34, pp. 542-564.

<sup>53</sup> Roosevelt to Churchill, R-207, 5 November 1942, quoted in Kimball, *Alliance emerging*, p. 661.

<sup>54</sup> Woodward, *British Foreign Policy, Vol. II*, p. 350.

<sup>55</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, C-185, 5 November 1942, quoted in Kimball, *Alliance emerging*, pp. 660-1.

<sup>56</sup> Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 6 November 1942, p. 489.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, 8 November 1942, p. 490.

<sup>58</sup> Woodward, *British Foreign Policy, Vol. II*, p. 390.

He also spoke favourably of Giraud, saying he was “without reproach”, and suggested he would be willing to work under him provided he carried “the mass of the French people”.<sup>59</sup> As a sweetener, de Gaulle was encouraged by Churchill to announce the appointment of General Paul Legentilhomme as High Commissioner in Madagascar, an end towards which de Gaulle and Eden had been working for some time. In light of de Gaulle’s positive reaction, Churchill informed Roosevelt of the need to “unify in every possible way all Frenchmen who regard Germany as the foe ... you will I am sure realize that his Majesty’s Government are under quite definite and solemn obligations to De Gaulle and his movement. We must see that they have a fair deal ... you and I ought to avoid at all costs the creation of rival French Émigré Governments each favoured by one of us”.<sup>60</sup> Though wanting to avoid rivalry between French groups, Roosevelt was unmoved on de Gaulle: “it is still my considered opinion that any association by him with the TORCH operation at this time would add serious difficulties to our efforts in that area”.<sup>61</sup> So whilst the need to unify French resistance was agreed, this meant little as Roosevelt did not want one of the groups to be represented, and almost resulted in the scenario Churchill set out coming to pass. For the time being, Eden had Churchill’s support in calling for a recognition of de Gaulle’s position vis-à-vis the British Government. This union was short-lived, however, as military concerns overtook their political counterparts, though the two would quickly intertwine, resulting in six weeks of diplomatic crisis.

Luck was an important factor for Eden, but with Torch, it initially went against him. Darlan, largely by coincidence, was in Algiers at the time of the Allied landings in North Africa.<sup>62</sup> This was not a factor that had been part of the allied plans, which assumed Giraud would take power, thereby unifying French resistance and winning the loyalty of the Vichy territories, and Churchill’s account

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<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, p. 390.

<sup>60</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, C-188, 11 November 1942, quoted in Kimball, *Alliance emerging*, p. 667.

<sup>61</sup> Unsent draft of Roosevelt to Churchill, R-210, 11 November 1942, quoted in Kimball, *Alliance emerging*, p. 669, this line was omitted from the final version.

<sup>62</sup> Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p. 548.

of the initial 24 hours of the operation,<sup>63</sup> coupled with other accounts,<sup>64</sup> suggest the Darlan factor caused significant chaos. The defenders didn't know whose orders they should follow, and the allies didn't know how to ensure the political stability of the region. With Giraud receiving little support, and recognising his inability to over-rule the Vichy Commander-in-Chief,<sup>65</sup> he and General Mark Clark<sup>66</sup> advised Eisenhower that the best way to neutralise resistance was a deal with Darlan, and negotiations began. As a result, a ceasefire was called, in the name of Pétain; German troops occupied the hitherto unoccupied parts of France; and an agreement was reached between Clark, Darlan and Giraud which made Darlan High Commissioner, Giraud head of the land and air forces, and required them to do what they could to get North Africa behind the war effort.<sup>67</sup>

Whilst this safeguarded the military aspects of the operation, this outcome had major political consequences. Eisenhower justified the deal with Darlan on practical military grounds, noting that the ceasefire saved allied lives and that only Darlan could have had such an order obeyed. Churchill accepted this, informing Eisenhower that he approved "anything for the battle".<sup>68</sup> The deal was sensible if looked at from a military standpoint, as it had been at the time, given there was no political consultation taken regarding it. Unfortunately, whilst Generals may not have worried about politics, politicians worried about the Generals, and political and public opposition quickly arose. The Foreign Office reaction is interesting, as they initially accepted the deal to ensure a ceasefire, but as reports came in of agreement about the administration of North Africa, attitudes quickly stiffened. Eden's memoirs suggest he didn't object to the agreement with Darlan to save lives, but on receiving news of the deal between Giraud and Darlan he noted that he "didn't like it a bit, and said so" to Churchill, with whom he was staying at

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<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*, Chapter 34, pp. 542-564.

<sup>64</sup> Mangold, *Britain and the Defeated French*, p. 162, Thomas, *Britain and Vichy*, pp. 150-152, Woodward, *British Foreign Policy, Vol. II*, pp. 360-362.

<sup>65</sup> Woodward, *British Foreign Policy, Vol. II*, p. 362.

<sup>66</sup> United States General, had been involved in the planning for Torch and was Eisenhower's Personal Deputy.

<sup>67</sup> Mangold, *Britain and the Defeated French*, p. 163, Woodward, *British Foreign Policy, Vol. II*, p. 366, Kimball, Vol II, editors text, p. 3.

<sup>68</sup> Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p. 567.



Chequers.<sup>69</sup> Likewise, Harvey made no negative mention of the ceasefire deal, but when he learnt of the Giraud–Darlan deal he noted that “we are horrified” by this, and that “all here in the F.O. are alive to the danger” of Darlan.<sup>70</sup> He was also quick to liken it to appeasement, a topic sure to fire up Eden.<sup>71</sup> Cadogan seemed pleased that an armistice had been quickly reached, even with Darlan, though this quickly changed as he was to refer to the political deal as the “compact with the devil”, and was quick to press on Eden the political dangers of the situation, feeling he was not sufficiently horrified by it.<sup>72</sup> This reaction continued outside the Foreign Office. Correspondence with Clark Kerr, and a meeting between Eden and Maisky backed up the warning from Gladwyn Jebb, the Head of the Economic and Reconstruction Department of the Foreign Office, that the Soviets would be disturbed by this turn of policy, which could be interpreted as being a future “Anglo-American-European quisling combination directed against the Soviet Union”.<sup>73</sup> Attlee and Bracken also raised objection, fearing damage to the moral aspect of the war effort, and the potential storm of public opinion this could produce if Britain were seen to have abandoned the spirit of France,<sup>74</sup> and some sources also note a hostile response of the British press to the deal.<sup>75</sup> De Gaulle, as expected, quickly reached a negative conclusion, feeling any deal with Darlan was despicable, and launched into a bitter tirade against American policy when he saw Sir Charles Peake, the British representative to the FNC, on 15 November.<sup>76</sup> In an effort to quell de Gaulle’s anger, Churchill and Eden saw him the following day, and were informed that he “would not be party to any arrangement, however temporary ... with a traitor”, and despite Churchill’s assurance that his “position was unassailable, that he need not be alarmed at the course events were taking”,

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<sup>69</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 349.

<sup>70</sup> Harvey, *War Diaries*, 14 November 1942, pp. 182–183.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid*, Letter to Eden, 14 November 1942, pp. 184–5.

<sup>72</sup> Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 15 November 1942, p. 493.

<sup>73</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/ 32139, Gladwyn Jebb’s minute, and associated correspondence, 16 November 1942, and TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/8A, Eden to Clark Kerr, 20 November 1942, record of conversation with Maisky.

<sup>74</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/8A, Attlee to Eden, 12 November 1942, and Bracken to Eden, 14 November 1942.

<sup>75</sup> For example, Barker, *Churchill and Eden*, p. 65, Mangold, *Britain and the Defeated French*, p. 165.

<sup>76</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/31951, Peake to de Gaulle, 15 November 1942.

he was not placated.<sup>77</sup> He issued a communiqué, stating that the Fighting French had nothing to do with the negotiations in North Africa,<sup>78</sup> and his anger had not subsided when he saw Eden two days later.<sup>79</sup> The widespread political opposition prompted Churchill to inform Roosevelt of the “very deep currents of feeling” stirred by it, commenting that the more he reflected, “the more convinced I become that it can only be a temporary expedient”.<sup>80</sup> It was not just the British having misgivings about the deal. The State Department were never happy with it,<sup>81</sup> and Roosevelt, despite being unwilling to undermine Eisenhower, had also experienced ‘deep currents’, and notified Churchill of a press statement where he discussed the “temporary arrangement” (he used the word temporary, or similar, nine times in the statement), and its implementation as a militarily expedient to save lives.<sup>82</sup> This was just the reaction to the news of the agreement. As the terms were discovered, tensions increased, especially between Eden and Churchill. Roosevelt’s statement had eased Churchill’s concerns,<sup>83</sup> as he proved unwilling to concede to further protest. When the terms were received, Eden faced a battle with Churchill, who wanted to accept them as they had already gained Roosevelt’s approval. Churchill’s determination not to upset the military operation with what he viewed a minor political issue proved too strong for Eden to combat single-handedly, despite serious efforts to do so via phone calls and telegrams,<sup>84</sup> and even in Cabinet on 21 November, but Eden received no support, so Churchill’s view was accepted.<sup>85</sup> Eden did not give up, however, and wrote to Churchill arguing that the allies were being outmanoeuvred by Darlan’s skill; that the agreement ran counter to Roosevelt’s public statement of 17 November; that they were losing the

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<sup>77</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 65/28/23, 16 November 1942.

<sup>78</sup> Woodward, *British Foreign Policy, Vol. II*, p. 392 and de Gaulle, *Memoirs*, pp. 56-58.

<sup>79</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/8A, Eden to Peake, 19 November 1942, record of conversation with de Gaulle and Pleven.

<sup>80</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, C-193, 17 November 1942, quoted in Kimball, W.F [Ed.]. *Churchill & Roosevelt, The Complete Correspondence: Volume II. Alliance Forged, November 1942-February 1944*, (Princeton, 1984), p. 7.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid*, editors text, p. 8, Thomas, *Britain and Vichy*, p. 166.

<sup>82</sup> Roosevelt to Churchill, R-214, 17 November 1942 quoted in Kimball, *Alliance Forged*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>83</sup> Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p. 569.

<sup>84</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, pp. 350-351, Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 20 and 21 November 1942, pp. 495-496.

<sup>85</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 65/28/26, Cabinet Conclusions, 21 November 1942.

moral high ground regarding French resistance in particular, but resistance against the axis in general; were giving hope to the quislings of Europe; and finally that there needed to be consultation with America to give effect to Roosevelt's statement.<sup>86</sup> Churchill didn't react, though ultimately took Eden's advice after Darlan declared that he was acting in the name of Pétain, so Churchill approved a telegram to Halifax calling for political consultation, and the sending of political advisors to Eisenhower. This was eventually agreed, with Harold Macmillan being appointed Minister Resident in Algiers in December 1942.<sup>87</sup>

These episodes demonstrate the difficulty that Eden faced in relations with de Gaulle and Fighting France during this period. Despite events and military operations which, in theory, should have acted to strengthen the Fighting French, a combination of circumstances often led to more difficulties being created than solved. They also serve to highlight the trouble with trying to plan, and conduct, a foreign policy which had one set of aims, against a military campaign which, for external or non political factors, had different ones. That Eden and Churchill, to a large extent, personify this dichotomy goes some way to disprove any suggestions that Eden was a yes-man in Cabinet or that he was unwilling to stand up to Churchill, and likewise shows that Churchill as a whole was more concerned about the military rather than the foreign policy aspects of the war. This was especially true where France was concerned, as listening to Eden would have often meant taking a different course to Roosevelt. As Thomas highlights, the deal also brought to the fore the contradictions in American policy, as they undermined de Gaulle and refused to support his movement because of his dictatorial leadership and political cunning, yet were happy to jump on board with Darlan, the apex of and authoritarian and unreformed Vichy administration.<sup>88</sup> This was to become more of a factor as foreign policy planning turned towards longer term strategy, in particular thinking about the post-war shape of Europe. Heading into 1943 the

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<sup>86</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, pp. 353-354.

<sup>87</sup> Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, Vol. II, p. 384.

<sup>88</sup> Thomas, *The French empire at war*, p. 164.

position was particularly difficult, with a Vichy regime in North Africa behind the allied military advances, de Gaulle having been excluded from both the military and political side of the operation, and Eden and Churchill sharing differing views as to the desirability of both of these facts. Eden's luck was to change, however, as the situation was suddenly simplified by Darlan's assassination. He was succeeded by Giraud,<sup>89</sup> and Charmley suggests this was proof that Father Christmas had not missed Churchill in 1942,<sup>90</sup> but it seems more likely that this Christmas present was intended for Eden, especially given the eloquence of Churchill's obituary to Darlan in *'The Hinge of Fate'*.<sup>91</sup>

### No Second Front in 1942

Despite securing the Anglo-Soviet Treaty, Eden's celebrations were short lived, as the British were faced with difficulties sending supplies to Russia, and ever increasing Russian demands for a Second Front. Whilst Churchill and Eden were fighting their memoranda battle over France, Molotov returned to Britain after his visit to Washington, and brought with him the unwelcome news that Roosevelt had agreed to a communiqué stating that "in the course of conversations full understanding was reached with regard to the urgent tasks of creating a Second Front in Europe in 1942".<sup>92</sup> This was a major blow for the British, who had not been consulted, and did not feel they could agree as it implied a definite promise of a Second Front that year, something they did not believe possible.<sup>93</sup> Though the British and Americans were still examining possible joint operations in Europe in 1942, it was understood that such an operation should only go ahead if, when the time came, it proved to be a practical possibility with worthwhile results. This point Churchill made explicitly in conversation and in writing with Molotov during his brief stop in London. The British had been forced into a corner by

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<sup>89</sup> *Ibid*, p. 385.

<sup>90</sup> Charmley, *End of Glory*, p. 518.

<sup>91</sup> v, pp. 579-580.

<sup>92</sup> Woodward, *British Foreign Policy, Vol. II*, p. 258, Sherwood, R.E. *Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History*, (New York, 1950), p. 577.

<sup>93</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 330.

Roosevelt, who had claimed to Molotov that “it was important to open a Second Front in 1942” and that he was ready to risk the sacrifice of “100 to 120 thousand men in the first instance even though that might lead to another Dunkirk”.<sup>94</sup> Churchill, for once disagreeing with Roosevelt, informed Molotov that “he was certainly not prepared to contemplate such a sacrifice” if the prospect was ultimate disaster, and put the point quite plainly to Molotov that, whilst operations were being considered, their implementation would depend on the situation at the time, so he could not and should not be taken as promising they would go ahead.<sup>95</sup> This was backed up by an Aide-Mémoire, drawn up by the Chiefs of Staff, which stated that “*We can therefore give no promise in the matter* (Italics in original)” regarding the opening of a Second Front in 1942.<sup>96</sup> From the available evidence, Molotov did not object to this statement, so it can be assumed that the explanations of the document and the British position had been accepted. The Aide-Mémoire thus safeguarded the British position; the publication of the communiqué signalled the intent to act as soon as possible; the inclusion of the ‘full understanding’ phrase reflected the truth that Second Front discussions were underway, and protected the appearance of allied unity. This potential problem had, therefore, been neutralised before it developed, and Churchill noted that Molotov “sailed off into the air ... apparently well satisfied with the results of his mission”.<sup>97</sup> Unfortunately, once back in Moscow the Aide-Mémoire appears to have been quickly forgotten, and the British in particular were to fall victim to Russian reproaches.

Before examining the implications of the Second Front situation, it is important to mention one other item of interest from the Washington talks, particularly from the point of view of this thesis. That is the revelation from Molotov that, while in Washington, he exchanged ideas with Roosevelt on the

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<sup>94</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/25B, Record of Meeting with Soviet Delegation, 9 June 1942.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> Churchill's Aide-Mémoire to Molotov on the Second Front, quoted in Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p. 305.

<sup>97</sup> Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p. 305.

shape of the post-war world.<sup>98</sup> Foreign Office attention was turning to this subject, so this information, albeit limited and idealistic rather than policy based, reinforced the need to look to the future in order to keep in step with their allies. Whilst not entirely thought out, Roosevelt presented a vision, which Molotov suggested that the Soviet Union fully endorsed, of a great power international police system, whereby the USA, USSR, Great Britain, and possibly China, would act to enforce the peace, with the aggressor powers being disarmed.<sup>99</sup> Roosevelt didn't mention this in his messages to Churchill, and thus the ground had not been prepared for Molotov to take up this issue.<sup>100</sup> He was, unsurprisingly, met with the typical Churchillian reaction that "the important thing was to win the victory first rather than, before it was won, to dispute how the advantages were ultimately to be shared".<sup>101</sup> This event appears to have been completely overlooked in the historiography, either missed due to the focus on the Second Front, or simply ignored as unimportant. Whilst it may not seem that important, the fact there was a conversation at this time about the idea of what happens next, so to speak, shows several interesting things. Firstly, that Churchill's steadfast attitude that the war must be won before the spoils could be shared was not only out of step with his Foreign Office, but also that of his friend and ally Roosevelt, upon whom he felt the alliance and hence the military success rested and, according to Molotov, the Soviet Union. Despite Roosevelt's attitude, Churchill was unwilling to discuss the issue with Molotov, and one wonders what he must have felt at being brushed aside on this topic. Secondly, that the Foreign Office were right to be thinking about the shape of the post-war world, as not only had they now secured the 'Grand Alliance' which Churchill had prophesised, and which would lead to ultimate victory, but their counterparts and allies were beginning to think about the peace requirements after the impending victory. Thirdly, that the thinking shown in the last chapter of some form of renewed alliance scheme to maintain peace, whilst perhaps slightly less advanced than the ideas outlined by Roosevelt,

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<sup>98</sup> Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, pp. 572-574.

<sup>99</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/25B, Record of Meeting with Soviet Delegation, 9 June 1942.

<sup>100</sup> Kimball, *Alliance emerging*, editors text, p. 502.

<sup>101</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/25B, Record of Meeting with Soviet Delegation, 9 June 1942.

was on the right track, and thus a worthwhile policy initiative for the Foreign Office to pursue, and in the following chapter the pursuit of that initiative will be examined. Though Molotov raised this topic, it did not lead to a constructive debate about post-war ideas, but it was a signal that the Foreign Office, more so than Churchill, were heading in the right direction. Unfortunately, the re-ignition of the Second Front issue upon Molotov's return to Moscow meant that, for the time being, their work on this was kept largely in the background.

Despite agreement in London, Molotov seems to have forgotten about his talks with Churchill and Eden, and the Aide-Mémoire, as in an interview with Clark Kerr he informed the Ambassador that he stood by the 'firm commitment' given in the communiqué to the creation of a Second Front later in the year.<sup>102</sup> Perhaps he thought Clark Kerr would be unaware of the Aide-Mémoire or the contents of his conversations in London, and that by standing by the communiqué he could get the Ambassador to support the Soviet demands. As it was, Clark Kerr had been sent an overview of the conversations in London and a full copy of the Aide-Mémoire, so knew perfectly well the true state of affairs.<sup>103</sup> Such was the concern at Clark Kerr's report of this conversation that the issue was discussed by the War Cabinet, with Eden being asked to instruct him to correct Molotov's position.<sup>104</sup> The Foreign Office were particularly anxious about the damage that could be caused to the new alliance should a failure to open a Second Front be incorrectly interpreted by the Soviets as a breach of a definite promise, and could effect other issues of the war that would later be regretted by Britain, Russia and the United States.<sup>105</sup> Clark Kerr saw Molotov, but reported that, whilst he had acknowledged the existence and contents of the Aide-Mémoire, he was unwilling to act to dampen down the public expectations of an imminent Second Front

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<sup>102</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/32909, Clark Kerr to FO, 28 June 1942, Report on an interview with Molotov on 26 June 1942.

<sup>103</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/25B, FO to Clark Kerr, 17 June 1942.

<sup>104</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 65/27/1, Cabinet Conclusions, 3 July 1942.

<sup>105</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/25B, FO to Clark Kerr, 3 July 1942.

which were being unfairly raised by the Soviet Government.<sup>106</sup> The lack of Soviet effort to rectify the British concerns made Clark Kerr suspicious, and he wrote home that “Molotov professes to have passed on faithfully to the Soviet Government all that was said to him in London ... it now looks as if he had to some extent failed to interpret to Stalin the mind of the PM”.<sup>107</sup> Donald Gillies attributes this situation to Molotov being afraid of informing Stalin that his visit had not actually yielded a firm promise of a Second Front, as he had initially led his chief to believe.<sup>108</sup> This could have been the case, though regular mentions in the Harvey and Cadogan diaries of the Russian military situation could offer another explanation, that the Russians were, in fact, desperate for help, and could do nothing else except cling to the hope that a Second Front would be forthcoming to relieve their situation.<sup>109</sup>

As Maisky claims to have predicted when reading the Aide-Mémoire, there was little likelihood of a Second Front being opened in 1942.<sup>110</sup> Churchill was against making a sacrifice just for the show, and was heavily engaged in the plans for Torch. He was considering going to Washington before Molotov’s return to London, as Hopkins had hinted that there were “certain matters of high policy which you must come to grips with the President on and he is hopeful that you can make a quick trip”.<sup>111</sup> Confusion surrounding the Second Front convinced Churchill of this requirement, especially as he was unconvinced of the viability of such an operation that year. Maisky claims this was a deliberate attempt to sabotage the Second Front plans,<sup>112</sup> though obviously it is hard to sabotage something which, as far as the British were concerned, never existed. Churchill left for Washington within a week of the Second Front communiqué being published, and although the aim was ensuring the US did not withdraw from its Germany

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<sup>106</sup> TNA, Prime Ministers Papers, PREM 3/76A/1, Clark Kerr to FO, 5 July 1942.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid*, Clark Kerr to Cadogan, 28 July 1942.

<sup>108</sup> Gillies, *Radical Diplomat*, p. 128.

<sup>109</sup> Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, various entries in July 1942, pp. 460-465, Harvey, *War Diaries*, various entries in June and July 1942, pp. 134-146.

<sup>110</sup> Maisky, *Memoirs*, p. 282.

<sup>111</sup> Hopkins to Churchill, 6 June 1942, quoted in Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p. 581.

<sup>112</sup> Maisky, *Memoirs*, p. 284.



first strategy,<sup>113</sup> both Maisky and Clark Kerr saw this as closer Anglo-American collaboration, which would further raise the suspicions of the Russians.<sup>114</sup> The discussions in Washington saw Churchill championing Operation Torch, though in his own memoirs he reproduced a note on future strategy, the third point of which discussed Torch, the first two points discussed cross-channel operations in 1942.<sup>115</sup> The coincidence of this meeting with the fall of Tobruk could have provided Churchill with the emotional passion which often stimulated his best oratorical performances, thus allowing him to skilfully put the case for the North Africa campaign, much to Maisky's annoyance, who felt Roosevelt was rather brow beaten by Churchill into doubting the cross-channel invasion plan.<sup>116</sup> Although this conference did not secure the go ahead for Torch and the abandonment of plans for a cross-channel invasion of Europe [codename Sledgehammer], it was a step in that direction, completed by Churchill's lengthy telegram to Roosevelt in early July setting out explicitly that "no responsible British General, Admiral or Air Marshall is prepared to recommend SLEDGEHAMMER as a practicable operation in 1942" and attempted to address Roosevelt's concerns about the situation on the Russian front with Churchill suggesting that "I am sure myself that GYMNAST is by far the best chance for effective relief to the Russian front in 1942".<sup>117</sup> This, coupled with further military conversations in London, largely settled that any Second Front in 1942 would not be aimed against German forces in Europe, which was an unrealistic proposal in the circumstances, but against Vichy French, Italian and German forces in Africa. For Churchill, it was a victory for British military strategy and its emphasis on imperial defence, for Eden, it was to extend the period of difficult relations caused by the lack of a Second Front.

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<sup>113</sup> Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p. 336.

<sup>114</sup> Gillies, *Radical Diplomat*, p. 129.

<sup>115</sup> Note of military conclusions preserved by General Ismay from a meeting between Brooke and Hopkins, quoted in Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, pp. 344-345.

<sup>116</sup> Maisky, *Memoirs*, p. 284.

<sup>117</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, C-107, 8 July 1942, quoted in Kimball, *Alliance emerging*, p. 520. Gymnast was the original codename for Torch.

As if it wasn't bad enough that there was little prospect of a Second Front, at least as the Russians conceived of one, in 1942, it also looked like the other method of support to Russia from the allies, supply convoys, was under serious threat. The Admiralty felt the northern convoys were "becoming a regular millstone round our necks"<sup>118</sup> and had considered reducing the supplies sent to Russia for some time, but with the increasing dangers being faced, and high losses sustained, they wrote to Churchill requesting to halt future convoys altogether.<sup>119</sup> This was considered by the War Cabinet, and Churchill opposed it, believing "it was our duty to fight these convoys through, whatever the cost".<sup>120</sup> It was decided to let the convoy scheduled for that evening depart, and inform Stalin that if the convoy suffered severe losses, the following convoys may well be held up.<sup>121</sup> This convoy, PQ16, suffered minor losses so, for the time being, the convoys remained active. The convoy and shipping situation caused the allies great difficulty, and had been discussed several times in the conversations between Roosevelt and Molotov in Washington.<sup>122</sup> The issue caused tension, as Molotov requested supply convoys continue undiminished, whilst also demanding the creation of a Second Front. Roosevelt had to point out that "ships could not be in two places at once", and that the Russians "could not eat their cake and have it too".<sup>123</sup> Molotov was unimpressed, and retorted that "the second front would be stronger if the first front still stood fast".<sup>124</sup> Whilst stating that he would put the suggestion to Stalin of reducing Russia's demands under Lend-Lease, he still did not grasp the difficulty of the shipping problem, though his implication that the Russian front would suffer without the shipping may have worried Roosevelt, who later wrote to

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<sup>118</sup> Pound (First Sea Lord) to King (Chief of Naval Operations, U.S.N.) 18 May 1942, quoted in Roskill, Capt. S.W. *The War at Sea, 1939-1945: Volume II, The Period of Balance*, (London, 1956), p. 115.

<sup>119</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/3A, Brooke, Pound and Portal to Churchill, 16 May 1942.

<sup>120</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 65/30/12, 18 May 1942, Confidential Annex on Supplies to Russia.

<sup>121</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/3A, Churchill to Stalin, 19 May 1942.

<sup>122</sup> Record of White House Lunch, 30 May 1942 and final meeting between Roosevelt and Molotov, 1 June 1942, both by Samuel Cross, Professor of Slavonic Languages and Literature at Harvard, quoted in SHR, pp. 568-570, 574-575.

<sup>123</sup> Cross's record of final meeting between Roosevelt and Molotov, 1 June 1942, quoted in SHR, pp. 574-575.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid*, p. 575.

Churchill that he viewed the Russian front with “great concern”.<sup>125</sup> For the moment, the successful arrival of PQ16 meant that the convoy issue temporarily abated. The following convoy, however, was to cause a sharp re-evaluation.

The ill-fated PQ17 convoy suffered some of the heaviest losses of any Russian convoy. The 34 Merchant ships and a sizeable escort came under fierce aerial and surface attack as it rounded the northern tip of Norway. The escort was withdrawn, the merchant ships were ordered to scatter and, unprotected, were picked off by German submarines and aircraft with only 11 eventually reaching Russian ports. 130,000 tonnes of war materials, tanks, planes and other supplies were lost.<sup>126</sup> Churchill aptly described this as “one of the most melancholy naval episodes in the whole war”.<sup>127</sup> The consequences were significant. Eden saw Maisky on 9 July, as the fate of the convoy was still unknown, and again on 14 July when a clearer picture had formed. At both meetings he faced demands for action from an anxious Maisky, whether it be a Second Front, or an operation in Norway, and had to advise that under such severe circumstances there may not be another convoy, as “to send convoys out and have nearly all the ships sunk was of no help to the Russians”.<sup>128</sup> Having been previously over-ruled, the Admiralty returned to the charge, and this time the War Cabinet agreed, despite reservations from Churchill.<sup>129</sup> Fortunately for Eden, the task of informing Stalin fell to Churchill, who sent a long, firm and eloquent telegram to Stalin<sup>130</sup> setting out the background of the convoys, the dangers faced in sending them, as well as the risk to the future Second Front if they continued with such high attrition.<sup>131</sup> As expected, the response was rather bad tempered. Stalin felt the British were refusing full stop to send further convoys, and that they were reneging on their commitment for the

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<sup>125</sup> Roosevelt to Churchill, R-155, 6 June 1942, quoted in Kimball, *Alliance emerging*, p. 508.

<sup>126</sup> Woodward, *British Foreign Policy, Vol. II*, p. 262, Gilbert, *Road to Victory*, pp. 141-142, Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, pp. 234-238, Roskill, *War at Sea*, pp. 134-146.

<sup>127</sup> Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p. 237.

<sup>128</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 336.

<sup>129</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 79/22, Chiefs of Staff Committee, 13 July 1942.

<sup>130</sup> Reproduced several places, including Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, pp. 239-241, Kimball, *Alliance emerging*, pp. 529-532.

<sup>131</sup> Gilbert, *Road to Victory*, p. 147.

creation of a Second Front in 1942.<sup>132</sup> Neither accusation carried much weight factually, but given the success of the most recent German military advances in the Caucasus, Stalin's severe concern and displeasure were not entirely a surprise, a thought with which Eden concurred.<sup>133</sup> Maisky felt the message rather mild, but noted that it had the desired effect on Churchill, though depressing and offending Churchill seems an odd objective to hope for in communication with the leader of an allied Government.<sup>134</sup> Though the interview between Churchill and Maisky was "stormy",<sup>135</sup> it seems Churchill quickly calmed down, as the two agreed that no response was necessary. Churchill had a change of heart, however, and sought council about a potential reply to Stalin from Roosevelt,<sup>136</sup> whose friendly tones probably soothed any remaining anger, and reassured Churchill that Stalin's position was one that neither of them could understand, principally because their countries had not been invaded.<sup>137</sup> Churchill's response, sent the following day, had interesting political consequences, and will be examined later.

The combination of the Second Front issue and the supply crisis lead to a particularly stormy period in Anglo-Soviet relations, perhaps more notable given the recent Treaty, yet there appears little coverage in the historiography. Aside from memoirs and diaries, there are few works which cover the period,<sup>138</sup> with most of the secondary works either noting the existence of an argument over the Second Front but not examining it,<sup>139</sup> or making it seem like nothing happened between the signing of the Treaty and Churchill's visit to Moscow,<sup>140</sup> discussed in the following section. A combination of the views of Clark Kerr and Maisky put

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<sup>132</sup> Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p. 241.

<sup>133</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 337, TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/25B, Eden to Clark Kerr, 24 July 1942, Record of conversation with Maisky.

<sup>134</sup> Maisky, *Memoirs*, p. 292.

<sup>135</sup> Eden's diary, 24 July 1942, quoted in Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 337.

<sup>136</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, C-124, 29 July 1942 quoted in Kimball, *Alliance emerging*, pp. 544-545.

<sup>137</sup> Roosevelt to Churchill, R-171, 29 July 1942, quoted in *Ibid*, p. 544.

<sup>138</sup> For example Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, Vol. II, pp. 257-265, Gilbert, *Road to Victory*, pp. 119-121, 141-153.

<sup>139</sup> For example, Barker, *Churchill and Eden*, p. 241, Dutton, *Eden*, p. 196, Charmley, *End of Glory*, p. 499.

<sup>140</sup> For example, Carlton, *Eden*, pp. 199-206, Rothwell, *Eden*, pp. 66-67.

the situation best. Clark Kerr wrote that "What the USSR wants is some tangible evidence that we realise that the time will come when great and costly efforts will have to be made ... As I see it they are not yet convinced that we understand this, or that we are yet taking the war seriously. They set up their own enormous losses against our (by comparison) trifling losses in men and material since the close of 1939".<sup>141</sup> Maisky noted that "Churchill said to me more than once: 'The enemy should always be deceived. The general public may sometimes be deceived for its own good, but an ally should never be deceived.' The negotiations about a Second Front in 1942 serve as a splendid illustration of how the bourgeois statesmen, not in words but in deeds, conceived of their obligations to their ally".<sup>142</sup> Both views illustrate the Russian position, as they felt genuinely let down by the lack of a Second Front, and one cannot dispute that they had suffered more severe losses than the British, although the British were incurring losses fighting the Germans in North Africa. Both views highlight the significance attached to the Second Front by the Russians, but diminish the risks and sacrifices associated with the convoys, yet it was only after the decision to halt the convoys that Stalin sent his rough message to Churchill. Given it was obvious to most people, except the Russians, that there was no British commitment to a Second Front in 1942, such a message could have been sent any time after Molotov returned to Moscow, but it was only the coincidence of circumstance threatening both of Russia's requirements from her allies, action and supplies, that the pressure was applied. Indeed when Eden and Maisky discussed Stalin's message, the first item raised was convoys, the last was the Second Front, suggesting either the convoys were more important, or more immediately concerning to the Soviet Union.<sup>143</sup> Both were important issues, and their combination offered a serious challenge to the morale of the Soviet Union, and to Anglo-Soviet relations. As such, on the suggestion of Clark Kerr and urged

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<sup>141</sup> Clark Kerr to FO, 25 July 1942, quoted in Gillies, *Radical Diplomat*, p. 129.

<sup>142</sup> Maisky, *Memoirs*, p. 289.

<sup>143</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/25B, Eden to Clark Kerr, 24 July 1942, Record of conversation with Maisky. Interestingly Maisky acknowledges that the British were covered in terms of documentation against Stalin's Second Front charges, though forgets this in his memoirs.

on by Cadogan,<sup>144</sup> Churchill, already planning to visit Cairo to try and rectify the military situation in North Africa, proposed to visit Stalin to discuss these issues, and give him a first hand account of the British position.

### Carrying a large lump of ice to the North Pole

Churchill was no stranger to gallivanting around the globe, so the muted response to his suggestion was unsurprising. That the announcement came at a Cabinet called at 1am probably did little to enliven the reactions of those in attendance. Eden, however, was surprised by the decision, and assumed the limited response was because others were too; only discovering later that this was not the case. Despite being the heir, Eden was no Machiavelli, and was worried about the risks of the journey, and the effect of such a trip on Churchill's health.<sup>145</sup> With Attlee and Ernest Bevin, the Minister of Labour, agreeing to Churchill's visit, Eden would have faced a solitary battle to prevent it were it not for a telegram received by Cadogan from Clark Kerr, which proposed that Churchill should endeavour to meet Stalin if possible, and that such a meeting would have a great effect on Russian morale and improve Anglo-Soviet relations.<sup>146</sup> With Roosevelt's council, and Eden's change of heart, Churchill informed Stalin that the British were making preliminary arrangements for another large convoy effort in September, and that he would be willing to come to Russia, if invited, to meet him and to "survey the war together and take decisions hand-in-hand".<sup>147</sup> Stalin warmly accepted, inviting Churchill to Moscow at his convenience.<sup>148</sup> After a week in Cairo, during which Churchill solved the British Command situation, at least to his liking, by replacing Auchinleck with General Harold Alexander and promoting General Bernard Montgomery to Command of the Eighth Army, Churchill and his

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<sup>144</sup> TNA, Prime Ministers Papers, PREM 3/76A/1 Clark Kerr to Cadogan, 28 July 1942, and Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 30 July 1942, p. 464.

<sup>145</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 338.

<sup>146</sup> TNA, Prime Ministers Papers, PREM 3/76A/1 Clark Kerr to Cadogan, 28 July 1942, and Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 30 July 1942, p. 464.

<sup>147</sup> Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p. 409.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid*, p. 410.

staff began the journey to Moscow.<sup>149</sup> At least that was the plan, as shortly after take-off from the overnight stop in Tehran the plane carrying Cadogan, Wavell and General Sir Alan Brooke, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, was forced to turn back with engine trouble. Thus Churchill reached Moscow accompanied only by Harriman, and had to rely on Clark Kerr until his other aides arrived. Not that this was a bad thing. Clark Kerr was an experienced diplomat and had established a good relationship with Stalin, so was a useful person to impart wisdom on such matters. That said, Cadogan had accompanied Eden to Moscow in December 1941, and Wavell could speak Russian, so Churchill was missing some experienced and able company. Just as Eden suffered doubts on his way to Moscow, Churchill was not certain his visit would produce any positive results, describing it to Roosevelt as a “raw job”,<sup>150</sup> and more evocatively in his memoirs as “like carrying a large lump of ice to the North Pole”.<sup>151</sup> There was even a poem or song, composed by Wavell, the verses of which set out the difficulties faced, and each ended with the line “*No Second Front in 1942*”.<sup>152</sup> Churchill was undeterred, however, and after some customary introductory speeches at the airfield, he was whisked away to the Dacha where he would stay during the conference. Churchill was impressed with this residence and, after taking a bath, was ready to leap straight into the daunting task at hand, and set off with his small party to meet Stalin at the Kremlin.

The details of the talks are covered quite sufficiently in the historiography,<sup>153</sup> and as this visit was not strictly about foreign policy, it seems fruitless to repeat them. What matters here is the importance of the visit as a means of improving Anglo-Soviet relations, the role of those around Churchill, and the implications for British foreign policy. This visit was an important political step. Churchill was by

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<sup>149</sup> General Gott was originally selected, but was killed when his plane was shot down en-route to Cairo on 7 August 1942, two days after Churchill had flown this route. The change occurred just two weeks after the first Battle of Alamein, which began to turn the tide against Rommel.

<sup>150</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, C-126A, 4 August 1942, quoted in Kimball, *Alliance emerging*, p. 553.

<sup>151</sup> Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p. 428.

<sup>152</sup> Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, editors text, p. 474, Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p. 428.

<sup>153</sup> For example, Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, pp. 426-452, Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, pp. 616-622, Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, editors text, pp. 470-474, Gilbert, *Road to Victory*, pp. 171-208, Woodward, *British Foreign Policy, Vol. II*, pp. 266-272.

no means favourable to the Russians, perhaps indicated by the fact he had not yet met Stalin, despite Britain and Russia having been allied and directly fighting Germany since June 1941; whereas the Americans had only officially entered the war in December 1941, but he held regular meetings with Roosevelt.

The first meeting carried almost the entire weight of the visit on its shoulders, as Churchill not only had to meet Stalin and build a relationship, but do so when imparting the news that there would be no Second Front, as least as the Russians envisioned one, in 1942. Giving people the worst news they could expect is rarely a good way to try and make friends, but it seems that the meeting, which was long and at times heated, was in fact a success. Clark Kerr's record suggests that Churchill's frankness and his delivery of the bad news was masterful, and that he managed to raise Stalin's hopes and lower his disappointment with a prolonged explanation of Torch.<sup>154</sup> Perhaps Stalin found Churchill's drawing of a crocodile amusing, but more likely he saw in the spirit of Churchill's oration the strength and determination of the man who stood before him, determined to meet the same end goal as Stalin, the destruction of Hitler. Churchill recalls how, during his explanation of Torch, Stalin, who was "glum" and "restless",<sup>155</sup> became "intensely interested"<sup>156</sup> and engaged in the discussion and, ultimately, Churchill was impressed with his "swift and complete mastery of a problem hitherto novel to him".<sup>157</sup> Clark Kerr's report corroborated this, noting that Stalin had moved from "keen disappointment and irritation to equally keen relief and interest".<sup>158</sup> It is hard to know for certain, but given the disappointment Stalin displayed on receiving the bad news from Churchill, it was probably relief as much as military strategy that led him to pronounce his support for Torch. The meeting ended amicably, with Churchill writing to the Cabinet that "all ended cordially, and I

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<sup>154</sup> TNA, Avon papers, FO 954/25B, Clark Kerr to Eden, 14 August 1942, Brief report from Clark Kerr on Churchill's first meeting with Stalin.

<sup>155</sup> Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p. 431.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid*, p. 433.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid*, p. 434.

<sup>158</sup> TNA, Avon papers, FO 954/25B, Clark Kerr to Eden, 14 August 1942, Brief report from Clark Kerr on Churchill's first meeting with Stalin.



expect I shall establish a solid and sincere relationship with this man".<sup>159</sup> As Churchill was soon to discover, however, no amount of relief or tactical grasp would hold off Stalin's disappointment.

The second day of the conversations did not go well when considered as an effort to improve relations between the two Powers. Churchill was in a querulous mood despite the positive end to the talks the previous night, and Clark Kerr found his attitude and his comments irritating.<sup>160</sup> That Churchill was to meet Molotov in this mood was concerning for the Ambassador, but he soon found another gripe to occupy his mind, the conduct of his late arriving colleagues. Upon their arrival he noted his disappointment at their rudeness and bad manners towards the greeting party, and particularly criticised Wavell given he could converse in Russian, though did note his pleasure at seeing the "well balanced, humorous" Cadogan again.<sup>161</sup> Clark Kerr was spared an unpleasant evening having been dropped from Churchill's party, and given the tension of the meeting he may not have felt too badly about this on reflection, though vented in his diary "What a bloody day!"<sup>162</sup> Churchill's meeting with Molotov was unfriendly, partly because Molotov reverted to discussions about the Second Front, and partly because comments from Molotov that "Mr Churchill should understand our feelings and our desire that something should be done to relieve the situation on our front"<sup>163</sup> aggravated Churchill's bad mood.

At the meeting with Stalin that evening the Aide-Mémoire handed to Churchill showed that Stalin had not accepted Torch as quickly as he had supposed. Essentially, Stalin understood there to be no Second Front in 1942, and that the British were refusing to carry out their obligation as agreed when Molotov visited London, despite favourable conditions for such an operation.<sup>164</sup> The disappointment and accusations levelled in the Aide-Mémoire continued in the

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<sup>159</sup> Churchill to Cabinet, repeated to Roosevelt, C-129, 13 August 1942, quoted in Kimball, *Alliance emerging*, p. 562.

<sup>160</sup> TNA, Inverchapel Papers, FO 800/300, Clark Kerr's record of 13 August 1942.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>163</sup> TNA, Cabinet Papers, CAB 120/65, Record of Churchill's meeting with Molotov, 13 August 1942.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, Translation of Soviet Aide-Mémoire, 13 August 1942.

discussion, with Churchill suffering several barbs and slights of Britain and its military effort. On the whole Churchill maintained his poise, a credit given his often emotional nature, though the repeated criticism left its mark, and eventually he expressed his annoyance to Stalin, breaking into such a spirited speech about his troubles, his long journey and how he had not received the hand of friendship he had expected to find, that the interpreters were so spellbound they abandoned their task. Fortunately, Stalin was equally taken aback, and noted his admiration for the spirit with which Churchill spoke.<sup>165</sup> This broke the ice, as Stalin opened up and became more engaged in the conversation, discussing the sharing of inventions, Torch and his plans for defending the Caucasus, though Harriman noted that despite this the conversation never became friendly.<sup>166</sup> The meeting ended with Churchill being invited to dine with Stalin the following evening, which he accepted “in the public interest”,<sup>167</sup> suggesting both men wanted to keep up the pretence that the visit was going well.

Back at the Dacha, however, there was serious discussion about the “performance”<sup>168</sup> of Stalin, as apparently nobody had expected such a change of attitude to occur, despite Harriman and Cadogan commenting that the tactics mirrored those used on their previous missions to Moscow.<sup>169</sup> The explanation the group arrived at, that the Council of Commissars had taken the news worse than Stalin, said much “for their ingenuity and ignorance of the Soviet system and little for their common sense”,<sup>170</sup> though it was an explanation Churchill would often resort too when relations soured between himself and Stalin.<sup>171</sup> Despite his annoyance at the change of attitude, Churchill was persuaded by Cadogan, and later Clark Kerr, to attend the dinner, and with the aid of Cadogan and Brooke he set to work on a response to Stalin’s Aide-Mémoire. The British reply stated that Torch was the best possible Second Front, countered the broken promise claims

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<sup>165</sup> Gilbert, *Road to Victory*, p. 186, Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, editors text, p. 471, Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p. 438, Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p. 620.

<sup>166</sup> Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p. 620.

<sup>167</sup> Gilbert, *Road to Victory*, p. 188.

<sup>168</sup> TNA, Prime Ministers Papers, PREM 3/76A/9, Churchill to War Cabinet, 14 August 1942.

<sup>169</sup> TNA, Inverchapel Papers, FO 800/300, Clark Kerr’s record of 14 August 1942.

<sup>170</sup> Charmley, *End of Glory*, pp. 507-508.

<sup>171</sup> Folly, *Churchill, Whitehall*, pp. 83-86.

made by Stalin, and reaffirmed Britain's resolve to aid its ally.<sup>172</sup> Cadogan delivered this to Molotov, and informed him that Churchill was "puzzled and much disheartened"<sup>173</sup> by Stalin's change of attitude. Molotov helpfully replied that he had not noticed any such change.<sup>174</sup> Maisky correctly assumed from London that the proceedings and the exchange of communications meant the atmosphere was not "particularly cheerful", which was putting it mildly, and even the big, formal dinner that evening struggled to raise the temperature.<sup>175</sup> Though it began well, with Churchill and Stalin conversing in a friendly manner, the barrage of toasts irritated Churchill,<sup>176</sup> and after the customary photographs he left without indulging in the film screening that followed such dinners. Stalin, perhaps in an effort to make amends for his roughness the night before, followed him to the door, something which was "without precedent".<sup>177</sup> Clark Kerr was again unimpressed with the British representatives, particularly Wavell, for their lack of courtesy during the evening, but notes that Stalin went out of his way in an attempt to be friendly.<sup>178</sup> Day three had done little to improve the situation, or the relations between Churchill and Stalin, and Churchill set his mind on going home without seeing Stalin again.<sup>179</sup> Though Cadogan managed to delay this overnight, the next morning Churchill's attitude was unchanged. He had, however, relented to Cadogan's pressure over the Soviet draft communiqué, which he initially claimed would be "calamitous".<sup>180</sup> With Churchill in no mood for any more meetings with Stalin, and no agreement on the wording of the communiqué, the future of the visit, and Anglo-Soviet relations, hung dangerously in the balance.

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<sup>172</sup> TNA, Prime Ministers Papers, PREM 3/76A/9 Churchill to War Cabinet, 14 August 1942, copy of Churchill's written response to Stalin.

<sup>173</sup> TNA, Prime Ministers Papers, PREM 3/76A/11 Clark Kerr to FO, 16 August 1942.

<sup>174</sup> Woodward, *British Foreign Policy, Vol. II*, p. 271.

<sup>175</sup> Maisky, *Memoirs*, p. 304.

<sup>176</sup> Diary of Lieutenant Colonel Jacob, quoted in Gilbert, *Road to Victory*, p. 191.

<sup>177</sup> TNA, Inverchapel Papers, FO 800/300, Clark Kerr's record of 14 August 1942.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>179</sup> Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, editors text, p. 472.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, editors text, p. 472.

Clark Kerr's finest hour

Clark Kerr's lack of coverage in the historiography thus far could be taken to suggest he was not the most effective Ambassador, and indeed his treatment by Churchill during his time in Moscow could imply the Prime Minister was disapproving of his Ambassador. Clark Kerr notes on many occasions that Churchill was rude to him, and that he bore the brunt of Churchill's tempers.<sup>181</sup> Admittedly he didn't help matters by discussing his desire for the American Embassy with Harriman, though that did illicit from Churchill the pronouncement that Clark Kerr's current post was the "most important job in the world".<sup>182</sup> If the Russians were listening in, as it was assumed they were, this was a good statement of intent from Churchill regarding the seriousness of his mission. Despite the best efforts of Cadogan and Charles Wilson, Churchill's Doctor, Churchill was already packing, intending to leave Stalin to fight his own battles,<sup>183</sup> it was all or nothing for Clark Kerr, who, fed up of Churchill behaving like a "spoilt child", decided to speak to him with "gloves off".<sup>184</sup> Spurred on by Wilson, Clark Kerr asked Churchill to join him in the garden. The resulting talk between the two men was a masterful exercise in persuasion, and the full record of it makes very interesting reading.<sup>185</sup> He flattered Churchill, saying he was a great man, with great talents, whilst simultaneously making him responsible for all the failures of the visit, simply because his judgement had been clouded by a cold memorandum, and his pride hurt when insulted by a peasant, but suggested that, if he set his mind to it and used his charms and his talents, he could still bring Stalin round if he could swallow his pride and meet him once more.<sup>186</sup> This Churchill decided to do, and with the aid of a new interpreter, set off to see Stalin one last time.<sup>187</sup> The final meeting, like Eden's visit before it, was considered to be the best, and was

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<sup>181</sup> TNA, Inverchapel Papers, FO 800/300, Clark Kerr's records of Churchill's visit to Moscow August 1942.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid*, Clark Kerr's record of 12 August 1942.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid*, Clark Kerr's record of 15 August 1942.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid*, also reproduced in Gillies, *Radical Diplomat*, pp. 133-136.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>187</sup> Charmley, *End of Glory*, p. 510.

thoroughly enjoyed by Churchill due to the quantity of food and drink and the intimate discussion he finally conducted with Stalin. Though not starting well, as Churchill rose to leave Stalin invited him to his apartment for drinks. During this more private conversation the two, later joined by Molotov and then Cadogan, surveyed the war, discussed convoys, exchanged “much chaff and banter” and agreed on the wording of the communiqué.<sup>188</sup> Clark Kerr recalled being awoken in the early hours by the Prime Minister, in a “triumphant mood”, and that “the glee of the P.M. was a pleasure to see”.<sup>189</sup>

Gillies suggests that the talk between Clark Kerr and Churchill was the “most important diplomatic coup” of Clark Kerr’s career, and that without this the “whole course of the Second Word War could have been fundamentally altered”.<sup>190</sup> It was certainly a master stroke from the Ambassador, convincing Churchill where the experienced Cadogan and the wise Wilson could not, and it is likely that the course of events could have been different had Churchill left without seeing Stalin again. That Clark Kerr produced this was also impressive, given his respect of and faith in Churchill had suffered during the visit,<sup>191</sup> and he was not keen on having to “shake a great leader of men out of whimsicalities”.<sup>192</sup> Churchill makes no references to the arguments with Clark Kerr or Cadogan discussed here, suggesting their influence was minimal, and Martin Gilbert’s work, drawing mainly on Churchill’s account, makes similar omissions. However, Cadogan noted that it was only after the talk with Clark Kerr that Churchill decided not to return home early, and Churchill sent a personal message to the Ambassador after his visit to say “Thank you so much for all you did for me during the Moscow visit. You were a constant help and wise adviser”.<sup>193</sup> This clearly suggests Clark Kerr did something important, though Churchill again omits this from his writings. Given the events, their frank discussion is the most likely candidate. It is also clear that this visit was an important step in the course of the war. Churchill had, despite the

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<sup>188</sup> Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*. editors text, p. 473.

<sup>189</sup> TNA, Inverchapel Papers, FO 800/300, Clark Kerr’s record of 15 August 1942.

<sup>190</sup> Gillies, *Radical Diplomat*, p. 133.

<sup>191</sup> TNA, Inverchapel Papers, FO 800/300, Clark Kerr’s record of 14 August 1942.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid*, Clark Kerr’s record of 15 August 1942.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid*, Churchill to Clark Kerr 19 August 1942.

difficulties, managed to establish a personal relationship with Stalin, one which he felt would be beneficial as the war progressed.<sup>194</sup> Both Clark Kerr and Cadogan felt that a genuine personal relationship had been established,<sup>195</sup> a view later confirmed by Molotov, who noted that Stalin had been impressed by Churchill's "spirit and by his dynamic qualities".<sup>196</sup> By the "sheer force of his personality"<sup>197</sup> Churchill had managed to break down the boundaries between the two great men despite bearing such bad news; and enabled the British to get away with Torch despite the displeasure it caused the Russians; and on that score Churchill was probably correct in reporting to the Cabinet that only he could have pulled this off,<sup>198</sup> though he neglected to mention the help he received along the way. The important implication for foreign policy was that little came out of this visit, though the knowledge that the Russians were confident of holding off any German advances and were not contemplating a separate peace was good news for the alliance, and the possibility of maintaining it into the future. A slightly spurious point, but one worth mentioning, is that in accepting Torch, the Russians were agreeing to a delay to the cross-channel invasion of Europe, something likely to aid their cause over the 1941 frontiers, as the way the negotiations developed meant there was no chance for lengthy discussion of topics such as this. From the Foreign Office point of view, this could have been a particularly difficult topic to leave Churchill to discuss, given his feelings on this issue, and so they were probably quite glad it didn't come up.

All this shows quite clearly the difficult nature of dealing with the Soviet Union. Despite the high point of the Anglo-Soviet treaty, where there appeared so much promise, relations were soon deteriorating due to the lack of a Second Front and the halting of the supply convoys. Even with the best efforts to convince the

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<sup>194</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/25B, Churchill to War Cabinet, 16 August 1942.

<sup>195</sup> Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, editors text, p. 474, Gillies, *Radical Diplomat*, p. 136.

<sup>196</sup> TNA, Prime Ministers Papers, PREM 3/76A/1 Clark Kerr to Cadogan, 21 August 1942, report on his interview with Molotov.

<sup>197</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/25B, Clark Kerr to FO, 16 August 1942, brief report on Churchill's visit to Moscow.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid*, Churchill to War Cabinet, 16 August 1942, report on final meeting with Stalin.

Russians that no Second Front had been promised, the Soviet attitude remained unaltered, and eventually relations became so strained that the Prime Minister himself visited Moscow to try and resolve the situation. Like Eden's visit, this started well, was pretty sour in the middle, and warmed up again towards the end; giving further credence to the argument made by Barker about Stalin's negotiating style. Whilst the tactics were the same, this time Stalin was unsuccessful on his key point, getting a cross-channel invasion, though in agreeing to Torch he was at least getting some form of Second Front. Perhaps Churchill's emotional nature saved him here, as mostly he felt too insulted to consider accepting Stalin's demands, and that it took serious persuasion from his Ambassador even to meet Stalin at the end shows how stubborn Churchill could be. These tactics may have worked on Eden, who was more sympathetic to the Soviet cause generally, but failed to work on Churchill, and could be argued to have backfired given the passionate defence Churchill gave of British policy. Eventually, a tactic more to Churchill's taste, food, drink and intimate conversation, swung the visit towards a success in terms of preserving Anglo-Soviet relations, but the communiqué provided little of substance except that they would keep fighting to destroy Hitlerism and, like the one issued after the Eden visit, displayed the conversations in a better light than had been the case.<sup>199</sup> One real positive for the Soviet Union was achieved though, as in September supply convoys were resumed, using new tactics and with new agreements about the increased provision of air cover, something which was agreed piecemeal over the course of Churchill's visit. Thus, for the time being, the two main sources of trouble subsided, and as Churchill had returned without championing the Second Front, or having damaged the alliance by snubbing Stalin, the Foreign Office was quite happy with the lack of other results, as this meant there was no new direction, limitation, or political chaos imposed on them, as often occurred after a Churchill visit, and allowed them to continue their post-war planning work, which shall be examined in the following chapters.

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<sup>199</sup> Communiqué issued on Churchill's departure from Moscow, 16 August 1942, quoted in Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, editors text, pp. 473-474, Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p. 449.

### **9) Shaping the Future of the World**

1942 had been a challenging year for the Foreign Office in their attempt to conduct their role in the British war effort. Whilst the difficulties and events outlined have merit in their own right, it is important to see them in the wider concept of foreign policy. Not only were there a series of crises to deal with whilst conducting the country's diplomatic relations, they were slowly trying to create an actual foreign policy, and were particularly attempting to capitalise on the growing realisation that a long-term foreign policy strategy was required. They had an idea about the need for some form of plan for the future, and a sense of this can be seen with the arguments for the Anglo-Soviet treaty. This chapter will examine how the Foreign Office moved from having a loose idea about some form of plan, to actively attempting to pursue and define this idea, and establishing how it would manifest itself as an actual policy initiative. As will be seen, this was to lead to some incredibly detailed work, and some particularly frustrating battles.

The arguments over the Russian treaty and the Second Front dilemma not only hindered the progress in relations between two powers which should naturally have occurred after signing an alliance, but also affected the British perception, or at least that in the Foreign Office, of America. Having excluded the British from the Second Front promise, America was also having a serious impact on their attempts to deal with France, and particularly de Gaulle and the Fighting French. This all served to increase the determination of the Foreign Office to ensure that Britain was, as far as possible, trying to follow its own policy course, rather than washing along with the current of other initiatives, something which, it seems, they had been unable to do thus far. Three events during 1942 were to see the Foreign Office stepping up its efforts in this particular area, the first was the signing of the Anglo-Soviet Treaty; the second was the formal nomination of Eden as the heir apparent in the Government; the third was the creation of the Economic and Reconstruction Department.



Whilst briefly covered when examining the cabinet reshuffle in early 1942, the issue of succession was to re-surface in light of Churchill's visit to Washington in June, and could almost be seen as opening the door to Eden's policy efforts. Given the danger of such trips, a rare event occurred prior to this visit. As Churchill recounts, "It is not customary for a Prime Minister to advise the Sovereign officially upon his successor unless he is asked to do so".<sup>1</sup> Yet, on 16 June, Churchill did just that, naming Anthony Eden as the person to be entrusted with forming a new Government in the event of Churchill's death, on account of his being the "the outstanding Minister" in the National Government, and the man "with the resolution, experience and capacity which these grievous times require".<sup>2</sup> Whilst previously named in conversation as Churchill's heir, Eden's place was now made more official, and at this time he began having regular lunches with the King, an agreeable addition to his schedule, not least because the two often ended up discussing post-war problems.<sup>3</sup> Though there is no obvious evidence that this formal nomination of Eden was the trigger for what was to follow in terms of a longer term foreign policy, the regular conversations with the King, as well as the knowledge that he was considered the future of the Conservative party, may have given Eden the self-confidence required to focus more on this issue, and consider it important enough that he was willing to challenge Churchill over it, as shall be seen later. Barker notes that self-assurance was the key for Eden, and that this, coupled with the backing of the historically strong, wise and experienced Foreign Office ensured he could act on his own accord and not simply fold to Churchill's demands.<sup>4</sup> Dutton suggests that this formal nomination made Eden more inclined to align with Churchill,<sup>5</sup> though this seems an incorrect judgement as far as policy was concerned, as Eden was still inclined to act against Churchill. Though little appears to be made of this in the secondary work, particularly works focusing on Eden, it seems that the timing,

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<sup>1</sup> Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p. 337.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 337.

<sup>3</sup> Thorpe, *Eden*, p. 276.

<sup>4</sup> Barker, *Churchill and Eden*, pp. 24-25.

<sup>5</sup> Dutton, *Eden*, p. 226.

more than the event, of this historically rare occurrence is the thing that should be considered. Eden had just secured the Anglo-Soviet treaty, a key component of which was the twenty-year mutual assistance clause, so it would be logical for him to be considering how this was to be implemented, especially as he had come to the opinion that working with the Russians was going to be crucial for Britain both during and after the war. Given he was also arguing with Churchill at this time over relations with France, being nominated as successor and being able to discuss ideas about the post-war world with the King could certainly have signalled to Eden that the time was right for a more determined effort to be made in this foreign policy direction.

The timing could also be considered important, as in August Eden sent Richard Law, his Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, to Washington. Having been nominated as the successor and then having a close aide make such a visit could make it appear, if one was looking for conspiracy, that Eden was setting up his personnel in preparation for a Governmental change. Fortunately, conspiracy would be hard to prove, as this visit had been planned in May 1942, with Eden discussing the initiative with both Churchill and Halifax. It is worth considering this visit for a moment, as it shows Eden attempting to engage the Americans in discussion over future plans, something which, given the suggestions made throughout this thesis of annoyance over American interference, may seem somewhat strange. What is important to note, and something which shall be followed up later in this chapter, is that the American influence that had frustrated the Foreign Office was mainly in areas considered traditional British interests, or key British interests for the war effort: attempted interference in Anglo-Soviet treaty negotiations, interference in Anglo-French relations and attempts to alter Britain's imperial policy, particularly with regard to India - though there is no room to discuss this topic here - all spring to mind; but in this instance Eden was trying to form a concerted and workable post-war plan, and had the sense and League of Nations experience to realise that America needed to be party to this. Thus it made sense to involve the Americans at an early stage, and the Law visit

was a good step in that direction. To secure support for it, however, Eden had to showcase his political skill.

To Churchill, he wrote that this visit was to “get in touch informally with those in the State Department and elsewhere who are working on the political side of post-war problems in Anglo-American co-operation”; that conversations would be aimed at removing suspicion of Britain in lower levels of the State Department; and that the experience would be useful for future economic talks.<sup>6</sup> To Halifax, however, he wrote that he had been “anxious for some time” that Law, “working on post-war problems on my behalf ... should visit the United States to get in touch with those in Washington similarly engaged”, and that this would be extremely helpful in dealing with this important theme in Anglo-American relations.<sup>7</sup> The differences are subtle, but it appears that Eden was attempting to play down the importance he attached to this visit when discussing it with Churchill, wary perhaps of the latter’s dislike of the topic at hand. The suggestion of meeting lower level officials and removing suspicions are not found in the telegram to Halifax, and whilst Eden talked about general conversations, the informal clause was also dropped. Both Churchill and Halifax agreed to the visit, though Halifax noted the Americans hoped procedural conversations would be conducted, which could also include other countries.<sup>8</sup> Currently, this proposal was too formal for Eden, who hoped to test the water with the Americans, rather than leap right in to formal discussions so the visit was postponed,<sup>9</sup> though it went ahead a few months later. Law reported successful conversations with Hull and Welles; that he was making good progress with the State Department; but found the Americans had “more definite ideas on post-war problems and on the necessity for a joint Anglo-American approach to them”.<sup>10</sup> The American position seems to have advanced little beyond Roosevelt’s suggestions to Molotov, however, as Law reported that their main plan was for a World organisation,

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<sup>6</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/31517, Eden’s minute to Churchill, 5 May 1942.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, Eden to Halifax, 14 May 1942.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, Halifax to FO, 16 May 1942.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, Eden to Halifax, 24 May 1942.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, Law to Eden from Washington, 27 August 1942.

headed by the four Great Powers within the United Nations framework, backed up by American, British and Russian military power.<sup>11</sup> It was also felt that Germany should be disarmed and possibly broken up into a loose confederation, to be monitored by an international police force.<sup>12</sup> It is interesting that, looking back, these were similar to demands made by French Prime Minister, Georges Clemenceau after the First World War, suggesting that America was beginning to understand the need for their involvement in Europe, an idea rejected after Versailles and which ultimately killed the chances of success of maintaining that peace. Thanks to the information provided by Molotov, and that gained by Law, the Foreign Office were in a position to start to work on a general plan, based on their own ideas, and those of the United States.

With Eden's succession in place, and consultation with the Americans over post-war co-operation underway, it now seems prudent to turn to the third event, and the one which arguably had the most impact in terms of foreign policy. There was already a general Ministerial Committee, operating under Sir William Jowitt, whose remit was to study reconstruction problems, but the Foreign Office wanted more control over this issue. It was already receiving detailed plans and suggestions for post-war policy from many different sources, both politicians and general correspondents, and there are several files full of these in The National Archives,<sup>13</sup> so it seems natural that a portion of their resources would be directed to deal with this. In June, it was decided to create a new department to investigate a range of post-war questions such as relief measures and armistice terms.<sup>14</sup> This was the Economic and Reconstruction Department, led by Jebb. Though initially tasked to investigate a series of specific post-war issues, Jebb, seeing an opportunity to exercise his considerable intellect, was soon attempting to make the

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<sup>11</sup> Woodward, L. *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War, Volume V*, (London, 1976), p. 2.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, p. 3.

<sup>13</sup> For example, TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/35340 and FO 371/35341, both of which contain many substantial submissions of post war plans, and designs for International Police Forces and World Organisations.

<sup>14</sup> Greenwood, S. *Titan at the Foreign Office: Gladwyn Jebb and the Shaping of the Modern World*, (Leiden, 2008), p. 150.

new department his own, against the intentions of Cadogan, who had aided him in securing the Foreign Office position. Cadogan quickly found a circular on his desk from Jebb which appeared “to throw all future foreign policy into the new Department”, and remarked that he could now see why Jebb was so happy with his appointment.<sup>15</sup> According to Sean Greenwood, Cadogan attempted to curb this ‘empire building’, but was unsuccessful; save the fact the Department retained its name. In effect, Jebb was able, in his new role, to do exactly what he had set out to do in his circular, and it was his department that was to be the catalyst for the formation of firm post-war foreign policy plans.<sup>16</sup>

The initial paper from the Department, on Relief Machinery, did cover the “trifling issue”<sup>17</sup> of establishing post war relief machinery, but then delved into the broader political spectrum. Jebb recalled that this plan was heavily influenced by what was thought to be the American mindset, and that this “coloured my subsequent thinking”.<sup>18</sup> The paper examined what was seen to be an American-led re-working of the League of Nations concept, and looked at what Britain’s responses should be. As part of this examination, alternative solutions were looked at, but neither the British Empire and Commonwealth idea, whereby the British would pursue an independent policy, backed by their Empire; the European Bloc idea, where Britain would lead a Western European bloc as a counterpoise to the United States and the Soviet Union; nor the League of Nations idea, which aimed for a reconstitution of the League, only in Washington; were considered practical or desirable. The ideal course was considered to be a policy based on collaboration between the four Great Powers, who would each maintain a degree of independence within their own sphere, but with a necessity of Britain having American support. Whilst it considered that this might herald the start of the “American century”, this was seen as necessary to ensure a lasting peace settlement, as British power had been essential to keep the (relative) peace between 1815 and the First World War, and avoid a Europe united against Britain,

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<sup>15</sup> Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 18 June 1942, p. 458.

<sup>16</sup> Greenwood, *Titan*, pp. 150-151.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, p. 151.

<sup>18</sup> Jebb, G. *The Memoirs of Lord Gladwyn*, (London, 1972), pp. 111-112.

particularly under German leadership.<sup>19</sup> It was thus concluded that the American concept was sound, though it needed to be polished and made practicable by Britain's more advanced "political sense".<sup>20</sup> Another advantage of this plan was that, with American and Soviet aid, Britain would maintain its status as a Great Power, even if realistically this was no longer quite so true.<sup>21</sup> Jebb considered that "For a first effort I do not think, in the light of hindsight, that this was too bad",<sup>22</sup> and given the evolution this paper was to experience, his first effort proved to be significantly more valuable to the cause of British foreign policy than he imagined. That said, the irony must obviously be noted here. The Foreign Office, given its concern about American influence, had wanted to try and establish its own policy. Yet what apparently happened was that American views, instead of being considered so British plans could allow for Anglo-American collaboration, were used in this paper by Jebb and his Department as a blueprint. Whilst the paper does discuss alternatives, these are dismissed as impractical or undesirable, and its main thrust was the dominance of America, and the imposition of some global system headed by Washington. There is thus significant irony in that, in attempting not to be dragged along behind American policy, the Foreign Office, through the Four Powers concept, was to champion that policy as its own.<sup>23</sup>

### The Four Power Plan

It is the second paper from the Economic and Reconstruction Department, or more accurately, the revision of the 'Relief Machinery' paper, which is probably the most well known of the works on post war planning. This was 'The Four Power Plan'. At approximately eleven thousand words,<sup>24</sup> this was no half-hearted effort, and, after multiple revisions, covered pretty much everything anyone who had seen it had felt was important. It was drafted in response to comments

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, p. 112.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, p. 114.

<sup>21</sup> Greenwood, *Titan*, p. 152.

<sup>22</sup> Jebb, *Memoirs*, p. 114.

<sup>23</sup> Greenwood, *Titan*, p. 169.

<sup>24</sup> Jebb, *Memoirs*, p. 116.

received on the 'Relief Machinery' paper, and was a considerably expanded and more detailed document than its predecessor. Most notably, despite maintaining its American focus, there was significantly more discussion of the role of Russia, possibly due to input from Sir Frank Roberts, Diplomat in the Northern Department of the Foreign Office, and Sir Christopher Warner, Head of the Northern Department of the Foreign Office. The likelihood of American involvement was also re-examined after suggestions from Sir Neville Butler, Head of the American Department of the Foreign Office, that the Americans desire for widespread obligations may not be as strong as originally suggested,<sup>25</sup> and from William Strang, Foreign Office Assistant Under-Secretary of State, who noted that "there is no sign of this conception [of a Four Power Plan]"<sup>26</sup> in the remarks made by Hull or Welles whilst Law was in Washington. Law consequently wrote several minutes on the drafts to reassure American doubters that the proposal would "appeal to the Americans very much" and was in line with their ideas, despite Welles not mentioning it in discussion.<sup>27</sup> There was also considerable discussion over the post-war fate of Germany, and during August Jebb, Strang and Sargent in particular exchanged a series of minutes and memoranda on the subject.<sup>28</sup> Given the causes of the war, and the peace imposed following the previous war, Germany was obviously a key factor in any such plan for the post war world, and it is unsurprising that there were strong opinions on it, and that the new plan thus paid considerably more attention to the topic than its predecessor.

Given this evolution, by the time the 'Four Power Plan' reached Eden for Cabinet distribution, it was truly a Foreign Office document, and indeed Jebb noted the need for it to be seen as foreign policy, rather than as a reconstruction plan, to avoid control of the issue being taken outside the Department.<sup>29</sup> However, having created the plan, the challenge was now to get it to Cabinet. This would

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<sup>25</sup> Jebb, *Memoirs*, p. 115.

<sup>26</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/31525, Minute by Strang to Jebb on Four Power Plan, 14 September 1942.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, Minute by Law to Jebb on Four Power Plan, 22 September 1942.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, various minutes by Jebb, Strang and Sargent, August 1942.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, Minute by Jebb to Sargent on Four Power Plan, 27 September 1942.

involve negotiating the obstacle of the Prime Minister, whose attention was currently held by the final preparations for Torch. As early as 26 September 1942, Jebb argued that the Cabinet needed to see the paper, and should be asked to give a general approval of the policy line suggested. In this, Jebb was in agreement with Sargent, and Cadogan noted that he had consequently discussed the matter with Eden, who suggested that, as a first step, he should send a minute to the Prime Minister, summarising the paper.<sup>30</sup> Cadogan agreed that Churchill was unlikely to read the full paper, and as such a summary was prepared for Eden, who liked the paper, thinking it “a good piece of work”.<sup>31</sup> The summary was composed by Jebb, and covered the key points of the paper, and an overview of its general policy suggestions, but looking back he felt it unconvincing, “shorn of all the closely reasoned argument and colourful phrases.”<sup>32</sup> Eden gave Churchill the summary on 16 October, hoping that the visiting Jan Smuts, the South African Prime Minister who was close friends with Churchill but who approved of Eden’s foreign policy work, would be able to lessen the Prime Minister’s concern and reluctance to discuss the issue. The summary was never discussed, but Churchill sent a minute to Eden on the subject on 18 October. This was the now famous ‘jugged hare’ argument. Churchill believed it was more important to focus on defeating Hitler and then to aid America in its struggle with Japan, thinking this would provide “a very good background for collaboration about the settlement of Europe”; that “Any conclusions drawn now are sure to have little relation to what will happen”; that these issues should be left “mainly to those on whose hands time hangs heavy”; and that “we shall not overlook Mrs. Glass’s Cookery Book recipe for Jugged Hare – “First catch your hare””.<sup>33</sup> This was not what Eden was hoping for, though was probably what he should have expected given Churchill’s reluctance to consider post war issues. Harvey considered this “foolish” and noted Eden was

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<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, Minute by Jebb on Four Power Plan, 26 September 1942 and response from Cadogan, 30 September 1942.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, Minute by Cadogan to Jebb on Four Power Plan, 27 September 1942 and minute by Eden on the Summary, 3 October 1942.

<sup>32</sup> Jebb, *Memoirs*, p. 118.

<sup>33</sup> TNA, Prime Ministers Papers, PREM 4/100 Churchill’s minute to Eden on the Four Power Plan, 18 October 1942.



“much annoyed at this further example of the P.M.’s blockading of postwar questions and [he] means to send a firm reply”.<sup>34</sup> Eden’s reply was not as firm as Harvey hoped, stating he was “most disappointed”<sup>35</sup> with Churchill’s reply. That said, Eden put a brief but forceful case defending his department’s work, and this section of his message is worth quoting in full. “I had hoped that you would not regard this Four Power Plan as a vague project for an indefinite future. My desire is to have the basis of a foreign policy now, which policy, if the basis is sound to-day, should carry us over into the peace. It is from every point of view bad business to have to live from hand to mouth where we can avoid it, and the only consequence of so doing is that the United States makes a policy and we follow, which I do not regard as a satisfactory role for the British Empire”.<sup>36</sup> He went on to give an example of when this type of forward planning was to Britain’s advantage in negotiations with the United States over territorial rights in China, and finished by reiterating his desire not for detailed discussion, but for a general approval of policy, and noted that this was a “very modest request from your Foreign Secretary”.<sup>37</sup>

This is probably where we see Eden’s whole foreign policy ethos stated most plainly. That he was prepared to take on Churchill over this issue dispels any suggestion of being subservient or too spellbound by succession to act independently of the great man, and, from all appearances, was acting as a strong Foreign Secretary, not being afraid of standing up for the work of his department. There appears no attempt to cover up his insecurities regarding America, as he made it clear that Britain should not take a course of action just because that was what the United States was doing, neither did he hide his belief that Britain and its Empire should maintain a strong position post war, which he believed would be particularly hard to achieve if Britain was having its whole foreign policy course laid out by another power. He was clearly putting the interests of Britain and its Empire first, and noting that, whilst peace has not yet been achieved, it was

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<sup>34</sup> Harvey, *War Diaries*, 19 October 1942, p. 170.

<sup>35</sup> TNA, Prime Ministers Papers, PREM 4/100, Eden to Churchill, 19 October 1942.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

important to look to the future now so that Britain could have a satisfactory role, and one must wonder if that isn't the whole point of the role of the British Foreign Secretary. Churchill was having none of this, and replied that whilst Eden was free to circulate papers – something that may not actually have been the case – he was inclined to believe that changes were happening, and would happen, that would render any decisions made as premature.<sup>38</sup> Thus, an impasse was reached, which was only broken when a similar topic was discussed by the War Cabinet. On 3 November they discussed a Memorandum from Eden, proposing instructions to Halifax regarding a plan for Post-War Atlantic Bases, details of which had been received from Trygve Lie, the Norwegian Minister for Foreign Affairs, and were said to be in line with the thoughts of the Netherlands and Belgium. This entailed the sharing of bases by Britain and the United States along the Atlantic Coast of Europe to help ensure security and stability after the war.<sup>39</sup> A similar idea was suggested by Stalin to Eden in Moscow,<sup>40</sup> so this Norwegian plan would likely have, or receive, Soviet backing, though Eden did not make this argument to the Cabinet. The instructions asked Halifax to discuss the political aspects of such a deal with the American Government, noting that he could express British support for the political aspect of the plans, but that they were unsure of the military advantages and sought to avoid commitment at this stage.<sup>41</sup> The War Cabinet, however, thought this went too far and felt that "certain general conclusions as to the broad lines on which we hoped to see international security re-established after the war" needed agreement before such a plan could be advocated.<sup>42</sup> According to Harvey, this resulted in a row, with Eden apparently stating that he had "been trying to circulate his general plan for weeks but the trouble was that the P.M. disagreed with it".<sup>43</sup> This resulted in a general demand from the Cabinet to view

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, Churchill to Eden, 21 October 1942.

<sup>39</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/30/10, Eden's memorandum to the Cabinet on Post-War Atlantic Bases, 22 October 1942.

<sup>40</sup> TNA, Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/20/39, Record of Eden's mission to Moscow, Record of interview between Eden and Stalin, 16 December 1941.

<sup>41</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/30/10, Draft Despatch to Halifax, October 1942, contained in Eden's memorandum on Post-War Atlantic bases.

<sup>42</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 65/28/19, Cabinet Conclusions, 3 November 1942.

<sup>43</sup> Harvey, *War Diaries*, 3 November 1942, p. 175.

the paper, a summary of which Eden submitted on 8 November. The Cabinet Conclusions do not confirm the suggestion made by Harvey,<sup>44</sup> although it is clear from the exchanges between Eden and Churchill that Eden had been pushing to have his plan seen by the Cabinet. Despite the request of the War Cabinet, he would have to push for a few more weeks until his paper was finally heard, with various minutes by Churchill on prospective Cabinet agendas stating “please not” and “I cannot deal with these matters now”.<sup>45</sup> Eventually, after receiving papers on the topic from Eden, Amery and Cripps, Churchill yielded, and on 27 November the War Cabinet received all three papers.

With the battle to bring the plan to Cabinet won, it is appropriate to examine the document itself, to see exactly what course the Foreign Office were proposing to pursue, and how they intended to do so. As the paper’s structure and central themes remained largely unchanged throughout the many drafts, this work shall study the final version, before it received the input from Cripps and Amery, though their papers shall be discussed later. It should be noted that this version was significantly longer and more detailed than the version seen by the War Cabinet, which was only a summary, though it is intended to draw on that at certain points to see how Jebb condensed the key ideas, and also to see if they actually reflected the true nature of the plan. As the plan was long and very detailed, the focus will be on its key foreign policy ideas, and the basis of the reasoning behind them, rather than every single detail.

The plan set out by examining American proposals regarding the organisation of the post war world, and it was these that the Foreign Office used as their test paper essentially to set out the British position. The American ideas outlined by the paper focused on the United Nations as a world-wide organisation, which would have at its helm what were considered the four Great Powers: the USA, the USSR, the United Kingdom and China; underneath which

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<sup>44</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 65/28/19, Cabinet Conclusions, 3 November 1942.

<sup>45</sup> TNA, Prime Ministers Papers, PREM 4/100 Churchill’s comments on a request from Eden to have the Four Power Plan put on the Cabinet Agenda, and a question from his secretary as to whether a similar paper by Amery could join it, 16 and 17 November 1942 respectively.

would be a greater assembly of the other powers who were members of the organisation, possibly including ex-enemy powers, and those which had been neutral during the war.<sup>46</sup> This would potentially be coupled with regional councils headed by one of the powers; an internationalisation of communication, transport and colonial resources; and was to be backed by the immense scale of American sea and air power, supported by British air and sea power, and the Russian army in a form of International police force.<sup>47</sup> The question posed by the paper was simple. What was the British attitude to this American conception, and did it fit with Britain's home and world interests?

The first, and most important, foreign policy assumption made by the paper, as a preface to the examination of the likely positions and foreign policies of each power, was as follows, and it is important to think about it for a moment: *"The United States, the United Kingdom and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics will all, after the war, realise their world-wide interests and responsibilities and be both able and willing to enter into the world-wide commitments in order to prevent any other nation from again troubling the peace [Italics in original]"*.<sup>48</sup> From this a few clear post-war requirements emerge. Firstly, the need for international co-operation from what the British considered would be the post-war Great Powers, the British did not consider China even a potential Great Power at this point; secondly, the necessity of these powers acknowledging that they had a world role to play, something that may have been difficult for the USA and controversial for the Soviet Union; thirdly, that this idea would only work if all were able and willing to participate in this process, something the League of Nations experience should have taught those involved. It is important to recognise that the rest of the paper was based on the fulfilment of this assumption. Whether or not it was a reasonable assumption to make given the differing circumstances of each power is a difficult question to answer, though one the following sections of the plan looked to address. At this point, the continuation of international co-operation can not really be seen as a bad

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<sup>46</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/31525, 'The Four Power Plan' Cabinet paper, undated attachment to the summary paper, dated 8 November 1942, Section 1 and 2.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, Section 2.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*, Section 4.

idea given this was felt to be the precursor to victory in the war, something obviously required to allow for any post-war plans to be put into effect. Also, the fact that the three powers were co-operating, albeit through circumstance, and often reluctantly, shows that it was not unreasonable to propose that this co-operation should continue.

Having set out the assumption that the great powers would need to work together, the paper then went on to examine what were felt to be Britain's crucial foreign policy interests in the post-war period, and how they could be reconciled with any world organisation. The paper determined that Britain had five foreign policy objectives:

- 1) The development or restorations of our export trade, our overseas investments and our merchant marine, and other "invisible exports," with the object of maintaining our imports, without which the population of these islands could not support themselves at their present standard of living;
- 2) The building up of an international system designed to restrict the power of Germany and Japan (but principally Germany) as the chief dangers to our national independence, livelihood and prosperity;
- 3) The retention by us of strong forces which, even if not sufficient to protect us without allies against all possible aggressor States, will be strong enough to inspire respect in our former enemies and confidence in our existing allies, so as to enable us eventually to make an adequate contribution to any international system of collective security capable of preventing the outbreak of further totalitarian wars;
- 4) The consequent maintenance of the power and influence, both political and economic, of Great Britain in all those parts of the world where up till now she has exercised such influence and where it has represented, and still represents, a civilising and educative force;
- 5) More generally, the pursuit of policies designed to promote world peace and world trade by means of international co-operation, provided always that such policies do not result in our being placed at the mercy of any foreign power or combination of Powers.<sup>49</sup>

These foreign policy statements were unsurprising from a country that had a long history of being a Great Power, and certainly fitted Eden's assumption "that the aim of British policy must be, first, that we should continue to exercise the

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<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*, Section 5A.

functions and to bear the responsibilities of a world Power".<sup>50</sup> In some respects, this was not very forward thinking. The idea that British security was most threatened by Germany suggests Britain's fear came from past experience, and preventing a reoccurrence of past problems, and while a logical position to take, showed no awareness of potential threats that might arise. Likewise, the conception that Britain must maintain its empire and its international influence shows a historic, almost romantic, vision of Britain as a world power, and failed to take into account the political, economic and military realities of Britain's position in the world. But as several works assert, this was not a conception with which many would disagree.<sup>51</sup>

The paper proceeded to discuss the commitments Britain had already made in an effort to achieve its objectives, as discussed previously. It is interesting that the paper saw the Atlantic Charter and the Anglo-Soviet Treaty as part of the process of achieving these foreign policy objectives. Given these objectives had not been set down at the time the commitments were made, it would be illogical to say that they were made as part of the development of this particular foreign policy idea, but the fact they were considered part of the wider process offers evidence that Britain, or perhaps the Foreign Office, saw the need for close working relationships with the other major powers as crucial for being able to deal with the post-war problems.

Little discussion is needed from a foreign policy point of view of the next section of the paper that weighed up the likely strengths and weaknesses of Britain's post-war position, though there are a couple of points worth noting. Firstly, the suggestion was that Britain would have a world role simply because of its existing commitments,<sup>52</sup> though its ability to carry it out would depend on its exact circumstances come the end of the war. Secondly there was a tacit acknowledgement that Britain was no longer the global financial or military powerhouse and, in practice, would struggle to stand up against the might of

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<sup>50</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/30/46, Eden's Four Power Plan Summary Memorandum, 8 November 1942.

<sup>51</sup> Charmley, *Grand Alliance*, p. 57, Dutton, *Eden*, pp. 145-146, Thorpe, *Eden*, p. 280.

<sup>52</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/31525, 'The Four Power Plan' Section 7.

either America or the Soviet Union, though this appears to have been considered insufficient reason for Britain to abandon the idea of playing a world role, particularly if it was able to maintain key parts of its empire and its trade.<sup>53</sup> These ideas suggest a failure to grasp Britain's true decline as a world power, as they seem to be based in the hope and expectation that Britain could continue to fulfil a world role because it had to, rather than having the capability to do so. This section was largely glossed over in the summary paper to the War Cabinet, which appeared to assume Britain would be a world power and would play a role, but which recognised that Britain would not be able to fulfil this assumed role unaided, but would need to be part of a larger organisation.<sup>54</sup>

What is most interesting is the final section of the examination of Britain as part of the Four Power system. This revolved around the question of whether or not Britain was willing to accept the responsibilities of a world power after the war. It was predicted, or assumed depending on whether the full or summary paper is read, that Britain would be required to fulfil a world role, and would probably be in a position to do so, though perhaps with a little help from its allies. There is plenty of evidence in this paper alone to suggest that Britain maintained its sense of importance, and could thus be expected to retain its titular status of Great Power. The 'Four Power Plan', however, sheds light on a trend of 'liberalism' which was considered to be defeatist in outlook, suggesting that Britain's time had passed, and that it was time to hand over the torch to the younger powers, notably America and Russia.<sup>55</sup> Whilst no evidence of the origin of this is set out, it appears a serious concern, as the paper goes on to assert that "unless we can find some rallying cry which will inspire such doubters with the belief in the necessity of our fulfilling our word-wide mission it is possible that, whether we like it or not, we may sink to the level of a second-class Power", the result of which would be "an agonising collapse, from which we should emerge as a European Soviet State, or the penurious outpost of an American Pluto-

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<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*, Section 7.

<sup>54</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/30/46, Eden's Four Power Plan Summary Memorandum, 8 November 1942.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, Section 9.

democracy or a German *Gau*, as forces might dictate”.<sup>56</sup> This is an incredibly evocative statement of the perils Britain could face were it not a world power, and was not without justification. The sheer political or military might of Russia, America or a revived Germany, could well impose itself in some way on Britain depending on how the war proceeded, and how the peace shaped itself, and none of the possible outcomes were felt to be acceptable or welcome for Britain or its Empire. This point should be born in mind given the divergent nature of the Churchill and Foreign Office foreign policies that have already been seen, and will continue to be seen in the rest of this work, especially with regard to America. The examination of Britain’s role concluded by noting that Britain, unlike the United States or the Soviet Union, did not have the luxury of lapsing back into isolationism, and insisted that it must, therefore, remain a world power, though rather paradoxically suggested that this could only happen if Britain had strong allies, but equally that Britain couldn’t have strong allies without being a world power.<sup>57</sup> This suggested Britain might in fact be in a lose-lose situation come the end of the war. This admission suggests good foresight from the Department, however, to ensure this matter was considered before Britain had actually been eclipsed in the war effort by Russia and America. At the time, Britain had not been eclipsed, and it was thus felt that the first assumption could be viewed correct in Britain’s case.

Having set out the British foreign policy objectives that were to be considered, and outlined Britain’s likely position and role within the ‘Four Power Plan’, the paper then examined the likely position of the other powers that were to be involved, and it is worth looking at a couple of key ideas about each power to understand Foreign Office thinking. With regard to the United States, there was particular concern in Britain that the betrayal of the American retreat to isolation

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<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, Section 9.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, Section 10.



would be repeated,<sup>58</sup> and indeed most of the section on America was dedicated to the potential problems around their non-involvement in Europe. Given the precedent after the First World War, coupled with Republican gains in the Congressional mid-terms in 1942, there was significant concern over this issue, and a point made in the summary, though not in the full paper, was that Eden's League of Nations experience showed that it was crucial to have the key powers involved in any large systems designed to maintain international order.<sup>59</sup> The paper considered that those who had discussed policy, such as Welles and Hull, were encouraging as their ideas were all wedded in some way to American international involvement, but there was concern over the more general public attitude. It was hoped that the universal nature of the war would emphasise the point to the American people that America could no longer escape the rest of the world, and would have to play a role as it would be impossible to escape a future conflict. The full plan does not state these ideas outright, but suggests the desirability, in attempting to create a world organisation, to have a willing America acting in concert with the other Powers, rather than on its own, which it could do given its significant resources.<sup>60</sup> Aside from this concern about American isolationism, the plan also examined the power of America, and recognised the fact that, come the end of the war, America would most likely be the dominant world power, with "incomparable" military strength, and forces active all over the world.<sup>61</sup> Unlike the possible weakness of Britain's post-war position, it seems thought had gone into the growth of American power, and perhaps the plan had been conceived to be along similar lines to current American thinking to ensure that this power could be harnessed for what Britain felt were the right international goals after the war, rather than some isolationist American

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<sup>58</sup> Reynolds, D. *Roosevelt, Churchill, and the wartime Anglo-American Alliance: Towards a new synthesis*, in Louis, W.R. and Bull, H [Eds.]. *The 'Special Relationship': Anglo-American Relations since 1945* (Oxford, 1986), p. 34.

<sup>59</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/30/46, Eden's Four Power Plan Summary Memorandum, 8 November 1942.

<sup>60</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/31525, 'The Four Power Plan' Section 14.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid*, Section 13.

imperialism.<sup>62</sup> These fears aside, it was considered that the sheer power and influence of America were coupled with sufficient positive signs that the first assumption could be applied to post-war America.

The position regarding the Soviet Union was more complicated, as the Soviet Union had put forward some post-war ideas, but was at the same time less understood and more secretive than the United States. The treaty with Britain had helped in this regard, and the plan noted it was a good step in engaging with Russia in Europe in a political rather than military manner. The fact Stalin had made some statements about potential Soviet goals had helped shape the plan, as it was already known that, somehow, the frontier issue would have to be dealt with, that the Soviet Union was principally interested in its own security, and particularly the restraining of Germany.<sup>63</sup> The plan was thus designed to include the Soviet Union in the post-war world order, as Stalin had suggested would be desirable; ensure it was put on a level footing with the other great powers, hopefully removing some of their traditional suspicion of the Anglo-Saxon powers; and show how it was beneficial to their search for security if they were involved in the long term pacification of Europe.<sup>64</sup> Given the earlier reference to the younger powers, this could be a suggestion that, akin to a stubborn child, the Soviet Union needing to be coaxed by its elder to play fairly with the other powers, and could be a rather patronising thing to suggest about the power that had, up-to this point, ensured a successful continuation of the war against Germany almost on its own. The idea of the Soviet benefit to participation, especially the geographic significance of participation, concerned much of the remaining Soviet section. The restriction of German power was also one of Britain's key objectives, and anyone familiar with Europe will realise the geographic importance of co-operation between these two powers to deal with this issue. The Plan was felt to offer the Soviet Union a win-win situation. It would be involved with the other main powers in the pursuit of this aim, and at the same time its involvement would also

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<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, Section 13.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*, Section 15.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*, Sections 19 and 22.

prevent its fear of Anglo-Saxon hegemony being imposed on Europe.<sup>65</sup> From Britain's viewpoint, Soviet involvement might also limit efforts to sovietise the eastern European countries, or at least prevent them being played off against the democratic powers in order to disrupt the post-war reconstruction.<sup>66</sup> The plan also offered Russia the advantage of American assistance in dealing with Japan, and British and possibly American assistance in the Middle East, both of which were areas of strong concern for Russia given its geographic location, and its current war effort. It was thus felt that Russia, provided she believed Britain and America were being fair and open with her, would eventually be willing to partake in the Four Power system to manage the post-war world. This was a conclusion, drawn not out of naivety, but out of a set of assumptions developed through debate and observation over the previous year, which suggested the importance of involving the Soviet Union, and the relatively strong possibility of co-operation with Britain that was felt to exist at that time.<sup>67</sup>

Finally the position of China was considered, though mainly because the Americans felt it would be a world power come the end of the war, rather than because the British felt it an integral part in preserving the peace.<sup>68</sup> In fact, the British saw very little to commend China as a potential world power, feeling its interests were not sufficiently global, its economic potential too underdeveloped, and its unity maintained only by military necessity – though these were also largely true of the Soviet Union, though it was seen as far more relevant to the overall war effort to the peace in Europe than China.<sup>69</sup> These factors combined meant that the only claims China had to being a great power were the “long and stubborn resistance to Japan” and “the Americans want her to be included”.<sup>70</sup> It was thus concluded that the assumption could not be applied in the case of China, but due to her limited value, this was not sufficient reason to abandon the plan, which largely hinged on the other three powers.

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<sup>65</sup> *Ibid*, Section 22.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*, Section 20.

<sup>67</sup> Folly, *Churchill, Whitehall*, pp. 109-110

<sup>68</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/31525, ‘The Four Power Plan’ Section 24.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid*, Section 24.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid*, Sections 24 and 25.

With the conclusions drawn above, the second foreign policy assumption of the plan was put forward, and that was that “*the real, if not the declared, object of the Concert of the four Powers will be to hold down Germany and Japan for as long a period as possible and will not be based on the alternative theory that both these Powers should be readmitted to the ranks of Great Powers [Italics in original]*”.<sup>71</sup> It is interesting to see how basic this objective is, and how, in a paper about future policy, one of the key themes is based on the past. Holding down Germany was a key demand of the French after the First World War, and the principle of the Triple Entente, and it is interesting to see how little peace considerations had moved beyond the ideas of the First World War and 1919. Whilst this was a different scheme to the League of Nations, and it was acknowledged in advance that it would need the participation of the great powers to make it workable, it still followed a similar policy line, suggesting those responsible for the drafting of this document were very conscious to avoid a repeat of the inter-war years. It was considered that this assumption might be more controversial than the first, but that it was the crux of the whole plan, and that if it were not considered its key objective then the whole plan would fall.<sup>72</sup> This seemed a reasonable position to take given the whole point of planning for the post-war was to establish how to deal with the aggressor powers, and how to maintain peace. With this assumption in place as the goal, it is necessary to consider how the plan might in practice be applied, though this section in reality mainly dealt with the various problems of applying the plan, rather than examining how it might work. The remainder of the plan was largely an exercise in self reflection, and while not all of these reflections are relevant to this study, there are a few points which are worth examining.

The first consideration in the application of the plan regarded the position of France. The British had the restoration of France as a war aim, and were keen to see the position of France restored, especially given the possibility that the Americans could be unwilling to use their military force to help tie down

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<sup>71</sup> *Ibid*, Section 26.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid*, Section 27.

Germany. If France was re-established, the British would have another power to work with, and would not have to place as heavy a reliance on Russia for the maintenance of peace. It was, therefore, considered that, if France was restored with some measure of greatness, the Four Powers would have to examine the desirability of her being associated with the Great Powers in the government of the world.<sup>73</sup> Obviously this was a risky strategy, as the plan had not been accepted before there was a proposal to expand it to five powers, and relations between America and France were not exactly harmonious, nor were they likely to be if Eden's championing of de Gaulle continued. It was felt, on balance, that the claims France could present would be sufficiently strong were she present and active in the victory that the Russians and the Americans would have difficulty in refusing. No reference is made to China – perhaps a thinly veiled attempt to supplant them with a more 'worthy' great power – though more likely an acknowledgement of China's considered lack of interest in Europe.

The second consideration was the concept of regionalism, and there is a lengthy examination of this process, which boiled down to the conclusion that regionalism had two levels, Global and European. On a Global level, all powers (except China) were considered to be interested in maintaining the peace everywhere so there would be no limited liability, though there would be initial liability for the power most closely associated with the region to be the initial source of the peace-keeping effort should trouble break out.<sup>74</sup> On a European level it was considered that regional schemes, such as the creation of a Western bloc, or Eastern European Confederations, should be considered as welcome, and should be supported by the Four Powers, though they should not be forced into existence, and their existence would not alter the responsibilities of the Four Powers.<sup>75</sup> This area of the plan was left open, as it was dependant on the as yet unknown geo-political landscape of post-war Europe.

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<sup>73</sup> *Ibid*, Section 31.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid*, Sections 32 and 33.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid*, Section 37.

The question of armaments, however, was one where some definite statements could be made. The main thrust of this section was its condemnation of the impractical nature of Roosevelt's idea of only the Four Great Powers having arms. It was considered impossible that France, for example, could be made to disarm after the war when its arms would have been involved in victory, and when it could potentially be accepted as a great power. It was also considered that, were the Americans unwilling to maintain significant forces in Europe, the burden of responsibility for Western European defence would, if everyone else were disarmed, fall to Britain, who would be unwilling to hold this responsibility alone, and would thus require assistance from others.<sup>76</sup>

The final consideration of this section concerned the status of the colonies. Britain, having a global Empire, had a particular vested interest in this, and had set out by maintaining that the Empire was one of its key foreign policy objectives. The American view, in contrast, was that empires should be treated as 'trusteeships' of the United Nations, and colonies should be moved towards independence.<sup>77</sup> As a compromise, the plan suggested that in the special circumstances of the Far East, Britain would be open to maintaining its rights to administer former British possessions, but treating them as trusteeships answerable to an international body of other interested powers.<sup>78</sup> This was not to be used as a precedent for other British colonies, though it was suggested that they could already be thought of as Trusteeships, with Britain, the parent state, responsible for administering and developing them, which was beneficial to the whole United Nations. The extent of this compromise becomes quickly apparent: "such principles, if applied, would in fact alter the present position very little",<sup>79</sup> suggesting that Britain felt they would be able to get away with both pursuing their own foreign policy goals, whilst in the meantime giving a minor gesture to

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<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, Section 39.

<sup>77</sup> Dimbleby, D and Reynolds, D. *An Ocean Apart: The Relationship between Britain and America in the Twentieth Century*, (London, 1988), p. 146.

<sup>78</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/31525, 'The Four Power Plan' Section 42.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid*, Four Power Plan' Section 42.

the United States to secure its participation in the larger project of worldwide defence.

This section links neatly with the following section, which put forward the doubts that could already be viewed about the Four Power Plan, some of which have been discussed. This section is essentially a series of critiquing questions, such as whether the Americans were united enough to make this scheme more workable than the League of Nations; whether the rest of the world would see the Four Great Powers as tyrants keeping the lesser states in straight-waistcoats, and whether the Dominions or India would go along with such a plan.<sup>80</sup> These are, on examination of the plan, reasonable questions to ask. The American position, as seen, was of considerable concern. The position of the lesser states was often overlooked through the plan, so the question is pertinent, as states such as France or Turkey might have felt they deserved a voice, rather than hoping for representation by one of the great powers. The Dominions is an interesting question, as maintaining the Empire was a key objective for Britain, and was in part considered a necessity for their world power status, and thus their inclusion in their own plan. It was, however, considered that, India aside, the majority of the Dominions would agree to have decisions taken on their behalf so long as they were consulted, and those decisions related to the aim of keeping down Germany and Japan.<sup>81</sup> The final doubt expressed in the plan was the ability of Britain to fulfil the balancing act that was required between the irresolution of America and the suspicion of the Soviet Union, to ensure sufficient identity of outlook to make the plan workable.<sup>82</sup>

The depth of thought that went into the plan is further displayed by the next section, which examined the alternative policies. Here it considered what Britain would do if any of their worst scenarios were to occur. Firstly, it considered the implications of American isolationism. In this event, Britain would have to look to the Soviet Union for political and military alliances in order to preserve the peace

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<sup>80</sup> *Ibid*, Sections 43 and 44.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid*, Section 44.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid*, Section 44.

in Europe, as its Empire would not be sufficiently powerful to carry out this task. It was also felt that Soviet influence in Europe would become so strong in this situation that Britain's relationship with the United States would suffer, and Britain would have to move towards more socialist economic practices in order to keep in step with its only major ally and compete at any level with the United States.<sup>83</sup> This, it should be noted, was not considered to be as bad as if Britain "were to surrender our freedom of action to an imperialistic and ill-disposed United States of America", though that is not to say this is something anyone, save perhaps Cripps, wanted to occur.<sup>84</sup>

The second scenario involved a Russian rejection of co-operation. It was felt that after the war Russia would be in a position of self-sufficiency, and could potentially abandon co-operation with the western allies. In such a situation, Russian foreign policy could pose a significant threat to British interests in the Middle East and Europe, and would make it particularly difficult to hold down Germany, whose strength could become a significant factor in any anti-Soviet bloc formed to combat the spread of communism.<sup>85</sup> It was also suggested that, in this situation, America would probably retreat from Europe, leaving Britain with little option but to abandon the policy of holding down Germany and make a series of agreements with other powers try and maintain any standing in Europe.<sup>86</sup>

The final scenario was the worst of all, where neither the United States nor the Soviet Union accepted the Four Power Plan or were willing to play a role in the subjugation of Germany. This was considered a "highly dangerous situation" as Britain would be unable to rely on Poland or France for support, and would have to collaborate with Germany and Italy in an attempt to appeal to their better natures and convince them to swap their swords for ploughshares.<sup>87</sup> The expected result of this was another world war. In a critique of appeasement, the Plan highlighted how history showed that Britain and France could not hope to

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<sup>83</sup> *Ibid*, Section 46.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid*, Section 46.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid*, Section 47.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid*, Section 47.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid*, Section 48.



subjugate Germany alone, and the “humiliating years” prior to the war would be repeated unless Britain could be certain of the attitude of the United States and the Soviet Union.<sup>88</sup>

With all this in mind the paper reached the following conclusions: That the Four Power Plan was something which the British should support, if not indeed advance; that the British should lead the Americans, without appearing to do so, and take their good ideas and “forge them into practical tools on the anvil of our experience”; that any agreements made with America should be in treaty form, making it as difficult as possible for the Americans to back out later; and finally, with more of the irony suggested earlier, that “it would be the height of unwisdom to commit ourselves forthwith and definitely to any precise American scheme” – apparently forgetting that the Plan they had concocted was based on the ideas put forward by Roosevelt.<sup>89</sup> It was thus suggested that the British should adopt the ‘Four Power Plan’ as general policy and should encourage both the United States and the Soviet Union to do the same. Jebb added a bit of Machiavelli, however, suggesting that during conversations with each power, Britain should drop hints that they were prepared to make an exclusive agreement with the other if demands became too stiff, suggesting that if Britain played its cards right it could be responsible for making a real world balance of power.<sup>90</sup> The paper ended with the following words, both vision and warning combined: “Only by taking up the vague ideas now floating about the world and expressing them boldly and even recklessly *in our own terms* can we hope to play the role which is proper to us. And irrespective of what we say, only by making up our minds as to what it is that we really want can we hope to be the master and not the victim of events. *Ducunt volentem fata nolentem trahunt* (Fates lead the willing and drag the unwilling) [Italics in original]”.<sup>91</sup> Although discussed in a manner of greater self-importance and superiority than its military and political strength deserved, British thinking

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<sup>88</sup> *Ibid*, Section 49.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid*, Sections 50, 51 and 53.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid*, Section 54.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid*, Section 55, Translation from Latin taken from Google Translate.

was still that of a world power, and a former world leader, and given Britain's long history at the top of the hierarchy it is perhaps unsurprising, if slipping out of touch with reality. As it turned out, the Cabinet made up its mind to adopt The Four Power Plan as general policy, and it became Eden's task to try and implement its ideas, and encourage its adoption amongst the other Great Powers.

When the 'Four Power Plan' eventually reached the Cabinet, both Leo Amery, and Stafford Cripps, had submitted memoranda on the subject. Amery argued in his paper that the most serious danger to peace lay in Europe, and that to nullify this danger the solution must also come from Europe, and be confined to Europe, unlike the idealistic worldwide attempt at peace with the League of Nations concept after the previous war.<sup>92</sup> He also thought Britain would be too busy to act as the policeman of Europe, that the United States were starting to show signs of withdrawing from Europe, that China was not interested in playing such a role and that Russian interest would be based more on extension of power than keeping the peace.<sup>93</sup> His proposed solution was for the federation of smaller states into ones which could stand up to Germany, along with the creation of a loosely organised Europe, using as an example the British Commonwealth, which would allow powers to develop in an inter-related manner with regard to currency, culture and infrastructure. Despite setting out that "The first and essential condition of any European polity, stable within and peaceful in its relation to the outside world, is that it should not be dominated by one of its component units", he argued that Germany should be invited into this European Commonwealth as an outlet for its goods and to share in a combined living space, and noted that there was a likelihood through this that Germany could eventually dominate this union.<sup>94</sup> He suggested that it was either this, or a revived and re-militarised Germany, which would unite the continent against outside interference, making his initial statement about the condition of non-domination rather pointless, and

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<sup>92</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/31/4, Amery's Memorandum on Europe and the Post-War Settlement, 12 November 1942.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

his whole argument rather flawed. It is easy to see why Jebb and Dr. Hugh Dalton, Minister of Economic Warfare, referred to it as “The No-Power Plan” and the “German Victory-through-Defeat Plan”.<sup>95</sup> It is clear that the paper was a direct attack against the whole conception of the Four Power Plan, suggesting that the Four Powers concept was not strong enough to work for the main purpose of what was being discussed, methods to ensure peace, and that the powers would in fact have no interest in doing so due to the other domestic and international issues they would be faced with. The idea that Europe should be largely left alone suggests a lack of understanding of the issues being considered by the Four Power Plan, which was aimed at ensuring Germany could never become the master of Europe. The plan was felt to add little to the debate or ideas for post-war planning. Eden felt it worthy of little comment, noting simply that “this is sad”.<sup>96</sup> Woodward failed to mention it in his *Official History*,<sup>97</sup> and Jebb only discussed the plan enough to explain the extent of his indignation at it, and it seems his disappointment at the effort from Amery, whose opposition he initially thought would be formidable.<sup>98</sup> It is, however, interesting to note that Amery was not far off in his vision. Firstly, Europe is now a federal system with integrated infrastructures, a single currency and common market, and it has, as he predicted, come to see Germany as the dominant power. Secondly, his argument that Russian interest in Europe would be for power rather than peace could be seen as justified in light of events during the Cold War, and even today with Russian actions in Eastern Ukraine.

The paper from Cripps, however, attracted significantly more coverage, and was not considered to be such a bad proposal. The fact that, unlike Amery, Cripps opened with the line “I agree with the view expressed by the Foreign Secretary” probably helped his case, as did the fact that his own conception, unlike that of Amery, relied to an extent on the Four Powers working together in some way for

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<sup>95</sup> Pimlott, B [Ed.]. *The Second World War Diary of Hugh Dalton, 1940-1945*, (London, 1986), 6 December 1942, pp. 532-533.

<sup>96</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/31525, Eden’s minute on Amery’s paper, 13 November 1942.

<sup>97</sup> Woodward discusses the Four Power Plan and the paper by Cripps at some length, but Amery does not get a mention. Harvey doesn’t discuss the fact that these plans were considered by the War Cabinet.

<sup>98</sup> Jebb, *Memoirs*, p. 118.

the good of the peace process.<sup>99</sup> Like Amery, Cripps felt the immediate post-war danger lay in Europe, but in contrast to his colleague believed the best way to deal with this was active involvement in the pacification of Europe by the United States, Russia and Britain, particularly in the pursuit of ensuring Germany would be economically restrained.<sup>100</sup> His work shared other similarities with the Foreign Office paper, acknowledging the role America would be required to play in a successful peace settlement, and being wary of allowing America to take a complete lead, suggesting that it would be undesirable for Britain to end up in a situation of following the other powers instead of leading them.<sup>101</sup>

It was over ideas as to how this was to be done that Cripps diverged from the 'Four Power Plan', however, and he put forward his vision of a system of international rule based on local and world councils. His proposal was for five smaller councils, a Council of Europe, a Pan-American Union, a Far-East Council, the British Commonwealth, and the U.S.S.R., all of which would have responsibility in their own sphere, and would all be represented on a Supreme World Council.<sup>102</sup> Only the Council of Europe was actually defined, and it had responsibility for pacifying and policing Europe; reconstruction functions; boundary changes; dealing with general social, economic and political issues; and overseeing the internationalisation of Europe, particularly with regard to transport. It is unclear exactly what some of those roles entailed, and Cripps noted that these were rough proposals, and that the exact tasks would be defined depending on the nature of the peace settlement. Having seen only the summary plan at this point, Cripps did not know that the full plan contained a discussion about regionalism, with reference to regional councils and a possible Assembly of United Nations.<sup>103</sup> The plan was received far more positively than that from Amery, with the War Cabinet giving their general approval to it, alongside Eden's

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<sup>99</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/31/12, Cripps' Memorandum on the Four Power Plan, 19 November 1942.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>103</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/31525, 'The Four Power Plan' Section 38.

plan, and suggesting the Foreign Secretary work to merge the two together.<sup>104</sup> Woodward's Official History felt this was worthy of comment, considering it an "important note",<sup>105</sup> and Jebb, who was concerned at the "dangerous" nature of an assault by Cripps, was relieved to find its views were "greatly preferable to those of Leo Amery".<sup>106</sup> That did not, however, stop him dismissing it as "naïve" in his memoirs,<sup>107</sup> nor, according to Greenwood, as "'waffly', 'silly' and 'absurd'".<sup>108</sup> The documents in the archives show a different picture, and highlight the importance of examining the official documents. Jebb wrote a minute in response to the Cripps paper, highlighting the similarities and differences to the Four Power Plan, and stated at the start that the paper was "certainly encouraging – almost surprisingly so".<sup>109</sup> Eden too was encouraged by the work, commenting to Cadogan that this was "better than usual" and suggesting he ask the department to examine the proposal.<sup>110</sup> As a result of the more favourable nature of this paper, not to mention the admission received from Cripps that he would not have submitted his points had he seen the full paper,<sup>111</sup> it was not an onerous task for the Foreign Office to merge these two papers, and the results shall be seen in the next chapter.

### Visionary or Protagonist?

Having examined the substance of the plan, it is worth taking a moment to bring in the historiography on what is undoubtedly one of the key aspects of this thesis, and foreign policy planning during the war to see how time and historians have treated this paper, and also its champion. Charmley's work on the Special Relationship is one of the few which look in detail at the 'Four Power Plan', and suggests that the plan showed a great deal of vision from Eden, something for

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<sup>104</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 65/28/31, War Cabinet Conclusions, 27 November 1942.

<sup>105</sup> Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, Vol. V, p. 11.

<sup>106</sup> Jebb, *Memoirs*, pp. 120-121.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid*, p. 121.

<sup>108</sup> Greenwood, *Titan*, p. 156.

<sup>109</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/31525, Minute by Jebb on Cripps's Four Power Plan Paper, 16 November 1942.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid*, Minute by Eden to Cadogan on receipt of Cripps paper, 13 November 1942.

<sup>111</sup> Jebb, *Memoirs*, p. 121.

which, in the shadow of Churchill, he receives less credit for than he perhaps deserved.<sup>112</sup> Charmley uses two key examples to illustrate his point. Firstly, the passage from the summary paper that: “We have to maintain our position as an Empire and a Commonwealth. If we fail to do so we cannot exist as a world Power. And we have to accept our full share of responsibility for the future of Europe. If we fail to do that we shall have fought this war to no purpose, and the mastery of Europe which we have refused to Germany by force of arms will pass to her by natural succession as soon as the control of our arms is removed”.<sup>113</sup> He thus suggests that Eden, not Churchill, saw most clearly the shape of Britain’s future with regard to Europe, and looking at where we now stand it would be hard to argue, that this prediction did not come to pass.

Secondly, the suggestion in the plan itself that: “unless we [Britain] can find some rallying cry which will inspire such doubters with the belief in the necessity of our fulfilling our word-wide mission it is possible that, whether we like it or not, we may sink to the level of a second-class Power with all that implies. It is a process which might be painless and possibly even profitable in the short run, but it is quite probable that, if it took place, we should sooner or later experience an agonising collapse, from which we should emerge as a European Soviet State, or the penurious outpost of an American Pluto-democracy or a German *Gau*, as forces might dictate”.<sup>114</sup> It might be argued today, as indeed Charmley argues in ‘*Churchill’s Grand Alliance*’ that the second of these outcomes did in fact come true, and that Britain today, shorn of its Empire, on the periphery of Europe, and bound by its ‘special relationship’, is little more than an outpost of the United States. Whilst this might have been the least unpleasant result, it was one that, by circumstances and events, became fully apparent when Eden was Prime Minister – yet another ironic foreign policy twist, though an unfortunate one given Eden’s vision to see this coming, and attempts to avert it during his time as Foreign

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<sup>112</sup> Charmley, *Grand Alliance*, p. 57.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid*, p. 57, and TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/30/46, Eden’s Four Power Plan Summary Memorandum, 8 November 1942.

<sup>114</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/31525, ‘The Four Power Plan’ Section 9, and Charmley, *Grand Alliance*, p. 59.

Secretary.<sup>115</sup> Whilst Charmley's assessment certainly stands up well when examining the contents of the plan, in examining the formation of the plan itself, it falls down, for reasons that shall be seen in a moment.

Few other works examine the importance of the Four Power Plan, perhaps feeling its wishful thinking was not relevant to Eden, or the course of the Second World War, or perhaps simply because the plan was never enacted, though that is not to say it failed.<sup>116</sup> Those works that do deem it worthy of mention either express no opinion on the plan, simply referencing it as a station through which the foreign policy train was passing; fail to see in it the same merit as Charmley; or only mention it when examining the dynamic of the Churchill-Eden relationship. Thorpe's biography is a good example of the first,<sup>117</sup> and Dutton's suggestion that, looking back "Eden was setting out to resist the inevitable. In the context of Britain's war effort, however, his stance seems more reasonable"<sup>118</sup> appears a good example of the second. Broad's biography and Barker's examination of the Churchill-Eden relationship are both good examples of the third case.<sup>119</sup> Dutton is interesting, however, as when discussing the Four Power Plan in his biography, he offers no suggestion of Eden being a visionary, and whilst acknowledging that his attempts to create a foreign policy seemed more reasonable at the time, though more reasonable than what is unclear, he doesn't give the impression that the policy deserved much merit.<sup>120</sup> The fact that in the following chapter of the same book he forgets about it entirely also suggests he had a low opinion of the plan.<sup>121</sup> That said, in his chapter on Eden in Thomas Otte's *The Makers of British Foreign Policy*, he notes how it had been usual to criticise Eden for lack of vision, but suggests that Eden was "perfectly capable of long-term planning when time

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<sup>115</sup> Charmley, *Grand Alliance*, p. 59.

<sup>116</sup> Many works on this bibliography make no reference to the plan, though the author is not infallible and may of course have missed one. They make vague references to post-war plans/policy, but in a generic and unclear manner.

<sup>117</sup> Thorpe, *Eden*, p. 280.

<sup>118</sup> Dutton, *Eden*, p. 146.

<sup>119</sup> Barker, *Churchill and Eden*, pp. 211-212, Broad, *Eden*, pp. 164-165.

<sup>120</sup> Dutton, *Eden*, p. 156.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid*, p. 197.

allowed”,<sup>122</sup> and when it came to post-war policy “showed a greater awareness of the need to plan for the longer-term than some of his critics have allowed”.<sup>123</sup> This perhaps suggesting that Eden’s visionary efforts were time or subject specific, and the Four Power Plan simply came at a time when Eden was too burdened with responsibility to focus on this, but was on a subject where he was keenly aware of the need for planning to occur.

This leads to another debate, over how involved Eden was in policy formation at this time, especially given his additional role as Leader of the House. There were frequent complaints by officials, particularly Cadogan, on the limited time Eden actually spent at the Foreign Office. This is something that is picked up in the secondary work, which somewhat weakens Charmley’s argument of Eden’s visionary status. It is almost a consensus that the burden of responsibility on Eden at the end of 1942 meant that he had little time for the daily affairs of his Department. Cadogan complained that his workload as the almost de facto head of the Foreign Office in Eden’s absence had become intolerable, and that “it took two Office Keepers to carry in my boxes!”.<sup>124</sup> Indeed there are numerous references in his diary to the working relationship between himself and Eden with Cadogan frequently complaining at being called to Cabinet meetings in Eden’s absence, or only seeing Eden for brief moments at a time to conduct any Foreign Office business.<sup>125</sup>

The crux of the argument against Eden being a visionary, and consequently the gap in Charmley’s argument, can be found in the archives. The documents show the significant role played by the Economic and Reconstruction Department, but most notably Jebb, in the creative and formative stages of this plan. He was the man responsible for writing most of the ‘Relief Machinery’ paper. After some encouragement and numerous critiques and comments from other Foreign Office Officials he re-wrote the plan, and it became the ‘Four Power Plan’ after input and

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<sup>122</sup> Dutton, D. *Anthony Eden*, in Otte, T.G. *The makers of British foreign policy: from Pitt to Thatcher*, (Basingstoke, 2002), p. 221.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid*, p. 229.

<sup>124</sup> Neilson and Otte, *The PUS*, p. 253.

<sup>125</sup> Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, pp. 481-500, every couple of pages there is a comment along these lines.



re-drafts from other key Officials. Undoubtedly, had Churchill been Foreign Secretary at this time, Jebb would not have been able to put the time and effort into the plan that he did, so Eden's role was of particular importance in allowing Jebb to create his "*tour de force* [Italics in original]",<sup>126</sup> something noted by Greenwood in his biography, and alluded to by Jebb in his memoirs.<sup>127</sup> Eden's actual input in the process, however, was limited. On 3 October he commented on an early draft that "I like this paper which seems to me a good piece of work",<sup>128</sup> and on 7 November he commented, via Cadogan, that he approved Mr Law's amended version of the Four Power Plan, and would like it to be circulated to the Cabinet.<sup>129</sup> There appears little other evidence in the file associated with the Four Power Plan, aside from a few signatures indicating he had read minutes, that Eden was actually involved in the creation of this policy. Whilst it was presented to the War Cabinet as a memorandum from the Foreign Secretary and as a foreign policy plan from the Foreign Office, this is not sufficient to claim that the ideas and visions as set out were Eden's own. Whilst he clearly agreed with the proposal, was keen to see such a policy pursued, and indeed became the champion of the policy in the War Cabinet, in the House of Commons and at international conferences and meetings with allied leaders, he was in this case, as Barker asserts, "the protagonist of the ideas and policies of his department ... rather than their creator".<sup>130</sup> That is not, however, to diminish the role of the protagonist. Eden was to be a key champion for Jebb and his department's plans, and his continued interest and belief in the topic was to pay dividends into 1943, as shall be seen in the following chapters.

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<sup>126</sup> Greenwood, *Titan*, p. 154.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 157-158, Jebb, *Memoirs*, pp. 118-121.

<sup>128</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/31525, Eden's comment on a draft of the Four Power Plan, 3 October 1942.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid*, Eden's comment on Law's amended draft of the Four Power Plan, 7 November 1942.

<sup>130</sup> Barker, *Churchill and Eden*, p. 25.

## **10) The Future Remains Elusive**

As 1942 drew to a close, the Foreign Office were tantalisingly close to having a fully thought out and generally approved foreign policy. Discussions had been held with American officials by Law, the Economic and Reconstruction Department was in full swing under Jebb's stewardship, and its brainchild, The 'Four Power Plan', had finally been seen by the War Cabinet. Comments and critiques had been raised, yet it was approved as the general line that policy should follow, subject to some modification to include the ideas expressed in the similar memorandum produced by Cripps. On top of this, they had seen their luck turn in France, with the removal of Darlan and his replacement by the more favoured, though that is not to say favourite, candidate in Giraud, and the military operations were proceeding, if slower than hoped. They had also seen, though in part thanks to Churchill's personal diplomatic efforts, a temporary thawing in their relations with the Soviet Union, which had allowed breathing space to focus on developing their foreign policy idea. As the year turned, they were further refining their ideas, and over the course of the year new plans would grow out of the 'Four Power Plan' initiative. This chapter will examine one of these, the United Nations Plan, as well as its rival in the shape of Churchill's foray into post-war planning, 'Morning Thoughts'. It will also look at the Casablanca Conference, the attempts to resolve the French Question, and Eden's visit to Washington to consult with Roosevelt, particularly on post-war issues.

In light of this on-going progress, Eden was determined to ensure the topic of post-war stayed at the forefront of the political agenda. With King George VI having used his speech when opening Parliament to praise the United Nations and emphasise its active role in the process of post war preparation,<sup>1</sup> Eden took an opportunity to make a speech during a related debate on International Reconstruction to further push this policy agenda. The speech was drafted by Jebb, and as it turned out, had not been shown to Churchill for approval, which helps

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<sup>1</sup> Eden, *Freedom and Order*, excerpt of Kings Speech opening Parliament, 11 November 1942, p. 173.

explain the strength of content it included.<sup>2</sup> Whilst fully reproduced in *'Freedom and Order'*,<sup>3</sup> it is not picked up to a great extent by the wider historiography, which seems a shame as there are ideas presented that are significant when examining the development of British foreign policy. Eden notes in *'The Reckoning'* that there were two conditions laid down by this speech for any international organisation to work, in fact, there were three. "To my mind there are three indispensable attributes ... First, it must be fully representative of the powers which meant to keep the peace ... Second the Powers themselves must have the unity and the determination to arrive at agreed and positive decisions. And the third, and perhaps the most important of all, is that they should have the force behind them to give effect to their decisions".<sup>4</sup> Throughout the speech Eden referred back to the League of Nations, and suggested areas where it had failed, which appear to be in meeting the 'indispensable attributes', and saying that Britain needed to learn the lessons of the past. If it could do this, and could convince both the United States and Russia to do the same, and be prepared to put the effort into the World Organisation after the war, then he felt there was every opportunity that the United Nations could succeed.<sup>5</sup> Approximately three quarters of the speech was dedicated to publicising the Four Power Plan, to a significantly wider audience than just the War Cabinet. It is interesting that Eden looked to the past, both when considering errors that needed to be avoided, and also for ideas as to how the peace should be managed. The ideas quite clearly harked back to the era of balance of power politics and great Power collaboration, and it certainly seems that Eden's thinking might have been influenced by this. His vision looks rather like an evolved and modernised version of the Congress of Vienna and the Quadruple Alliance, only with the United States and China replacing Austria and Prussia, and the United Nations replacing the Concert of Europe.<sup>6</sup> Indeed one only needs to look at the opening chapter of C.J. Bartlett's *'Peace, War and the European Powers*

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<sup>2</sup> Pimlott, *Dalton Diaries*, 4 December 1942, p. 531.

<sup>3</sup> Eden, *Freedom and Order*, Eden's Speech to the House of Commons, 2 December 1942, pp. 173-183.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p. 182, Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 365.

<sup>5</sup> Eden, *Freedom and Order*, Speech the Commons, 2 December 1942, p. 182.

<sup>6</sup> Congress of Vienna, 1814-1815. The Quadruple Alliance came into being in 1813 but was signed on 20 November 1815, between Britain, Austria, Prussia and Russia.

1814-1914' to be able to draw comparisons between Eden's ideas and diplomacy, and those of Lord Castlereagh during his stint as Foreign Secretary.<sup>7</sup>

Eden also used the speech to re-emphasise the importance of the role of the Foreign Office during the war, stating that "Here and there there is a tendency to suggest that foreign policy is in abeyance in war-time. If anybody would spend a day at the Foreign Office he would learn that that is not so".<sup>8</sup> Despite the burden placed upon him as Leader of the House, Eden still recognised the need for a strong Foreign Office as part of the war effort, and from what has been seen so far, little satisfactory work would have been done had foreign policy been completely neglected in pursuit of ultimate victory, given that the successes were often achieved against the will of Churchill. Despite Eden's assertion, however, the occasions during the war when Churchill took over the Foreign Office do not appear to have made him realise the importance of the department or its role in the war effort.

On top of this Eden set out one of the key realisations that had come from the development of the 'Four Power Plan', that Churchill's assertion that peace could be organised after victory was wrong, and that "In fact, the manner in which and the extent to which we succeed or fail to succeed in co-operating with our Allies now will, to a very large extent, determine the course of post-war foreign policy".<sup>9</sup> In December 1942, Eden would not have known just how true these words would become, and it is important to note that it was he, not that great visionary Churchill, who foresaw the significance of any acts, gestures, or failings, made by any of the allies towards the others during the war, as part of the process of developing a working peace-time Grand Alliance and World Organisation after the War. As it turned out, even before the end of the war the allies were not fully co-operating: there was no unified plan for the liberation of Europe, and no agreed grand strategy, so it looked unlikely that there would be continued agreement on working together, something which resulted from necessity rather than genuine

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<sup>7</sup> C.J. Bartlett, *Peace, War and the European Powers 1814-1914*, (London, 1996), pp. 1-23.

<sup>8</sup> Eden, *Freedom and Order*, Speech to the Commons, 2 December 1942, pp. 176-177.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, p. 177.

desire. That said, at this point post-war planning was very much at a nadir, and in the spirit of discussions in the Commons, and the earlier War Cabinet decision on the Four Power Plan, the Foreign Office and other departments continued to work on drafting some future strategy, and there were several plans submitted to the War Cabinet, though it appears they were never examined.

One of these plans was the 'United Nations Plan'. This, from Eden on behalf of the Foreign Office, was the new, improved, and interestingly, shorter, 'Four Power Plan'. After the War Cabinet in November, Jebb and other officials had re-examined the plan, taking on board some suggestions encompassed in the plan by Cripps, in an attempt to create one unified policy. They had also taken on board feedback from the Treasury, the Admiralty, The Ministry of Labour, the Air Ministry and Dalton, in an example of that unfortunate process when working by committee – trying to please everyone.<sup>10</sup> In fact, the only person not pleased was Cripps, ironically, given he retracted most of his criticisms after reading the full 'Four Power Plan'. But eventually, after working with David Owen, one of his advisors, a relatively acceptable draft was reached, and it was felt that Cripps could like it, or be told to like it by Eden.<sup>11</sup> The new plan, comprising only 28 sections to its predecessor's 55, still attempted to cover much the same ground, though there were some notable omissions. The American sections at the start of the plan were dropped, in favour of a simple statement of Britain's aims and its current position along the lines of those in the 'Four Power Plan'; the in-depth discussion of the position of the great powers was dropped in favour of a statement that they must work together, and alongside this the assumptions of the 'Four Power Plan' were stated, again without the analysis of whether they could be applied to each power; the discussion of regionalism was reduced in favour of a greater examination of the economic problems facing allied unity after the war; the 'Doubts' and 'Alternative Policies' sections were largely shelved in their entirety;

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<sup>10</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/31525, Folio's U1507, U1796, U1797, U1798 and U 1805 all contain suggestions and comments on the 'Four Power Plan'.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, Folio U1933, Foreign Office minutes, by Jebb in particular, suggest that this is the final draft and Cripps will have to accept it.

the 'Conclusions' section disappeared as a distinct part of the plan, though a couple of the clauses were altered to fit the new plan, and the 'Grand Strategy' section was reduced to simply stating the desire to implement the plan.<sup>12</sup> More emphasis was placed on the occupation and disarmament of Germany, and the plan also included a diagram suggesting how the bureaucratic structure of the proposed World Organisation and its associated Council's would look.<sup>13</sup> In essence, it suggested a similar proposition to the 'Four Power Plan', but with a greater insight into how the Four Powers would work within the larger United Nations organisation, how it might be structured, and some of the requirements that would fall upon it. Due to the similarity of intent and policy, there is little need to analyse it in the depth afforded to the 'Four Power Plan', but it is important to have offered a brief evaluation of it as it was undoubtedly a stepping stone in the Foreign policy process, and was to form the basis of ideas that would arise after Eden and Jebb visited Washington a few months later.

There appears to be essentially no coverage of this plan in the historiography. The fact the plan was a refined and updated version of two plans already approved by the War Cabinet may be reason for this, that the plan was never discussed by the War Cabinet is another fairly logical reason as to why it isn't considered important. This, however, begs the question, is something unimportant because it doesn't succeed? In this case the memorandum was a Cabinet approved attempt to hone Foreign Office plans and allow them to plot the course that foreign policy should follow. It was also a policy that, based on Eden's aforementioned speech, appeared to have wide support: Eden notes in *The Reckoning* that it was "the policy which the nation wanted";<sup>14</sup> it was not alone in spirit either, as post-war planning was not just occurring in foreign policy. Around this time the Beveridge report was being prepared, which, like Eden's plans, proposed a set of aims and ideals that were intended to shape the future. These things would suggest some level of importance for this document. The fact it discussed the

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<sup>12</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/33/31, Eden's United Nations Plan, 16 January 1943.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 366.

United Nations should also have made it important, as this was a concept to which Britain had subscribed and which they were expecting to be a major party in as it developed. The fact plans such as this have been neglected suggests there is no significance in the topic, but given the size, scope and role of the United Nations today, it is surprising that there is not more discussion of this topic as part of the broader history of Second World War foreign policy. Given Eden was a potential candidate for the role of UN Secretary General,<sup>15</sup> it is also surprising his own biographies fail to examine his involvement in the planning and development of a workable United Nations in more detail, most jumping from the Four Power Plan to the Foreign Ministers Conference, which shall be examined later. Aside from Eden mentioning in his memoirs that he sent the paper to Cabinet for their consideration in January, and highlighting a few of its key points,<sup>16</sup> only Dutton mentions Eden's role in the formation of the United Nations and the submission of this paper, and Greenwood and Barker make references to the United Nations Plan, though these are subtle hints at best.<sup>17</sup> Woodward's history reproduces the plan, and in fact offers some interesting insights as to its significance. Not only was the plan an attempt to finalise a policy before consulting with the American and Russian Governments, but it was also considered a political necessity.<sup>18</sup> Victory appeared far closer in January 1943 than it had in late 1942, with the successes of Torch, including El Alamein, and the turning tide at Stalingrad, and the Foreign Office were concerned that no unified allied policy might have been reached by the end of the war.<sup>19</sup> It was this concern, linked with the urgent matters of needing a plan to deal with Germany upon its defeat; a process to restore national sovereignty to subjected powers; and a decision about how this transition was to be managed, that led to the submission of this new plan.<sup>20</sup> In reality, it was probably that perennial problem for Eden – timing – that led to its limited

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<sup>15</sup> Thorpe, *Eden* p. 339.

<sup>16</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, pp. 365-366.

<sup>17</sup> Dutton, *Anthony Eden*, in Otte, *Makers of British Foreign Policy*, p. 230, Greenwood, *Titan*, p. 160 and Barker, *Churchill and Eden*, p. 212.

<sup>18</sup> Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, Vol. V, p. 14.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, p. 13.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, p. 13.

evaluation, as it was submitted on 16 January 1943, a time when the attention of the politicians, and of the historians studying them, was turning to the meeting between Churchill and Roosevelt at Casablanca.

To some extent, post-war planning was the big topic in early 1943, evidenced by the fact that even Churchill became involved, though this was very much to the annoyance of the Foreign Office. The Casablanca Conference, whilst not strictly post-war planning, was intended to discuss key questions about future strategy, and in light of the death of Darlan provided an opportunity to settle the dispute over the policies towards France. It also afforded Churchill the opportunity to examine the post-war landscape from his point of view, in what became known as his 'Morning Thoughts'. It should, quite importantly, be noted that Casablanca almost didn't get off the ground. During the previous months there had been repeated communications with Stalin about holding a tripartite conference. Despite their best efforts, neither Roosevelt nor Churchill could persuade him to leave Moscow; the most he would agree too was the need to meet in the future.<sup>21</sup> Even when they hung the question of a European Second Front on the meeting, his response was no more forthcoming.<sup>22</sup> Roosevelt, frustrated by Stalin's lack of co-operation, suggested to Churchill that the meeting should go ahead, in Stalin's absence if necessary,<sup>23</sup> and thus, on 13 January, Churchill arrived at Casablanca, followed by Roosevelt the following day. There are many accounts of Casablanca, from Churchill's detailed account in *'The Hinge of Fate'*, to more overview accounts such as in Charmley's *'The End of Glory'*,<sup>24</sup> so it seems superfluous to delve into the details of the whole Conference. Instead, given the scope of this thesis, it seems more prudent to examine the implications the decisions made regarding strategy had on foreign policy, the efforts to resolve the de Gaulle situation, and Churchill's Morning Thoughts.

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<sup>21</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/25B, Stalin to Churchill, 5 December 1942.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, Churchill to Stalin, 12 December 1942.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, Roosevelt to Churchill, 9 December 1942.

<sup>24</sup> Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, pp. 604-622, Charmley, *End of Glory*, pp. 520-523. Other accounts include: Woodward, *British Foreign Policy, Vol. II*, pp. 410-420, Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, pp. 667-697, Gilbert, *Road to Victory*, pp. 292-315.



With Stalin absent, it would be fair to say, given his insistence on a European Second Front, that the decisions reached did not reflect the attitude and preferred strategy of the Grand Alliance as a whole.<sup>25</sup> In fact, as with his visits to Washington, it seems it was a remarkable victory for Churchill and the British strategists. Having successfully persuaded the Americans to follow a Germany first strategy, then to invade North Africa, it might be presumed that the British had used up most of their excess of wartime diplomatic nous and political leadership, and given the continuous increase in American strength, it would not have been a surprise had the Americans gone to Casablanca and dictated the future military strategy to the British. The Americans were, however, disorganised and still at odds over the Germany first strategy,<sup>26</sup> so despite trying to present a plan for a cross-channel invasion of Europe, they were bettered by the British, who arrived with an array of in-depth logistical and statistical studies to show the folly of this enterprise. As Colonel Albert Wedemeyer put it, “We came, we saw, we were conquered”.<sup>27</sup> This, coupled with the plans the British had already settled on before the Conference, Churchill’s determination to press home the advantage in North Africa, (and perhaps, though this is hard to prove, firm up British Imperial possessions in Africa and the Middle East), and Roosevelt’s decision to take the easy route by utilising the troops and equipment from Torch, led to the American acquiescence in Operation Husky – the invasion of Sicily from North Africa.<sup>28</sup> It was also announced at the end of the Conference that the allies would seek to demand “unconditional surrender” from their enemies.<sup>29</sup> The timing of the announcement appears to have surprised Churchill, but the issue had been discussed, and Churchill had consulted the War Cabinet about its inclusion in the

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<sup>25</sup> Wilson, T.A. *Coalition: Structure, Strategy, and Statescraft*, in Reynolds, D. Kimball W.F. and Chubarian, A.O [Ed’s]. *Allies at war: the Soviet, American, and British experience, 1939-1945*, (Basingstoke, 1994), p. 94.

<sup>26</sup> Dimbleby and Reynolds, *An Ocean Apart*, pp. 144-145.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, p. 145. Colonel Albert Wedemeyer, Senior Army Planner to General Marshall.

<sup>28</sup> Charmley, *End of Glory*, p. 522.

<sup>29</sup> Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p. 615.

joint statement, to which they had approved, so he should not have been as confused or surprised as he claimed to have been.<sup>30</sup>

Although the intention of the Conference was to deal with military matters, both leaders found themselves quickly involved in the French political squabble. With Darlan out of the picture, there was a gap in the civil authority in North Africa, and the Americans hoped that it could be filled by Giraud, who arrived in Casablanca the day after Roosevelt. Eden, however, saw in the Conference a chance to put an end to the squabbles, as it would provide an opportunity for the two leaders to meet Giraud and de Gaulle and hopefully bring them to co-operate with each other.<sup>31</sup> Despite the seriousness of the French situation, and the trouble it had caused in the preceding years, this effort became the subject of jokes between Churchill and Roosevelt, on the need for the 'bride' and 'bridegroom' to have a 'shot-gun' wedding.<sup>32</sup> Given his status, not to mention his considerable ego, it is unlikely de Gaulle would have taken kindly to being cast as the bride, but, as with any wedding, the bride turned up late, much to the annoyance of the two men to whom, to a greater or lesser extent, he owed the existence of his movement. Having initially not been told about Casablanca, de Gaulle was invited by Churchill and Roosevelt to join the Conference, meet with Giraud and attempt to negotiate an agreement with him.<sup>33</sup> There had actually been negotiations ongoing between de Gaulle and Giraud since the death of Darlan, aided by General Catroux and the Foreign Office, with de Gaulle suggesting a meeting of the two Generals, but Giraud stalling, and suggesting instead a preliminary meeting of military officials.<sup>34</sup> In light of this, de Gaulle showed "no pleasure" in the message received from Churchill, and felt he should not be summoned to negotiate at the

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<sup>30</sup> Churchill to Attlee and War Cabinet, 20 January 1943, and Attlee and Eden to Churchill, 21 January 1943, both quoted in Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, pp. 612-614.

<sup>31</sup> Charmley, *End of Glory*, p. 520.

<sup>32</sup> Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p. 680, Kimball, *Alliance Forged*, editors text, p. 121, Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 363.

<sup>33</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/8B, Record of a Conversation between Eden and de Gaulle, 17 January 1943.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, Woodward, *British Foreign Policy, Vol. II*, pp. 399-403, Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 359.

whim of the other allies when he was dealing with the situation.<sup>35</sup> He was particularly adamant that nobody could invite him to meet anybody on French soil.<sup>36</sup> Despite the best efforts of Eden and Cadogan to convince de Gaulle of the opportunity in front of him, and the potential to achieve his aim and hold talks with Giraud, the General remained dismissive – earning himself the comment that “He is a species of mule” in Cadogan’s diary entry for the day.<sup>37</sup> In a further meeting with Eden that evening, he re-emphasised these points, saying he was unwilling to negotiate under pressure from the allies, and in his reply to Churchill noted that he would continue to communicate with Giraud in an effort to arrange a meeting.<sup>38</sup> Eden, who had been working behind the scenes to try and alleviate the American suspicions of de Gaulle and the Free French must have been particularly annoyed at this, but managed not to show it in his meetings with the General.<sup>39</sup>

It seems de Gaulle had now pushed Churchill too far, and such was his displeasure when de Gaulle refused the invitation, that he threatened that British support for his movement would need to be reviewed if he remained at its head, unless he accepted the “unique opportunity” open to him.<sup>40</sup> Eden was, yet again, tasked with breaking the bad news to the General, with Churchill suggesting he should “knock him about pretty hard”.<sup>41</sup> Though the War Cabinet amended the message before it was given to Plevin, de Gaulle having refused to receive the response personally, its terms were quite strong.<sup>42</sup> Churchill had suggested that Eden could alter the message, so long as it maintained its seriousness, the War Cabinet draft was actually stronger, suggesting that “If with your eyes open you reject this unique opportunity, the consequences to the future of the Fighting French Movement cannot but be grave in the extreme”.<sup>43</sup> For once, we see Eden

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<sup>35</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/8B, Record of a conversation between Eden and de Gaulle, 17 January 1943.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 17 January 1943, p. 504.

<sup>38</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/8B, Record of a second conversation between Eden and de Gaulle, 17 January 1943, and de Gaulle’s response to Churchill, 17 January 1943.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, Eden to Halifax, 8 January 1943 and Eden to Peake, 12 January 1943.

<sup>40</sup> Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p. 610.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 610.

<sup>42</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 65/37/3, Cabinet Conclusions, 19 January 1943.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

taking a line that was as strong, if not stronger, than Churchill's towards de Gaulle, something which had not usually been the case. One potential reason for this can be seen from Eden's foreign policy plans. Thinking about the post-war, and with France a concept that was, as far as Eden was concerned, to be included in the peace settlement and the United Nations, he was more worried about ensuring Britain did not lose out on one of its key war aims and foreign policy goals rather than pushing the position of de Gaulle. Eden perhaps recognised that it was in the interests of post-war France that agreement was reached early on between its rival power bases, and thus felt the need to take this stronger line. Usually, when crises occurred, Eden shared the opinion or approved of the actions of the Fighting French, and stood up for them against Churchill. This time Churchill was trying to enact Eden's idea of a meeting to unify the French allied forces, so Eden was not at odds with the Prime Minister. Thus, with pressure put on de Gaulle from the man who was usually his supporter, he eventually relented and accepted the invitation to Casablanca. This change of role for Eden makes this an interesting episode in Anglo-French relations, as usually Eden was the mediator between de Gaulle and Churchill or the Americans, this time he was pushing the hard line. It could well be that his determination to see his foreign policy goal come to fruition became his over-riding concern, rather than ensuring de Gaulle remained friendly to the British.

Unfortunately, having ensured de Gaulle made it to Casablanca, Eden had no control over what happened next. In a snub which still frustrated de Gaulle many years later, he was not met by any guard of honour, or a car, upon his arrival, and things continued to go downhill.<sup>44</sup> When he reached the Conference, he was greeted by an angry Churchill, who gave him a stern dressing down, but de Gaulle was un-moved and stalked out of Churchill's villa with his head held high, as if he were "Stalin, with 200 divisions behind his words".<sup>45</sup> Despite his anger and frustration, Churchill's sense of admiration for the General still shone through, perhaps recognising a man very much the spirit of France as Churchill had been

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<sup>44</sup> Mangold, *Britain and the Defeated French*, p. 180.

<sup>45</sup> Gilbert, *Road to Victory*, p. 305.

the spirit of Britain during 1940 and beyond. Given Churchill's stance, that he had not become "the King's First Minister to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire",<sup>46</sup> it would seem hypocritical for him to chastise de Gaulle for essentially making the same point, that he had not kept France in the war on the allied side to see the liquidation of French sovereignty, and Churchill confided later to Wilson that he recognised that "France without an Army is not France. De Gaulle is the spirit of that Army".<sup>47</sup> Churchill's memoirs contain a short, almost reminiscent section, suggesting how he truly felt about de Gaulle, in spite of the angry words in the telegrams, which lends weight to the argument that above all else he respected de Gaulle as a great and unconquerable Frenchman.<sup>48</sup> Despite the rough start, Churchill endeavoured to help facilitate an agreement between de Gaulle and Giraud over the coming days, and he and the British staff attempted to work with de Gaulle to come up with an agreeable compromise. Roosevelt, despite laughing when de Gaulle rejected the initial invitation, was reported to have been "kindly and paternal" at his initial meeting with de Gaulle, with Churchill suggesting they got on "unexpectedly well".<sup>49</sup> This did not help proceedings, however, as by the press conference at the end of the Casablanca Conference no agreement had been reached on the communiqué, let alone the fusion of the two French groups. A cunning piece of stage management did, however, lead to photographs of the two Generals shaking hands, though Churchill admits that looking back, these photo's cannot be viewed without laughing.<sup>50</sup> Eventually, the two Generals agreed to a limited joint declaration, espousing the need to reach a union quickly and for liaison between the two groups to achieve the liberation of France.<sup>51</sup> Whilst this was not the best result, it was more progress than may have been expected, especially since at one point breaking with de Gaulle entirely was considered, and it was to be the catalyst for efforts over the following months to achieve the union of the two Generals. Or at least, until it was discovered shortly

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<sup>46</sup> Charmley, *End of Glory*, p. 514.

<sup>47</sup> Gilbert, *Road to Victory*, p. 306.

<sup>48</sup> Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p. 611.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*, p. 611, Gilbert, *Road to Victory*, p. 305.

<sup>50</sup> Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p. 621.

<sup>51</sup> Woodward, *British Foreign Policy, Vol. II*, pp. 415-416.

afterwards that Roosevelt had signed documents which recognised, on behalf of the United States and Great Britain, “in the Commander-in-Chief [Giraud] ... the right and duty of preserving all French interests . . . They bind themselves to aid him by all means in their power”.<sup>52</sup> This was not well received by Harold Macmillan, the Resident Minister at Allied Forces Headquarters in Algiers, who informed Eden, the latter passing this information to Churchill, who had no knowledge of the documents. After some consultation with Robert Murphy, Roosevelt’s minister to French North Africa, and the Foreign Office, Churchill was able to get the documents amended so they were essentially nullified, re-opening the door for continued efforts towards French unity. For Eden, it was a sharp reminder of the perils of letting America influence British foreign policy and, for once, he managed to encourage Churchill to deal with a problem which could have had serious implications for post-war France, not to mention British relations with de Gaulle and the Fighting French, and Churchill’s own relations with Roosevelt.

With the conference behind him, Churchill was now free, after a protracted argument with his Cabinet,<sup>53</sup> to travel around North Africa, and also visit Turkey in an effort to convince them of the need to enter the war alongside the allies. Whilst the meeting with the Turks did little to improve their willingness to enter the combat, one thing of interest did come out of Churchill’s visit, and that was his ‘Morning Thoughts’.<sup>54</sup> Having been requested to accompany Churchill on his travels, Cadogan noted that on 31 January Churchill had dictated his paper on the future of the world, and intended to present it to Ismet İnönü, the Turkish President. In spite of the Foreign Office’s recent work, Cadogan, noted that he “didn’t see anything much wrong with it”,<sup>55</sup> perhaps showing a greater aversion

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<sup>52</sup> Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, Vol. II, p. 417.

<sup>53</sup> Telegrams between Churchill and the Cabinet were discussed in several Cabinet meetings between 20 and 27 January 1943, TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 65/37/4 to CAB 65/37/7.

<sup>54</sup> Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*. 31 January 1943, p. 509.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, p. 509.

towards long term planning than his colleagues.<sup>56</sup> When word of this reached the Foreign Office, however, they were not as sanguine. Given Churchill's obstructions over post-war planning, it is unsurprising that offense was taken at the sudden appearance of these proposals. He provided no evidence he had caught the 'Hare' required for the recipe to be implemented, as the Germans had not yet surrendered at Stalingrad, and whilst the Torch landings had been successful it would still be several months until Rommel was defeated in North Africa. His proposals differed greatly from those produced by the Foreign Office, and which had been loosely agreed by the War Cabinet. Harvey was displeased by both these issues, and also that the document was not transmitted securely, so the Germans would probably have been able to see it.<sup>57</sup> Similar concerns were raised by Jebb, who must have felt a particular sting given his involvement in the development of the plans. In a lengthy minute, he criticised Churchill's method and his views, noting that they "differ fundamentally and indeed in most essential points from those of the Foreign Secretary. The only hopeful feature is that where the Prime Minister's proposals are vague they are (like the Atlantic Charter) capable of being adapted to almost any concrete scheme for a world system that may eventually be approved by the Cabinet, and where they are specific are, to put it mildly, rather impracticable".<sup>58</sup> Not exactly a positive commentary, and one that time did little to mellow, as in his memoirs Jebb reproduces sections of this minute to support his critique of Churchill, using stronger language at points, though admitting at the end that "perhaps my feelings were too violent".<sup>59</sup> After this general criticism, Jebb's minute proceeded to tackle 'Morning Thoughts' point by point, arguing against each one, though mentioning the odd crumb of comfort he found, such as the fact the victorious powers would remain armed.<sup>60</sup> The most troubling sections of Churchill's plan, according to Jebb, were the pseudo-revival

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<sup>56</sup> Greenwood, *Titan*, p. 160.

<sup>57</sup> Harvey, *War Diaries*, 2 February 1943, p. 216.

<sup>58</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/35363 Jebb's Minute on Churchill's Morning Thoughts, 3 February 1943.

<sup>59</sup> Jebb, *Memoirs*, p. 123, Rothwell suggests time did little to alter Jebb's feelings, Rothwell, *Britain and Cold War*, p. 32.

<sup>60</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/35363, Jebb's minute on Churchill's Morning Thoughts, 3 February 1943.

of the League of Nations, the super Versailles style peace conference at the end of the War, and an ill-defined European Government that could include Russia and Turkey.<sup>61</sup> There was little contention over the contents of Jebb's minute, though Cadogan held it up thinking it an over-reaction, and that whilst Jebb might be right, Churchill's pronouncements wouldn't do much harm.<sup>62</sup> The idea that Jebb was right does not come across in Cadogan's diary, however, as he notes that it was a "ridiculous minute", and that even Eden did not feel it was as bad as Jebb was making out.<sup>63</sup> So irritated was Cadogan by this, and his rather unpleasant return flight to England, that he suggested the "little quill-drivers" should "go abroad – and stay there".<sup>64</sup> This hope, or at least the first part of it, came true a month later, when Jebb accompanied Eden to Washington, ironically in place of Cadogan who was too ill to travel.

Whilst Jebb's outburst may have been over the top, 'Morning Thoughts' led to another diplomatic conundrum. Given that the Turks had the document, that the Germans had probably seen it, and Churchill had transmitted it to Roosevelt,<sup>65</sup> should it be communicated to the Russians? This was not controversial, but caused more debate than should have been necessary given the clauses of the Anglo-Soviet Treaty, and it took several days for agreement to be reached. Warner, particularly after a conversation with Clark Kerr, who was home on leave, advocated showing the Russians, though ensuring they realised it was an unofficial document.<sup>66</sup> Likewise Jebb felt that in the spirit of co-operation the Russians should be informed, suggesting it could be raised as part of the discussions that Clark Kerr had been authorised to conduct on his return to Moscow.<sup>67</sup> Sargent, however, argued strongly that it was in the interests and spirit of Churchill's mission that the document was not shown to the Russians, as it was specifically designed to try and bring Turkey into the war, a result felt less likely if

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<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> Jebb, *Memoirs*, p. 123.

<sup>63</sup> Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 7 February 1943, p. 513.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 513.

<sup>65</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/35363, Minute by Warner on Churchill's Morning Thoughts, 4 February 1943.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, Minute by Jebb on Churchill's Morning Thoughts, 3 February 1943.



Moscow was informed of its contents.<sup>68</sup> The issue was resolved a couple of days later, as Churchill decided to communicate 'Morning Thoughts' to Moscow, with suitable explanations.<sup>69</sup> In reality, it seems the only difference between 'Morning Thoughts' and the Foreign Office concept was the detail of how certain things would be achieved. Both plans, as Charmley ascertained, presented a vision of Britain as a great power, and having achievements to show for the heavy exertions of the war effort.<sup>70</sup> Whilst the plans may have given Britain different roles, both Eden and Churchill essentially saw Britain as the elder statesman, using its wisdom to guide the up and coming powers. For Eden, it was in shaping and running the United Nations, for Churchill it was as part of the Government of Europe. Whilst the plans differed in specifics, in essence they shared a common outlook and aim, that Britain would have an important role in the post-war world. With little more being said about 'Morning Thoughts', the Foreign Office was able to continue the development of its own plans, and also to prepare for Eden's upcoming trip to Washington, but first it had to deal with the Russian fall out from Casablanca.

On 26 January Churchill and Roosevelt sent a joint message to Stalin, informing him of the decisions made at Casablanca. The telegram set out the British and American strategy for the coming months, particularly forthcoming military operations to be undertaken against the Axis. It noted that the defeat of Germany was the priority; that every effort would be made to divert German forces away from the Russian front whilst sending Russia the maximum possible amount of supplies; that the allies intended to clear the Axis out of North Africa, open up the Mediterranean, and then conduct amphibious operations in the area; that troops would be concentrated in Britain ready to re-enter the continent of Europe; that the allied bomber offensive against Germany would be increased and to maintain the initiative in the Pacific against Japan.<sup>71</sup> It also stated that both men

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<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*, Minutes by Sargent on Churchill's Morning Thoughts, 5 February 1943 and 6 February 1943.

<sup>69</sup> Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 9 February 1943, p. 513.

<sup>70</sup> Charmley, *End of Glory*, p. 526.

<sup>71</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 120/75, Churchill and Roosevelt to Stalin, 26 January 1943.

believed that “our ruling purpose is to bring to bear upon Germany and Italy the maximum forces by land, sea and air which can be physically applied” and that “these operations, together with your powerful offensive, may well bring Germany to her knees in 1943”.<sup>72</sup> Small wonder that Stalin’s initial reply was positive, as he made what appears a logical assumption, that these statements meant the allies would be launching a European Second Front in 1943.<sup>73</sup>

Unfortunately, upon receiving the follow-up telegram<sup>74</sup> with the additional information he had requested, he found it less to his liking, and his response reflected this. He bemoaned the delays both in North Africa, as well as in the suggested cross-channel invasion of France, and felt that these decisions had allowed Hitler to transfer more divisions to the Eastern Front.<sup>75</sup> At the same time Eden received an account of an interview with Maisky, in which Maisky was critical of the Casablanca decisions, deeming them too vague, and felt Britain needed to act soon or risk leaving the impression that they had left Russia to win the war for them.<sup>76</sup> Maisky had also badgered Churchill on this issue, taking him to task for the lack of preparation for a cross-channel operation, only to find that, to his surprise, the Americans had only transported one division to Britain since November, and that Churchill had no idea how many they may actually send to participate in a cross-channel operation.<sup>77</sup> The communications between Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin on the Second Front question continued unsuccessfully, and despite their best efforts to placate him, Stalin was still unsatisfied with the lack of a Second Front. The communications were, however, overtaken by the postponement of the supply convoys, with Churchill, alone despite Roosevelt offering to send a supporting message,<sup>78</sup> informed Stalin on 30 March that, owing to German naval concentrations around Narvik, it was too risky to send any

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<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 120/75, Stalin to Churchill and Roosevelt, 30 January 1943.

<sup>74</sup> Churchill to Stalin, 9 February 1943, quoted in USSR Foreign Affairs, *Correspondence: Between Stalin, Churchill & Attlee During WWII*, (Hawaii, 2003), pp 93-94.

<sup>75</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/26A, Stalin to Churchill via Clark Kerr, 25 February 1943.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, Boothby to Eden, account of an interview with Maisky, 25 February 1943.

<sup>77</sup> Maisky diary, 9 February 1943, quoted in Maisky, *Memoirs*, p. 352. Maisky suggests Churchill was as surprised and frustrated as he by the American failures.

<sup>78</sup> Roosevelt to Churchill, R-265, 28 March 1942, quoted in Kimball, *Alliance Forged*, pp. 177.

convoys via the northern route. He also bore the bad news that they could not be resumed until September, especially in light of the shipping required for Husky.<sup>79</sup> As on previous occasions when supply convoys were postponed, Stalin sent an angry telegram, complaining that the other allies were not pulling their weight, and that this “unexpected [...] catastrophic cut in the delivery of strategic raw materials [...] cannot but affect the position of the Soviet troops”.<sup>80</sup> The convoy issue proved to be only a brief distraction, however, as its significance was reduced somewhat by the German announcement of the war graves discovered at Katyn, in Poland, containing the bodies of thousands of Polish Officers murdered by the NKVD.<sup>81</sup>

It was this backdrop that greeted Clark Kerr on his return to Moscow. As if returning to an unfriendly Russia wasn't bad enough, he also had to deal with different directives as to his actions upon his arrival. His meeting with Churchill before he left London contained what is perhaps the most unusual directive given to an Ambassador, as when Churchill was asked for instruction by Clark Kerr, he responded “I don't mind kissing Stalin's bum, but I'm damned if I'll lick his arse!”, Clark Kerr, showing his class, simply responded “Thank you, Prime Minister, now I quite understand”.<sup>82</sup> He also received detailed instructions from Eden regarding the efforts he should make to engage the Russians in talks about the post-war world. They suggested that he should float the idea with the Russians of conversations on the whole field of post-war reconstruction, and particularly post-war Europe, which it was felt did not require American input, using the positive nature of recent speeches by Stalin, particularly those referencing co-operation, as his way into such discussions.<sup>83</sup> Once conversations had begun he was instructed to discuss a wide range of topics, including Germany, a Customs Union, Eastern

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<sup>79</sup> Churchill to Stalin, 30 March 1943, quoted in USSR, *Stalin, Churchill*, pp. 110-111.

<sup>80</sup> Stalin to Churchill, 2 April 1943, quoted in *Ibid*, p. 112.

<sup>81</sup> The graves of 4,000-10,000 Polish Officers (varying by report) were reported in April 1943, and it is likely the Massacre occurred after the Soviet occupation of Poland following the Nazi Soviet Pact.

<sup>82</sup> Gillies, *Radical Diplomat*, p. 141.

<sup>83</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/35338, Eden's directions to Clark Kerr, 4 February 1943.

European Confederations and Poland.<sup>84</sup> Despite the unfavourable political situation arising from Casablanca, Clark Kerr managed to make some progress. Very efficiently upon his return he engaged Molotov as per his instructions, and had a relatively successful talk, though seems to have scared Molotov by pointing out some disparity between a few of Stalin's remarks towards Germany. As a result, the conversation was brought to an end, and upon receiving Clark Kerr's account the Foreign Office minutes expressed surprise and pity that this question had frightened Molotov.<sup>85</sup> That said, they expressed general approval at his approach, and his idea to put further questions in writing for Molotov to consider, even suggesting items that should (if not already) be covered by such written communication.<sup>86</sup> Clark Kerr also met Stalin a few days later, and despite the difficult circumstances, appears to have gone on the offensive about his position as Ambassador, and the restrictions placed upon him which completely differed to the free role Maisky held in London. Stalin, according to the Ambassador's report, was unimpressed by this approach, simply grunting occasionally, but was sufficiently moved by Clark Kerr's argument to agree to help him gain greater access to people and institutions with whom and which he wanted to engage.<sup>87</sup> So far, so good, and there were further positives to come, as Clark Kerr had another meeting with Molotov after seeing Stalin, where the two worked through more points from Eden's directive, and had a discussion on three-power consultations. Whilst Molotov was unable to answer directly, Clark Kerr suggested his reply indicated that the Soviet Union would not be opposed to this idea, and that Molotov was rather surprised that the Russians had been approached on this subject before the Americans.<sup>88</sup> Despite the positive response from the Foreign Office to his efforts – though now not to their form<sup>89</sup> – the written response from Stalin to the letter submitted to Molotov drew Churchill's attention to the

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<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, Clark Kerr to FO, record of his conversation with Molotov, 21 February 1943.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, Unsent Foreign Office reply to Clark Kerr's telegram of 21 February, Undated but associated minutes suggest circa 24 February 1943.

<sup>87</sup> TNA, Inverchapel Papers, FO 800/301, Clark Kerr to Warner, 28 February 1943.

<sup>88</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/ 35338, Clark Kerr to FO, 25 February 1943.

<sup>89</sup> Eden commented "What do we say to this?!" on Stalin's written response to the letter from Clark Kerr to Molotov, and suggested that "we should have been wise to leave this alone". *Ibid.*

proceedings, and with that the approach quickly ground to a halt. Clark Kerr was informed that he should stop his written correspondence on this issue, and not mention anything further about post-war discussions.<sup>90</sup> Although trying to alleviate Churchill's concern, Eden's minute was conciliatory, apologising for the fact Clark Kerr had gone too far, but trying to suggest that this had been rectified, and that there had still been some positive responses.<sup>91</sup> A letter from Warner to Clark Kerr served to further highlight the different viewpoint of Churchill when it came to anything beyond the war effort. He noted that whilst Eden had authorised the instructions to Clark Kerr, he had not informed the Prime Minister, who, upon finding out, "emitted a series of vicious screams from his sickbed and ordained that the whole subject of post-war matters should be dropped at once like the hottest of hot bricks".<sup>92</sup> Warner in particular felt "a great opportunity has thus been missed with the Russians".<sup>93</sup> Gillies argues that in taking this approach, the British actually gave the Soviets time, in the wake of their victory at Stalingrad, to formalise their own thinking, and without the restraints of tri-partite conversations or agreements, allowed them to exercise a relatively free hand in Eastern Europe.<sup>94</sup>

The free hand being granted to the Soviets was further evidenced by the British attitude towards the Katyn Massacre. Whilst undoubtedly tragic, it was also a testament to the ability of Anglo-Soviet relations to take a firm hit and carry on. Given the close relations between Britain and Poland, especially since the Polish Government in Exile was residing in London and Britain had gone to war over Polish sovereignty, it would have been unsurprising had the British backed the Pole's stance upon the discovery of the mass grave. As it was, despite the distaste at the discovery, and the general feeling that the Soviets were responsible, Eden, Churchill, Clark Kerr and others felt that military and political necessity made it a greater priority to maintain the Anglo-Soviet alliance than support the

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<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/35338, Eden to Churchill, 1 March 1943.

<sup>92</sup> TNA, Inverchapel Papers, FO 800/301, Warner to Clark Kerr, 16 March 1943.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> Gillies, *Radical Diplomat*, p. 141.

Polish calls for a Red Cross investigation.<sup>95</sup> Despite the Soviets breaking off relations with the Sikorski Government, relations with Britain remained stable, though for some the recognition that Britain had essentially endorsed a war crime because it had been committed by an ally was a painful pill to swallow.<sup>96</sup> The lack of reference to this in Eden's memoirs suggests unease at the topic as a whole, something Carlton picks up on,<sup>97</sup> and is unsurprising given the efforts Eden had put into Anglo-Soviet relations. Churchill had no such qualms, it seems, as in May he was sending Stalin jokes about trading Poles for German and Italian soldiers, thinking it would amuse Stalin.<sup>98</sup> This sort of interaction highlights that, despite the seriousness of Katyn, winning the war was the priority, so friendly relations continued. The Polish question remained unresolved, however, and would rumble on throughout the year.

### The American Mad House

With de Gaulle back in London, Clark Kerr back in Moscow, and Churchill home and sufficiently recovered from his post-Casablanca pneumonia to take over the Foreign Office, Eden was at last able to embark on his much delayed trip to Washington. This would be Eden's first meeting with Roosevelt since 1938, and his first visit to Washington since becoming Foreign Secretary. That he visited Moscow before Washington may be a telling sign of his exclusion from the Anglo-American relationship, but it was a pleasant opportunity for him to attempt to rekindle some of the positive feeling he held for America during his last visit, a feeling that had been gradually replaced by suspicion during the course of the war. The visit, long hoped for by the Foreign Office,<sup>99</sup> was an opportunity for Eden to discuss key issues for British relations with the United States, most notably the

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<sup>95</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 142-143, Harvey, *War Diaries*, 25 April 1943, p. 249, Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 27 April 1943, p. 523, Thorpe, *Eden*, p. 283, Rothwell, *Eden*, p. 68, Charmley, *Grand Alliance*, p. 69.

<sup>96</sup> Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 18 June 1943, p. 537.

<sup>97</sup> Carlton, *Eden*, pp. 215-216.

<sup>98</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/26A, Churchill to Clark Kerr, 2 May 1943.

<sup>99</sup> Both Cadogan and Harvey mention this idea on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1942, Harvey, *War Diaries*, p. 174, Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, p. 487.

situation with France and the field of post-war planning. As there are lots of accounts of Eden's visit – undoubtedly one of the highlights of his time in office – this examination will focus on specific ideas, rather than the broad sweep of the visit, and look particularly at the difficulty of dealing with the Americans, and the discussions about France, Russia and post-war organisation.<sup>100</sup> One interesting point that will become relevant in the next chapter is that Cadogan fell ill a few days before travelling, so Jebb was selected to replace him. Whilst in Washington Jebb and Strang, who was also accompanying Eden, held many conversations with members of the State Department on post-war topics, particularly armaments, Germany, collaboration with Russia and a proposed United Nations Armistice Commission,<sup>101</sup> and the knowledge gained from these discussions would shape some of Jebb's future ideas.

After an uneventful, though uncomfortable flight, the British arrived in Washington, where they were greeted by Halifax and Sumner Welles. Notably Winant, who had returned to Washington for Eden's visit, had not met the party upon arrival, as, in the first example of the complications of American political dealings Welles refused to tell Winant where Eden would be landing, in revenge for Winant being invited to the first dinner between Roosevelt and Eden.<sup>102</sup> This trend was to continue throughout the visit, with different people attending different meetings, though notably Hopkins seems to have attended most of them.<sup>103</sup> Harvey makes reference in his diary to the role of Hopkins, seeing him as the "*éminence grise*" of the President, and states that "he does everything here. He is like the secretary to the Cabinet, the private secretary to the President and general coordinator all in one".<sup>104</sup> This made him a useful ally, as he was friendly to Britain, and always encouraging of Eden during the visit. Eden also recalled the usefulness of Hopkins, and the number of times he was involved in the various

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<sup>100</sup> See, for example, Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, pp. 707-721, Harvey, *War Diaries*, pp. 227-240, Eden, *Reckoning*, pp. 371-381, Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, Vol. V, pp. 31-38.

<sup>101</sup> Jebb, *Memoirs*, pp. 125-128.

<sup>102</sup> Harvey, *War Diaries*, 13 March 1943, p. 229.

<sup>103</sup> Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, pp. 707-721.

<sup>104</sup> Harvey, *War Diaries*, 11 and 17 March 1943, p. 228 and p. 233.

discussions.<sup>105</sup> That Hopkins carried out such a role was incredibly beneficial to the British, especially given the divisions in the American policy process. Eden remembered how “There was a strange dichotomy in the conduct of American foreign affairs, the President preferring to work through Sumner Welles, yet having regard for his Secretary of State’s authority”.<sup>106</sup> He also noted how Welles was not invited to parties thrown by Hull, and that he only saw them together once, at his most formal meeting with Roosevelt, when both men were accompanied by their advisors.<sup>107</sup> This division led to Eden confiding in Harvey that “it is all rather like a mad house” here, and he felt “more at home in the Kremlin. There at least they meant business”.<sup>108</sup> That this was the American manner, as Thorpe suggests, goes some way to explain why the British had difficulty dealing with the Americans when it came to something other than direct correspondence with Roosevelt.<sup>109</sup> As Churchill occupied this channel, the Foreign Office almost always had to deal with the slower and far less coordinated State Department. Harvey recalled Hopkins telling Eden that Roosevelt, Hull and Welles would all have different viewpoints, so it is easy to see why, particularly on difficult issues such as France, where Britain held different views to the Americans, there was very rarely any agreement.

The ‘mad house’ did have its advantages though, as Eden was able to spend plenty of time in discussion with Roosevelt, free from the drama of the Hull – Welles relationship. It was in these conversations that the real purpose of his visit could be discussed, and both parties could expatiate on the topic of post-war considerations. Eden had been hoping for this visit for some time, and saw it as an opportunity to outflank Churchill and the Cabinet by demonstrating how far ahead the Americans were, and push them to finally allow the Foreign Office to really set to the task of fully defining Britain’s post-war role.<sup>110</sup> Eden was pleased to find that, on many aspects, he and Roosevelt were broadly in agreement. Both

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<sup>105</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, pp. 371-381.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid*, p. 380.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 280-281.

<sup>108</sup> Harvey, *War Diaries*, 13 March 1943, p. 229.

<sup>109</sup> Thorpe, *Eden*, p. 282.

<sup>110</sup> Charmley, *Grand Alliance*, p. 62.



saw the necessity for an American world role after the war, both agreed in principle to a four-power council at the head of a World Organisation, and both agreed on the need to deal sufficiently with Germany to prevent it becoming a threat in the future.<sup>111</sup> There were some differences, however, as Eden still felt China was not suitable for a role as a great power,<sup>112</sup> and was concerned about how the liberated countries would be run, preferring the reinstatement of the Governments in exile or other civil authorities, rather than Roosevelt's suggestion that they should initially be run by the allied liberating forces.<sup>113</sup> He found that Hull and Welles were also, separately, forthcoming on the post-war topic. Hull expressed the view that "the future of the world depended on our ability to understand each other, and to work together in collaboration with Russia" and that it was imperative to avoid another "Wilson Fiasco",<sup>114</sup> while Welles put forward a similar idea to Roosevelt's of a four power executive committee at the head of the United Nations, with regional structures underneath, and a general assembly where all powers could be represented.<sup>115</sup> On reporting his visit to the War Cabinet, Eden certainly presented a positive light when it came to outlining the conceptions for a post-war World Organisation, suggesting that "he saw little in this lay-out in which our ideas differed from those of the President", and he was encouraged by the fact that Roosevelt saw the need for wider discussions with representatives of other nations on such an important topic, rather than Britain and America simply agreeing this amongst themselves.<sup>116</sup>

Equally as encouraging for Eden were the discussions about Russia. Having previously been averse to the idea of an agreement with Russia that incorporated a decision on their western frontiers, Eden was pleased, and rather surprised, to find the President willing to agree to the Soviet frontier demands, having accepted that

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<sup>111</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/35/30, The Foreign Secretaries visit to Washington, 30 March 1943.

<sup>112</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/35365, Eden to Churchill via FO, 16 March 1943.

<sup>113</sup> Harvey, *War Diaries*, 16 March 1943, p. 232. This was particularly true in the case of France.

<sup>114</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 120/136, Eden to Churchill via FO, 15 March 1943.

<sup>115</sup> Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, Vol. V, p. 33.

<sup>116</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 65/38/2, Eden's report to Cabinet on his Washington visit, 13 April 1943.

there would be little that could be done to turn her out of the Baltic states,<sup>117</sup> though Hopkins records of a later conversation suggest otherwise.<sup>118</sup> He was also reassured by Roosevelt's suggestion that proper consultation was needed between Britain, the United States and Russia, particularly on issues such as Poland, as this would help alleviate Russian fears of an Anglo-American conspiracy, and would demonstrate the willingness of the powers to work together, especially as Roosevelt seemed to have accepted the Russian idea of territorial change for Poland.<sup>119</sup> It seems Eden was also able to alleviate some of the American fears of working with the Russians. He was asked by Roosevelt what he thought about the concern that Russia intended to communise all of Europe after the war. Whilst noting that no definite view could be given, Eden replied that even if this was the Soviet intention, though he did not believe it was, "we should make the position no worse by trying to work with Russia"<sup>120</sup> and that "one of the best ways of avoiding this was [...] to keep on good terms with Russia".<sup>121</sup> These ideas, Eden reported to the Cabinet, gained general agreement, and Roosevelt suggested that he would try and ensure better communication with Russia in the future.<sup>122</sup>

On the subject of France, however, there was significantly less agreement. This was raised during Eden's first dinner with the President, and persisted to the press conference after he had left for Canada. Eden faced most hostility from Hull, and recorded in a telegram to Churchill how Hull "unburdened himself of his grievances", which mostly revolved around the fact the British Press, and the Free French, had criticised his pro-Vichy policy.<sup>123</sup> Given that both the United States and Britain were democracies with free speech, it is odd that Hull expected people who opposed his view not to criticise his policy, though his complaint was largely because the British had acquiesced, albeit reluctantly, to the American policy of

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<sup>117</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/35365, Eden to Churchill via FO, 16 March 1943.

<sup>118</sup> Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p. 715.

<sup>119</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 65/38/2, Eden's report to Cabinet on his Washington visit, 13 April 1943.

<sup>120</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/35365, Eden to Churchill via FO, 16 March 1943.

<sup>121</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 65/38/2, Eden's report to Cabinet on his Washington visit, 13 April 1943.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 120/136, Eden to Churchill via FO, 15 March 1943.

maintaining contact. Eden did his best to convince Hull that the British public felt no sympathy for Vichy and that no matter what anybody said this wouldn't change, and while not stating the following outright, it seems the implication was that their attitude certainly would not change because a few Americans were unhappy about press coverage.<sup>124</sup> He reported to the Cabinet that Hull's insistence on this line was due to his hatred of de Gaulle, something that would certainly explain American policy towards France. Despite the rather frustrating exchange of views, Eden wrote in his memoirs that he liked Hull, and confided to Hopkins that, whilst he was difficult to talk to and obsessed with the problems of the Free French, the two men saw eye to eye on the major world problems.<sup>125</sup> Eden was to find similar difficulty over France when talking to Roosevelt. Here he found British policies decidedly at odds with the views of the President, who favoured a more opportunistic policy based on dealing with individuals, and taking different approaches in different areas, such as the French Pacific colonies.<sup>126</sup> This was in conflict with the British policy, which was to work with a single, unified French authority.<sup>127</sup> There was also contention over the American idea to rank France as a lower class power by treating her in much the same way as any other liberated European power, and not allowing her a position of prominence in the World Organisation, or even its European aspects, something which Eden felt was overly harsh, and would raise strong opposition.<sup>128</sup> This point in Eden's telegram prompted the response from Churchill that "A proposal to rank France lower than China even in matters affecting Europe, and to subjugate all Europe after disarmament to the four powers, would certainly provoke lively discussion. I feel sure that whilst listening politely you have given no countenance to such ideas. You were quite right to protest about France".<sup>129</sup> So Eden was, as Harvey put it, between the hammer and the anvil – on the one hand the Americans were pushing

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<sup>124</sup> *Ibid*, Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 372.

<sup>125</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 380, Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p. 719.

<sup>126</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 372.

<sup>127</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 65/38/2, Eden's report to Cabinet on his Washington visit, 13 April 1943.

<sup>128</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/35/30, The Foreign Secretaries visit to Washington, 30 March 1943.

<sup>129</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/8B, Churchill to Eden, 30 March 1943.

a multifaceted and non-committal policy towards France, on the other Churchill was praising him for standing up for France, yet at home frustrating Eden for trying to aid de Gaulle and the Fighting French.<sup>130</sup> The differences over France were strong enough that they gave Eden reason to doubt the likely success of future Anglo-American co-operation.<sup>131</sup> Perhaps Hull's hatred of de Gaulle caused Roosevelt to be dismissive towards the Fighting French, or maybe Roosevelt genuinely thought France was defeated and there was no need for de Gaulle continuing to have a presence and act like a national hero, but either way the American attitude hadn't to this point, and wouldn't prove to ever, really warm to de Gaulle, or the British efforts to see a unified French organisation keeping them in the war. Perhaps the championing of Giraud was a sign that America were trying to ensure that post-war France had a Vichy style Government, which would transfer its subservience to the United States.<sup>132</sup> Whatever the reasoning, this attitude showed a complete lack of understanding of French national feeling, and could explain why the Americans never understood the strength and importance of de Gaulle.

On the whole, and certainly at a personal level, the visit was considered a success. Eden had made many useful and significant contacts, and built up good relations with key personnel, most notably Roosevelt. Harvey commented that "Roosevelt is developing a passion for A.E." and later that Eden had made a personal friend of the President.<sup>133</sup> Halifax and Hopkins both sent messages to Churchill informing him of the success of the visit, with Halifax stating that "from the first, he clicked with everyone from the president downwards, both in private and public. He has never put a foot wrong [...] I am sure that his visit, both from the short-term and long-term point of view, has been immensely useful".<sup>134</sup> Those historians who have studied this visit come to similar conclusions, though make a

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<sup>130</sup> Harvey, *War Diaries*, 3 March 1943, p. 225, and Dutton, *Eden*, pp. 160-161.

<sup>131</sup> Dutton, *Eden*, p. 161.

<sup>132</sup> Thomas, *Britain and Vichy*, pp. 173-175, Thorpe, *Eden*, p. 282, Dutton, *Eden*, p. 152. TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/36036, This file contains many minutes and telegrams by Officials between February and April 1943 discussing American policy motives, the simplest was wanting a subservient France as a second rate Power.

<sup>133</sup> Harvey, *War Diaries*, 15 March and 2 April 1943, p. 231 and p. 242.

<sup>134</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/30A, Halifax to Churchill via the FO, 31 March 1943.

point of noting where there was division, and evidence Eden's report to the Cabinet, where Eden highlighted the difficulties faced as well as the political achievements. Given the potential for Eden and Roosevelt to be working together as Heads of State, helping run and maintain the post-war peace they were currently trying to shape (at this point nobody knew Roosevelt would not live to see the peace, that the Conservatives would be beaten in the 1945 election, or, for that matter, that Churchill wouldn't relinquish the reins until 1955), it was very important that the two developed a strong relationship.<sup>135</sup> This must also have given Eden confidence to return to London and press forward with his efforts to shape the World Organisation, and bring to an early end some of the disputes already flaring relating to post-war issues.

Whilst it can not be definitely stated that the allies would have worked together after the war had a different course been pursued up to this point, it is not unreasonable to suggest that, had certain decisions been different, there would have been more goodwill and respect amongst the allied powers, and that they could have worked together. Most notably had there been a decision at Casablanca that the priority was a cross-channel invasion of Europe rather than Husky, the British would have been saved some of Stalin's wrath, and equally could have been on stronger ground when it came to negotiations with the Russians over strategic direction, and post-war issues such as the Polish frontiers. They would also have found Stalin more co-operative, as, to put it simply, the British would be able to quote combat figures to prove they were actually shouldering their share of the war effort. Likewise had Churchill left the Foreign Office to develop its foreign policy, without putting the brakes on, or leaping off on his own tangents, it is likely that this would have been further forward by the time Eden went to Washington, and potentially some agreements could have been reached that may have allowed the process of fully forming the United Nations to have begun in 1943, rather than late 1944. It seems unlikely that any progress could have actually been made on the French problems, as despite negotiations it is doubtful that de

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<sup>135</sup> Charmley, *Grand Alliance*, pp. 65-66.

Gaulle would ever have subjugated himself to Giraud. That said, had Hull been able to let go of his vendetta against de Gaulle, and the Americans been prepared, as they reluctantly were later in the year, to consider France as an important power and work with a single, unified administration, a good deal of the difficulty in Anglo-American relations could have been alleviated, allowing them to concentrate on bigger issues, and the prosecution of the war. Likewise, some of the difficulty of dealing with America could have been eased had Churchill not believed so fervently in his relationship with Roosevelt, and put its maintenance above British strategic requirements. Had he been willing to stand by de Gaulle all the while, his uncountable persuasive oratory skill could well have helped swing American opinion more behind de Gaulle, possibly allowing for either an earlier French union, or even better for the British, a unified allied backing of de Gaulle and the Fighting French. Obviously little is gained by dwelling anymore on conjecture, but given the more limited coverage of the development of this strain of foreign policy, it is important to see that there were alternatives to the course that was followed, and that these alternatives could have yielded results, some of which could have been more satisfactory than those that were actually achieved. These 'what-ifs' will remain apparent during the following chapter, where it can certainly be seen that events could well have been allowed to follow a different course.

### **11) The Foreign Office's Finest Hour?**

Having had success during his visit to Washington, Eden was eager to try and build on this, though there were still many difficulties to negotiate. For the Foreign Office, Churchill's forthcoming visit to Washington to discuss military strategy in light of Torch and early successes with Husky offered an opportunity to make some progress on foreign policy without the interference of the Prime Minister, or at least ensuring he was as far away as possible to make Cabinet discussions smoother. Whilst some progress was made, most of 1943 was to be spent dealing with the persistent French drama, which became a major headache for the Department, particularly due to the continued interference of Roosevelt. With Allied military success in the Mediterranean and on the Eastern Front, and private meetings on strategy between Roosevelt and Churchill, came further Russian demands for a second front, as well as displeasure at being left out of the loop, making Eden's calls for tripartite conversations, and the Foreign Office plans for the future seem all the more urgent. These issues were all to come to a head during the great conferences at the end of 1943, at Quebec, Moscow and Tehran, each having important consequences for the war, and the peace.

Eden had taken Jebb and Strang with him to Washington in March, and whilst he was consulting the President, they were busy holding detailed discussions with American Officials from the State Department, and also the American Advisory Committee on post-war foreign policy.<sup>1</sup> Here they were able to discover more fully American views on certain topics, particularly post-war armaments, and the future of Germany. It seems Roosevelt's suggestion that only the Four Powers should be armed was not a widely shared view, as this was, amongst other things, economically impractical, and that opinion was moving towards an international police force.<sup>2</sup> It was also discovered that the Americans

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<sup>1</sup> James Dunn, Ray Atherton and Norman Davis in particular, State Department Adviser on Political Relations, State Department Head of European Division and Diplomat and Member of the Advisory Committee respectively. Woodward, *British Foreign Policy, Vol. V*, pp. 36-37.

<sup>2</sup> Jebb, *Memoirs*, p. 126.

had no firm views about Germany and on certain topics, such as German dismemberment, the range of views was quite varied. Despite the President favouring it, as he told Eden, it seems the Chiefs of Staffs and Hull were uncertain as to its merit,<sup>3</sup> and there was, equally, disagreement about zones of occupation, though discussion of this topic was ahead of the Foreign Office, who had only moved as far as accepting that Germany would have to be occupied.<sup>4</sup> Jebb took the opportunity in these discussions to raise an idea he had, which was for the creation of a United Nations Commission for Armistice and Post-Armistice Problems,<sup>5</sup> which was received favourably and considered worthy of further study.<sup>6</sup> The idea was to co-ordinate the armistice work of the three powers to create unified plans both for armistice terms and for the restoration of order in Europe. All agreed that this would provide a strong opportunity to involve the Russians, and show them that Britain and America were willing to continue working with them into the peace.<sup>7</sup> Unlike Eden, Jebb was not engaged for the entirety of the visit, and was able to spend time working on his latest revision to his post-war planning work.

Building on the 'United Nations Plan', 'Suggestions for a Peace Settlement' took note of comments made on its predecessor, and the American views encountered during the conversations in Washington. The plan, running at a tangent to its predecessors, removed some of the more British focussed sections in favour of more generalised statements, and rephrased sections so their terms were "more acceptable to the Americans".<sup>8</sup> This appears to have occurred for two reasons. Firstly, Jebb was easily influenced by American opinion where it was along similar lines to his own, and thus felt this should be incorporated into the Foreign Office work; and second, after Eden's visit there seemed a strong prospect of America being involved in some form of World Organisation. Given the Foreign

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 126.

<sup>4</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/34/46, Eden's Memorandum on the Future of Germany, 8 March 1943.

<sup>5</sup> Also known as the United Nations Commission for Europe or the Inter-Allied Armistice Commission for Europe.

<sup>6</sup> Greenwood, *Titan*, p. 163.

<sup>7</sup> Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, Vol. V, p. 37.

<sup>8</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/35396, Jebb's covering minute on 'Suggestions for a Peace Settlement', 20 April 1943.



Office's aim was to get the Cabinet to approve a policy so Eden could begin consultation with the Americans and the Russians, it made sense to have a draft that was relatively acceptable to two of the powers right off the bat. Some notable differences between the 'United Nations Plan' and the 'Suggestions' plan included a new clause referencing the Atlantic Charter, the removal of statements about British goals, the redefinition of the roles of the Executive Committee of the World Organisation and an expanded role for the United Nations Commission for Europe.<sup>9</sup> There was one notable omission from 'Suggestions', as it contained no reference to the Anglo-Soviet Treaty, which was a key feature of previous plans.<sup>10</sup> Whilst these changes did little to alter the overall theme and guiding aims of the plan, they were subtle nods to Britain ceding ground to America in post-war planning. Given the American conception was so similar (in part as the British Four Power conception had been borrowed from America to start with), it was felt this was not a problem. Jebb suggested that some sections that were less aligned to American thinking had been left vague so they could be more easily "reconciled with President Roosevelt's views" without the British having to make sacrifices, and the suggestion that the organisation would be provisional until it was proved to work offered flexibility for future changes if required.<sup>11</sup> The paper did not make it past draft form, as at a meeting the next month between Eden, Cadogan, Jebb, Sargent, Strang, Harvey and Malkin, post-war thinking was overtaken by Cadogan's suggestion for the need to focus on the particular machinery required for dealing with the practical issues that would arise after the war regarding the agreement and implementation of armistice terms.<sup>12</sup> Cadogan felt agreement with the Americans and Russians on these matters was the priority, and if it were achieved it would allow for the easier formation of other machinery.<sup>13</sup> It was thus agreed that the Dominions would be consulted over the 'Suggestions' paper in an effort to understand how they would fit into the scheme, but that attention would

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, Draft of Jebb's 'Suggestions for a Peace Settlement', 27 March 1943.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, Jebb's covering minute on 'Suggestions for a Peace Settlement', 20 April 1943.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, Record of a meeting held by Eden on the 'Suggestions' Plan, 12 May 1943. Sir William Malkin, FO Legal Advisor.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, Record of a meeting held by Eden on the 'Suggestions' Plan, 12 May 1943.

focus on the drafting of a Cabinet paper dealing with the creation of a United Nations Commission for Europe.

The paper, rather swiftly compiled by the Economic and Reconstruction Department, was based on the lines Jebb had discussed for such a commission in Washington, and was circulated to the War Cabinet on 25 May, though it appears not to have been considered until mid-June, by which time Churchill had returned from Washington. Its central theme was that: "There should be established a supervisory body entitled "United Nations Commission for Europe," composed of high-ranking political representatives of the three major Allies, of France and the minor European Allies, and possibly of any Dominion prepared to contribute to the policing of Europe. The Commission should be situated at some convenient point on the Continent. The Commission would act as the supreme United Nations authority in Europe to direct and co-ordinate the activities of the several Armistice Commissions, the Allied Commanders-in-Chief and any United Nations civilian authorities that may be established; and to deal with current problems, military, political, and economic, connected with the maintenance of order. A "Steering Committee," consisting of the representatives of the three major Allies and of France, if she recovers her greatness, should be established as the directing body of the Commission".<sup>14</sup> It was considered that, by undertaking such a commitment, harmony could be achieved between the three allies, the danger of Russia concluding separate armistices would be reduced, and it would, for the time being, avoid awkward topics such as the future of Germany being discussed, requiring only an acceptance of great power co-operation for consultation to begin.<sup>15</sup> The Cabinet, including a notably quiet Churchill, agreed to the general lines of this paper, save for the section on the Occupation of Germany which they felt required further examination, and instructed Eden to make an informal approach to Winant and Maisky as a first step, which he did in early July.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/37/17, Eden's Memorandum on Armistices and Related Problems, 25 May 1943.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 65/34/40, War Cabinet Conclusions, 16 June 1943, Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, Vol. V, p. 50.

With the process started on the Commission, attention turned once more to the wider plan for peace and world organisation, made necessary by Churchill's recent trip to Washington. Despite the conference being concerned with military strategy, Churchill hosted a lunch party at the British Embassy on 22 May where he held forth on the structure of the post-war settlement, and later presented a record of this conversation to the War Cabinet.<sup>17</sup> His views, although moving closer to those of Eden, were still further away than those of the State Department and America more generally. Whilst there was less adverse reaction to this latest round of interference, Jebb and Webster were put out.<sup>18</sup> It is also interesting that Halifax sent Eden a letter from Washington about Britain's position in the future Churchill was proposing, noting his concerns that "the British outlook ... might easily be swamped" by the strength and dominance of America in such an Anglo-American partnership.<sup>19</sup> Eden and Jebb concurred, and work continued on the World Organisation, rather than Churchill's ideas, though Jebb did find time to write a satirical paper critiquing Churchill's views, entitled 'Early Morning Thoughts'. This paper set out the extreme of anti-Foreign Office views, with suggestions for a merged Anglo-American Empire, run by the Combined Chiefs of Staff from Washington, Councils of Europe, Asia and the Americas all subservient to this, and a boycott of Russia.<sup>20</sup> Jebb, however, makes a serious point when looking back, and realising that the reality of Europe by 1948 was far closer to the suggestions in this paper than any official plan, and stating that the reality of Cold War, a world ideologically divided between its two Superpowers, was exactly what the Foreign Office had been trying to avoid.<sup>21</sup> Worryingly, the same sentiments were to be found in Churchill's speech, given at Harvard after the Quebec conference later in the year, showing how out of step Churchill's views still were with those of the Foreign Office, and how little awareness he appeared to

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<sup>17</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/37/33, Churchill's Memorandum on the Structure of the Post-War Settlement, 10 June 1943.

<sup>18</sup> Greenwood, *Titan*, p. 165, Reynolds, P.A. and Hughes, E.J [Ed's]. *The Historian as Diplomat: Charles Kingsley Webster and the United Nations, 1939-1946*, (London, 1976), pp. 16-17 and pp. 20-21.

<sup>19</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/22A, Halifax to Eden, 28 May 1943.

<sup>20</sup> Jebb, *Memoirs*, pp. 130-131.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, p. 131.

have of the likely impact of such a vision on the post-war world.<sup>22</sup> In hindsight one could argue that this showed Churchill's greater awareness of the Russian danger, but this ignores the fact that, if Britain sided with America and left Russia out, it would have increased Russian concerns and their historic suspicion of the Anglo-Saxon powers. Given the concern Russia had shown to this point of being excluded, such a situation would make a post-war division more likely than attempts to work with Russia and resolve some of the concerns.

Despite this interlude, the 'Suggestions' plan was revised once again, and re-titled The 'United Nations Plan for Organising Peace and Welfare' (though the last two words were dropped when presented to the Cabinet). This dealt with the suggestions made by Churchill in Washington, the concerns raised in the Armistice and Related Problems memorandum and also took onboard advice from Webster, whose close relationship with Jebb meant he had a strong influence on the shape of this and future papers. His expert knowledge of Castlereagh, the Congress of Vienna and the Paris Peace Conference made him an incredibly suitable academic to advise the Foreign Office on post-war planning, something which could add weight to the notion that the Department was actually being very clever, and learning from the past how best to cope with the future. Jebb considered it "much improved" from the 'Four Power Plan', combining the best of the previous plans, opinions from America and Webster, and managing to vaguely include a Council of Europe in an effort to show some compromise with Churchill's views.<sup>23</sup> Greenwood noted how the influence of Webster, though a Great Power man like Jebb, gave the plan a new level of innovation and sophistication, allowing it to remain a Great Power plan, but appear to give voice to the smaller powers through an Assembly and with a Secretariat to organise regular meetings.<sup>24</sup> He also proposed the need for Judicial and Arbitral machinery, such as a World Court.<sup>25</sup> This conclusion was also reached by Reynolds and

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<sup>22</sup> <http://www.winstonchurchill.org/learn/speeches/speeches-of-winston-churchill/118-the-price-of-greatness>.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, p. 128.

<sup>24</sup> Greenwood, *Titan*, p. 168.

<sup>25</sup> Reynolds and Hughes, *The Historian as Diplomat*, pp. 19-20.

Hughes, whose work on Webster shows that he was actively involved in the work of the Foreign Office before the formal creation of the Foreign Office Research Department in April 1943, and they note that his “deeper understanding of the problems of international organizations and a greater sensitivity to the feelings of smaller powers” meant his note on Jebb’s draft was taken seriously, and led to amendments being made before the paper was presented to the Cabinet.<sup>26</sup>

The paper was circulated to the Cabinet on 7 July, though it was never discussed. Instead, Churchill proposed that it and similar ‘post-war’ memoranda, including one of his own, should be considered by a small Cabinet Committee, which would then report to the War Cabinet.<sup>27</sup> Unfortunately, this never happened as, by September, the Committee had stopped meeting, probably due to the decisions made at Quebec, though on 5 August and 11 August it did discuss the paper, and suggested it should be taken as the basic statement on foreign policy.<sup>28</sup> The paper, in its new and slightly expanded form, was an incredibly detailed piece of work, and is worth examining despite its lack of progress beyond a Cabinet sub-committee.<sup>29</sup> Unlike previous plans, the new plan set itself against the Atlantic Charter, and the clause relating to this is interesting, as it highlights the dichotomy of British foreign policy planning: “The principles embodied in the Charter will be the basis of any international world order after the war. But they will need to be applied and interpreted so as to provide definitely both for a world security system and for world economic arrangements”.<sup>30</sup> This statement shows British adherence to the Atlantic Charter, but also their belief that it should be interpreted vaguely so as not to upset world security or the world economy. In other words

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<sup>26</sup> Reynolds and Hughes, *The Historian as Diplomat*, pp. 19-20, also TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/36396, Note from Webster to Jebb, ‘Some Considerations on a United Nations Organisation’, undated.

<sup>27</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 65/35/37, Cabinet Conclusions, 29 July 1943.

<sup>28</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/35397, Record of meeting of the Cabinet Sub-Committee on the Post-War Settlement, 5 August 1943.

<sup>29</sup> Full copies of the plan can be found in TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/35397, War Cabinet Memorandum ‘United Nations Plan for Organising Peace’, 7 July 1943; Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, Vol. V, pp. 51-61; Reynolds and Hughes, *The Historian as Diplomat*, pp. 126-134.

<sup>30</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/35397, War Cabinet Memorandum ‘United Nations Plan for Organising Peace’, 7 July 1943, Section A.

this is a suggestion that the British, as Churchill had asserted previously, didn't think the Charter applied to them in its full terms, and that whilst its principles were sound, its universal application was not considered beneficial. From this point it followed a similar structure to the previous plans, with a General Considerations section analysing the need for international co-operation and a body to replace the League of Nations; the status and duties of the World Powers, and the potential ranking of other powers including France and the Axis powers and the structure and function of a World Organisation.<sup>31</sup> This was followed by a section examining the Economic and Social Considerations to be taken into account, including relief and reconstruction and the development of backward countries, then sections examining how the plan would be applied, firstly in Europe but also in the Far East.<sup>32</sup> It finished with a section espousing the ideal view of the World Organisation, covering a discussion of regionalism and regional defence systems, where the colonial structures would fit, representation of the smaller states and methods for organising meetings and communications of the organisation.<sup>33</sup>

The plan in this form offered new suggestions to the previous version, some of which were courtesy of Webster, others a result of increased work on armistice problems and responses relating to previous papers. Included in this revision was a more detailed assessment of the functions of the World Council: which in essence were to smooth friction between the World Powers, and to take such dispositions as required to maintain peace within the general security system; together with a provision for inclusion of smaller Powers both by regional elections, and for consultation where their interests were directly involved.<sup>34</sup> This paper also contained a new expanded clause on armaments, which was particularly interesting given it was designed to cover the small powers, whose allowance would be determined by their level of usefulness during the war and in maintaining the peace, but was also supposed to apply to the World Powers too. It

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, Sections B, C and D.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, Section E.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, Section A, Paragraph 5.

is hard to imagine the Soviet Union, or some of the smaller Powers, agreeing to have their allocations dictated too them by the World Council.<sup>35</sup> The increased examination of Armistice Problems meant the plan also made greater reference to the idea of a United Nations Commission for Europe, with emphasis placed on its role in controlling and administering Germany after the war, and even suggested that it may eventually morph into a Council of Europe with the caveat that Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States would have to be represented to prevent its dominance by Germany.<sup>36</sup> Similar considerations would also be applied to the Far East.<sup>37</sup> Its final section was also expanded from previous plans, offering a more detailed idea of the whole concept of a World Organisation, and this was the area where Webster's influence was most notable. This section now allowed for regional groupings, but was worded so as to prevent the creation of spheres of influence by the World Powers, and also provided a clearer idea of how the regional structures would work in the system with a general Assembly and a World Council. The 'Four Power Plan' would still be the heart of any system, but it was now a broader and more open system, making it harder to criticise the World Powers for dictating the peace, though that, in effect, was what they would be doing, at least initially.<sup>38</sup> On top of these major changes, there were other, smaller ones, such as the inclusion of Judicial and Arbitral Machinery; a greater examination of post-war Economic and Social Considerations, and a clearer statement of post-war status of Germany, Japan and Italy.<sup>39</sup>

It is a great shame that more attention was not paid to this plan, as not only was it detailed and thorough, it was an incredibly visionary piece, setting out a structure and method by which peace could be maintained after the war. In fact, given the way the United Nations would develop, many of the ideas set out in this paper were to become part of the United Nations Charter, agreed upon in 1945 but

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, Section A, Paragraph 7.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, Section C.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, Section D.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, Section E.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*, Sections A and B.

based on proposals discussed in 1944.<sup>40</sup> Jebb said of his 'Four Power Plan' that it "served as an essential basis for the discussions at Dumbarton Oaks, out of which emerged, largely unscathed, the eventual charter of the United Nations".<sup>41</sup> Whilst Greenwood notes that this was an exaggeration as the plan, at that stage, contained barely a shadow of how any proposed organisation could function, had Jebb made this statement about the 'United Nations Plan for Organising Peace', such an accusation would be significantly harder to level.

The study of these plans is important, not least because very few others seem to have felt this necessary or relevant to studies, either of the Second World War, the formation of the United Nations, or the history of European integration or collaboration. They show that important work was happening in the Foreign Office, in collaboration with staff in the State Department, towards the achievement of a system for preserving peace at the end of the War. Reynolds suggests that the post-war efforts were intrinsically flawed due to the uncertain future of the Soviet Union, but makes this statement looking back through the medium of the Cold War.<sup>42</sup> Taking this stand, such efforts would seem in vain and thus unworthy of serious study, potentially explaining his comment in an earlier work that no serious planning for peace or the future of Germany took place until summer 1943.<sup>43</sup> Looking from 1943, where victory had been secured in North Africa, where Stalin had broken the German offensive, first at Stalingrad and then at Kursk, and where Italy was close to collapse under increasing allied military operations, these plans cannot be regarded as insignificant. Jebb noted the difficulty of co-ordination by telegrams and indeterminable minutes, and the concern that, without some form of integrated plan amongst the allied powers, further difficulties would arise, such as over Italian armistice plans, hence Eden's

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<sup>40</sup> Dumbarton Oaks Conference, October 1944, and the Charter signed in San Francisco, 25 June 1945.

<sup>41</sup> Greenwood, *Titan*, p. 155.

<sup>42</sup> Reynolds, D. *From World War to Cold War: Churchill, Roosevelt, and the international history of the 1940s*, (Oxford, 2006), p. 70.

<sup>43</sup> Reynolds, D. *Great Britain: Imperial Diplomacy*, in Reynolds, Kimball and Chubarian, *Allies at War*, p. 336.



paper to the War Cabinet in May. Roosevelt was talking about Four Powers and an international police force, Stalin had made positive references to collaboration and had signed the Alliance with Britain, so the prospects of continued collaboration did not seem beyond the realms of possibility, especially as nothing in the Foreign Office plans contradicted, to their knowledge, anything Stalin thought or had stated on the topic.<sup>44</sup> It was hoped that such schemes, if enacted, would also provide a means to deal with difficult topics, such as Poland, that could hamper allied relations, and thus they seemed like a productive method for improving allied collaboration and co-operation during the war, and making the Grand Alliance a genuine diplomatic alliance, rather than a militarily convenient one. Britain had been urged in 1941 and 1942 to take the lead on post-war planning, particularly regarding Europe,<sup>45</sup> and these plans show that the Foreign Office made a very good effort at making this a reality.

### A Special Brand of Obstinacy

These plans were not developed in isolation, work taking place alongside the attempted unification of the French groups into one movement, a battle that was to occupy Eden for much of 1943, despite the promise shown at the end of the Casablanca Conference. Negotiations between the two French Generals continued for some time, with neither willing to make concessions. No general agreement was reached, but in March the French National Committee presented a proposal to Giraud, suggesting the fusion of the two movements should be based on a repudiation of the armistice; the restoration of fundamental freedoms; the reestablishment of republican forms of Government and an assurance that nothing would be done to prejudice the eventual decision to be made by the French people

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<sup>44</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/32918. File contains several reports and memorandum from the end of 1942 detailing Russian attitudes to the Post-War settlement, War aims, France and confederations. TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/36992 contains similar documents from 1943.

<sup>45</sup> Barker, *Churchill and Eden*, pp. 214-215, Greenwood, S. *Britain and European cooperation since 1945*, (Oxford, 1992), p. 7, Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 341.

with regard to their elected Government.<sup>46</sup> Giraud initially rejected this, though later made a speech which essentially accepted these clauses, and followed this by inviting de Gaulle to Algiers.<sup>47</sup> The War Cabinet, encouraged in Eden's absence by Law, considered this a good basis for agreement, and both Hull and Churchill made positive statements about the speech.<sup>48</sup> Thus only issues of personality, rather than policy, remained, but eventually, with efforts from Catroux, Macmillan and Jean Monnet,<sup>49</sup> the two Generals moved closer to an agreement. In April de Gaulle reported to Eden that the French National Committee and Catroux had reached two proposals for communication to Giraud, both of which were acceptable to him. These would allow for a union of Giraud and de Gaulle, whereby Giraud could maintain his role of Commander-in-Chief, but assume no political role, or should he prefer a political role, he and de Gaulle would be co-Chairs of the Committee.<sup>50</sup> De Gaulle suggested that he envisaged a reconstituted National Committee, with Giraud and himself as equal members, and including some of Giraud's collaborators such as Monnet.<sup>51</sup> These were considered positive proposals by Eden, who had seen Churchill earlier that day and gained his acquiescence to recognise a committee formed along the lines proposed by de Gaulle.<sup>52</sup> Cadogan remained suspicious, however, and there are several references in his diary around this time to the notion that Catroux may have been double crossing de Gaulle.<sup>53</sup> After initially rejecting these proposals, Giraud changed his mind, and was prepared to accept Cabinet collective responsibility and joint presidency, though not the expulsion of ex-Vichy figures or the subordination of the military to the civil structure.<sup>54</sup> An outburst from de Gaulle quickly followed a

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<sup>46</sup> Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, Vol. II, p. 423.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 424.

<sup>48</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 65/33/40, War Cabinet Conclusions, 15 March 1943, Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, Vol. II, p. 424.

<sup>49</sup> Jean Monnet, French Political and Economic Advisor, former Deputy Secretary General of the League of Nations, generally regarded as one of if not the founding father of the European Union.

<sup>50</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/8B, Eden to Peake, 16 April 1943, Record of a meeting with de Gaulle on French Unification.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 24 March to 3 April 1943, pp. 516-518.

<sup>54</sup> Mangold, *Britain and the Defeated French*, pp. 190-191.

meeting with Churchill, almost resulting in the resignations of Catroux and René Massigli,<sup>55</sup> and Giraud threatened to break off relations, but the day was saved by Macmillan and Murphy who convinced everyone to calm down, and helped draft a response from Giraud.<sup>56</sup> Catroux, was, therefore, able to bring news in May that Giraud would be happy to come to an agreement with de Gaulle.<sup>57</sup>

Unfortunately, this was timed perfectly to coincide with the arrival from Churchill of a large and dubiously packaged American spanner, a gift courtesy of Roosevelt and Hull, who saw de Gaulle being afforded a chance of prominence, and thus felt the need for a dramatic over-reaction. Unlike their previous visitor, Churchill, in Washington for strategic discussions, proved far more willing to listen to, and more worryingly agree with, American anti-Gaullist protestations. The unimportance of France and French policy to Churchill is demonstrated by the singular paragraph he devotes to the American protestations and his conflict with the Cabinet during this visit, and this is only a paraphrasing of the telegram he sent to the War Cabinet.<sup>58</sup> On 21 May, the day Catroux brought the news from Giraud, Churchill gave in to the persistent nagging of the President and sent the War Cabinet a strongly worded telegram on the de Gaulle situation. Calling de Gaulle a “marplot and mischief-maker” Churchill felt he had “missed his market in North Africa”, that he was “absorbed in his own personal career which depends on a vain endeavour to make himself the arbiter of the conduct of all Frenchmen” and that we should now “eliminate de Gaulle as a political force”.<sup>59</sup> The telegram suggested that he should be prevented from going to North Africa so he couldn’t squabble with Giraud or the ex-Vichyites, and also referred to several complaints against de Gaulle, one of which was his supposed plan to assassinate Giraud.<sup>60</sup> The War Cabinet appear to have found this tirade, and its associated memoranda essentially ridiculous, and the meeting spent little time discussing Churchill’s

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<sup>55</sup> Free French Commissioner for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>56</sup> Mangold, *Britain and the Defeated French*, p. 191.

<sup>57</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 386.

<sup>58</sup> Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p. 716. Eden devotes two whole pages to this, Eden, *Reckoning*, pp. 386-7.

<sup>59</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/36047, Churchill to Attlee and Eden, 21 May 1943.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

point of view. Contrary to Barker's suggestion that this was the first occurrence of Eden rallying the Cabinet against Churchill in his absence (a statement she contradicts within a few sentences),<sup>61</sup> the Cabinet again rallied against Churchill, and the meeting focussed on critiquing the American position, and drafting three separate responses to Churchill dealing "effectively with the odds and ends brought up against de Gaulle".<sup>62</sup> The telegrams addressed all the flimsy slights Churchill and the Americans had raised, reminded them of the firm agreements in place, and also highlighted the practical difficulties which would be experienced if they broke with de Gaulle.<sup>63</sup> It was the Cabinet's considered opinion, they informed him, that the American policy towards France was and had been consistently wrong, that they were continuing to pressure for the removal of de Gaulle to mask this fact, which was becoming more obvious in the United States, and that taking such a course would in fact be to make a martyr of de Gaulle.<sup>64</sup> It seems in trying to rectify their failed policy the American efforts would only serve to more swiftly facilitate the realisation of their fear of a strong de Gaulle. Churchill replied that he wouldn't mar his relations with Roosevelt by arguing the Cabinet line, and would discuss it with them when he returned, in light of the developments between the two Generals.<sup>65</sup> Eden was probably buoyed by a message received the following day from Halifax which showed the folly of Churchill's indictment of de Gaulle, and that Eden had been correct in the line he had taken. Halifax noted his concern at the President's attitude to de Gaulle and the potential of Britain sacrificing its own policy to please America, furthermore, American public opinion actually preferred the British policy to the one being pushed on it by the White House and the State Department.<sup>66</sup> Churchill paints the picture in his memoirs that "time and patience afforded tolerable solutions"<sup>67</sup> to

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<sup>61</sup> Barker, *Churchill and Eden*, p. 73. Barker notes in the same paragraph that Eden had used this tactic over Churchill's visit to Turkey after Casablanca.

<sup>62</sup> Harvey, *War Diaries*, 24 May 1943, p. 260.

<sup>63</sup> Three telegrams from Attlee and Eden to Churchill, contained in TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 65/38/9 War Cabinet Conclusions, Confidential Annex, 23 May 1943.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/36047, Churchill to Attlee and Eden, 25 May 1943.

<sup>66</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/8B, Halifax to FO, 26 May 1943.

<sup>67</sup> Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p. 716.

this problem, and whilst this was the case, he neglected to mention that time and patience came about because the Cabinet put him in his place regarding agreed British and Anglo-American policy, and refused to let the American influence override British interests. Churchill, perhaps, would have been wise to consider acting in the manner of the advice he would later give Eden: that “It is a great mistake always to want to do things. Very often they will do themselves much better than anyone could do them”.<sup>68</sup>

Time and patience on the part of the French did yield results and, in what must have been a satisfying moment for Eden, Churchill was there to witness it. Having finished his discussions in Washington, Churchill travelled to North Africa, taking with him General George Marshall, Chief of Staff of the United States Army, in an effort to convince him on the Mediterranean strategy he had been less successful promoting in Washington. He arrived in Algiers shortly before de Gaulle, and kept himself updated on French affairs using an old friend, General Georges, who was working with Giraud.<sup>69</sup> Anticipating trouble, he had summoned Eden, on the premise that he was “much better fitted than I am to be the best man at the Giraud-de Gaulle wedding”.<sup>70</sup> No doubt this was the case, given that of the two men Eden was in favour of French union and Churchill, in the hangover from his Washington visit, still somewhat against. Unintentionally, Churchill had invited Eden to be present to witness the triumph of his policy, something that should have given Eden great satisfaction; though it seems from his memoirs to have been lower on the scale than bathing and touring the front lines.<sup>71</sup> After a rocky start to negotiations, and with Eden, but more importantly Churchill, touring the battlefields, the French were able to come to an agreement, though some outside help was needed from Macmillan and Murphy. The first meeting had ended abruptly, with de Gaulle storming out, mostly over a personal dispute with Georges, though the lack of any agenda or items to discuss didn’t help, and

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<sup>68</sup> Barker, *Churchill and Eden*, p. 119.

<sup>69</sup> Georges had been Second in Command to the French Commander-in-Chief until the fall of France, and had been recently smuggled out of France by the British.

<sup>70</sup> Churchill to Attlee and Eden, 29 May 1943, reproduced in Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, p. 729.

<sup>71</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 389.

Macmillan took it upon himself to provide these for the following meeting.<sup>72</sup> The tension and mutual dislike was significant, with Catroux at one point commenting that he was stuck “between a madman and an ass”,<sup>73</sup> but Macmillan and Murphy worked hard to convince all parties that negotiations should be continued. Unfortunately, before the next meeting, a new dispute arose over the resignation of Marcel Peyrouton, the Governor-General of Algeria. De Gaulle, having never favoured his appointment due to his Vichy connections, and without consulting Giraud, quickly accepted, as did Giraud when he later received the letter of resignation. De Gaulle later informed Giraud of his action, which, for some reason, caused chaos. It seems bizarre that this almost led to the arrest of de Gaulle and his associates, given both generals had been sent the letter of resignation, both had accepted and made similar offers of a future position for Peyrouton, and both had done so without consulting the other.<sup>74</sup> Yet Giraud was apparently astonished that de Gaulle had done exactly what he had done, and requested Admiral Muselier join his Cabinet to keep order against a possible Coup. More peacemaking was required, and Macmillan, after “heroic” efforts, managed to convince de Gaulle of the folly of missing this opportunity, believing that if he acted honourably, he would be able to acquire in due course power for himself and his supporters.<sup>75</sup> With everyone suitably mollified, the two parties met the following day, and agreed on the formation of the French Committee of National Liberation (FCNL), essentially along the lines of the proposals given to Giraud by the French National Committee in March.<sup>76</sup> A celebratory lunch was held the following day, toasting the new committee. Intentionally or not, but presenting a nice image of the differing policies, this was a British event, and no Americans were invited.

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<sup>72</sup> Mangold, *Britain and the Defeated French*, p. 195.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid*, p. 196 (it is unclear which general was which, though, arguably, de Gaulle could have played both roles).

<sup>74</sup> Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, Vol. II, p. 435.

<sup>75</sup> Charmley, *End of Glory*, p. 541, TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 660/49, Macmillan to de Gaulle, 2 June 1943, reproduced in Mangold, *Britain and the Defeated French*, p. 196.

<sup>76</sup> Formed 3 June 1943, with de Gaulle and Giraud as co-Presidents.

Roosevelt, keenly sensing this latest snub to his desire to break with de Gaulle, sent Churchill an angry message, complaining about positive publicity and wishing Churchill "Best of luck in getting rid of our mutual headache".<sup>77</sup> Despite Churchill's reply that things were looking more positive,<sup>78</sup> continued squabbles over the French military command led to Roosevelt resuming the attack, and Churchill once more sided with his friend.<sup>79</sup> After several telegrams from Roosevelt, some of which Churchill requested Macmillan adhere to,<sup>80</sup> a long, "hysterical" telegram arrived on 17 June, which even Churchill could not defend.<sup>81</sup> The repeated assertion that everyone should break with de Gaulle showed Eden that "we shall be hard put to it to keep in step with the Americans, or rather pull them into step with us, over the French business, and not commit some folly which will give de Gaulle a martyr's crown or control of the French army or both. F.D.R.'s mood is now that of a man who persists in error. It has all that special brand of obstinacy, like Hitler at Stalingrad".<sup>82</sup> Fortunately, he and Attlee secured a compromise reply from Churchill, though this was somewhat ambiguous, praising the President's instructions to Eisenhower to keep military control with Giraud, whilst also stating that he did not favour breaking up the committee, apparently unaware that the former would likely result in the latter.<sup>83</sup> Cadogan considered this a sign that Roosevelt had lost his head.<sup>84</sup>

Eden was saved a continued fight over this issue by an American who commanded enough respect to swing even Churchill's mind. This American was not situated in Washington, however, but in North Africa, and was working with Macmillan to resolve the French command issue, both men having decided to interpret their instructions more as guidelines than rules. Eisenhower felt the best method for resolving the situation was not allied dictation, but a discussion setting

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<sup>77</sup> Roosevelt to Churchill, R-278, 4 June 1943, in Kimball, *Alliance Forged*, pp. 229-230.

<sup>78</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/8B, Churchill to Roosevelt, 6 June 1943.

<sup>79</sup> Charmley, *End of Glory*, p. 541.

<sup>80</sup> Woodward, *British Foreign Policy, Vol. II*, pp. 438-441.

<sup>81</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 394.

<sup>82</sup> Eden's diary entry for June 18<sup>th</sup>, quoted in Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 394.

<sup>83</sup> Barker, *Churchill and Eden*, pp. 78-9 and Carlton, *Eden*, p. 219.

<sup>84</sup> Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 18 June 1943, p. 537.

out basic military necessities, and leaving the details up to the French.<sup>85</sup> Whilst de Gaulle was unhappy at this further interference in French affairs, Eisenhower only discussed military matters when he met the two generals, informing them that he “would not intend to interfere with any internal organisation that the French Committee might decide upon”, and appealed to them both as soldiers to accept the military requirements of a fellow soldier.<sup>86</sup> Shortly after, a decision was reached that was acceptable to Eisenhower, though maybe not to Roosevelt, whereby a permanent military committee was established, with de Gaulle as its chair and Giraud a member, and military command split so Giraud was Commander-in-Chief for North Africa, and de Gaulle for the rest of the French Empire.<sup>87</sup> Macmillan considered this satisfactory, recommended its support by the British, and for Churchill to recommend its acceptance to Roosevelt.<sup>88</sup> Given the trouble de Gaulle was to cause after the war, it could be suggested that Roosevelt’s demands should have been met. However, as the alternative was the generally unpopular Giraud, and as de Gaulle proved manageable when he was treated fairly, it is dangerous to draw a line backwards from the post-war world to the situation in the war. This is especially the case given that de Gaulle’s bad behaviour was often a result of being excluded from decisions, or from being openly snubbed by Churchill, so to suggest he should have been excluded because he was trouble masks the reality that he caused trouble because he was excluded, mainly at the insistence of Roosevelt. Equally, he remained on good terms with Eden, the latter visiting de Gaulle in Paris on several occasions after the war, suggesting that an antagonistic de Gaulle was a symptom of the Anglo-American special relationship, and not entirely a character defect in the General.

With the Committee unified, temporarily at least, and organised so as not to interfere with allied military operations, there remained one final question to deal with, and that was its formal recognition. This was initially raised because, soon

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<sup>85</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/8B, Macmillan to FO, 19 June 1943.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> Barker, *Churchill and Eden*, p. 79, Mangold, *Britain and the Defeated French*, p. 201, Woodward, *British Foreign Policy, Vol. II*, p. 442.

<sup>88</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/8B, Macmillan to FO, 22 June 1943.



after its formation, the FCNL sent a note to Eden asking for its formal recognition as the qualified body to represent and defend French interests and manage the conduct of the French war effort.<sup>89</sup> This arrived the day after Churchill informed Roosevelt that the formation of the committee effectively brought to an end his formal ties to de Gaulle, and that the arrangements of the British Government would be transferred to the new committee.<sup>90</sup> He formally proposed this action in the House of Commons on 8 June, including a statement about forthcoming recognition.<sup>91</sup> Due to continued squabbles, this idea was shelved for a few weeks, though some background discussions with Halifax and the State Department did occur,<sup>92</sup> but in early July Eden felt the situation more favourable, and submitted a paper to the War Cabinet pressing for “some form of recognition” as the best means of helping build up the civil authority, something agreed in a previous Cabinet meeting.<sup>93</sup> Eden’s hand should have been strengthened by the knowledge that the Soviet Union intended to recognise the Committee, but with no British decision to do the same, Churchill asked Stalin to delay, and the latter, with some confusion, acquiesced.<sup>94</sup>

Weight of opinion was building, however, as Halifax was pushing for recognition from Washington, and Macmillan reported from Algiers that Murphy and Eisenhower were also in favour.<sup>95</sup> This, coupled with continued pressure from Eden, culminated in a potential crisis between Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary. A heated Defence Committee meeting on 8 July prompted Churchill to ask Roosevelt’s advice in dealing with the “sudden” swell of demands for recognition, and also a proposed Foreign Office formula for recognition,

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<sup>89</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/38/41, Eden’s Memorandum on the French Committee of National Liberation, 2 July 1943.

<sup>90</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, C-300, 6 June 1943, in Kimball, *Alliance Forged*, p. 231.

<sup>91</sup> Hansard, Series 5, Vol. 390, cc 560-71. Churchill’s report on the War situation, 8 June 1943.

<sup>92</sup> Woodward, *British Foreign Policy, Vol. II*, pp. 443-445.

<sup>93</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 66/38/41, Eden’s Memorandum on the French Committee of National Liberation, 2 July 1943. This had been agreed in Cabinet on 28 June 1943.

<sup>94</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/36299, Peake to Mack, note from a conversation with Dejean, 7 June 1943. Churchill to Stalin, 23 June 1943 and Stalin to Churchill, 26 June 1943, quoted in USSR, *Stalin, Churchill*, pp. 135-6 and 139-40.

<sup>95</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/36300, Halifax to FO, 24 June 43 and Halifax to FO, 13 July 1943. TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/8B, Macmillan to FO, 6 July 1943.

essentially stating the FCNL was replacing the French National Committee, and would ensure the continued French War effort.<sup>96</sup> The President's response was to send Churchill the directive issued to Eisenhower, that he was not to recognise the Committee under any condition.<sup>97</sup> Eden was growing impatient, however, resulting in a heated dinner with Churchill on 12 July. The two reportedly argued until the early hours, and both prepared memoranda on French policy for the War Cabinet.<sup>98</sup> Thus, after a thirteen month interlude, Churchill and Eden resumed their memoranda duel over France. The two papers had similarities, with both arguing for a strong France and the need to afford recognition to the committee (though disagreeing on timescales), but whilst Churchill's was concerned with the American attitude, and his relationship with Roosevelt, Eden's took into account the bigger picture of British foreign policy objectives, putting particular emphasis on the importance of France to Britain in the post-war world.<sup>99</sup> The paper served to further emphasise Eden's post-war vision, and helps explain the continued developments towards such a policy in the plans examined earlier. Eden set out that "Our main problem after the war will be to contain Germany. Our treaty with the Soviet Union, which is designed to secure the collaboration of the Soviet Union for this purpose on Germany's eastern flank, needs to be balanced by an understanding with a powerful France in the west [...] Our whole policy towards France and Frenchmen should therefore be governed by this consideration ... In dealing with European problems of the future we are likely to have to work more closely with France even than with the United States [...] Europe expects us to have a European policy of our own, and to state it".<sup>100</sup> In the end, fearing they were coming to a break, Churchill invited Eden to a formal meeting. Though it is unclear exactly what happened, neither paper went before the War Cabinet, and the matter was resolved by a Cabinet decision that Eden should hold limited

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<sup>96</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, C-348 and C-349, 8 July 1943, in Kimball, *Alliance Forged*, pp. 310-311.

<sup>97</sup> Roosevelt to Churchill, R-306, 8 July 1943, in *Ibid*, pp. 311-312.

<sup>98</sup> Carlton, *Eden*, pp. 219-20, Dutton, *Eden*, p. 163, Harvey, *War Diaries*, 13 July 1943, pp. 273-4.

<sup>99</sup> Woodward, *British Foreign Policy, Vol. II*, pp. 447-451, Eden, *Reckoning*, pp. 397-399, Churchill, W.S. *The Second World War, Volume V: Closing the Ring*, (London, 1985). pp. 157-9, Dutton, *Eden*, p. 164.

<sup>100</sup> TNA, Prime Ministers Papers, PREM 3/181/8, Eden's draft memorandum, 13 July 1943.

discussions with Winant on the issue.<sup>101</sup> Churchill subsequently informed Roosevelt that recognition was required, and that if a formula could not be reached Britain may have to proceed without American agreement, likely accompanied by the Soviet Union.<sup>102</sup> Eden had gained Churchill's agreement on the need for recognition, but was soon to find that this would not yield an easy result, as the quickly approaching Quebec Conference was to demonstrate.

Whilst the achievement of this stand against Churchill was considered a success by Eden, with Harvey making a particularly enthusiastic diary entry,<sup>103</sup> it may not be this clear cut. Eden had been trying for some time to obtain agreement on the need for recognition, and this was eventually achieved, but his actual goal had been to offer said recognition to the Committee, and on this basis his efforts were unsuccessful. This has resulted in some mixed reviews of Eden's efforts. Dutton feels this episode showed Eden was no push-over against Churchill and had in fact won him round, whereas Carlton suggests that Eden had been tactically outplayed by Churchill, who was then magnanimous in victory.<sup>104</sup> That this episode is widely covered in the historiography suggests some importance is attached to it, though this is often in terms of the Churchill-Eden relationship rather than foreign policy direction. Although not the focus of this work, the Churchill-Eden dynamic is undoubtedly interesting, and it seems important to note that, whilst Churchill may have tactically out played Eden to an extent, the Foreign Secretary had not surrendered to Churchill's view, but established that one tactic did not work, yielded and moved on to another. Realising a showdown in Cabinet would be an embarrassment for both men and undermine the war effort, Eden opted for sapping and mining as Harvey put it, and the subtler tactics eventually yielded partial results.<sup>105</sup> Although his efforts were still thwarted by Roosevelt, Eden proved that he was no yes-man to Churchill, and was determined to stand up and fight for the policy he believed to be right, even if, with Churchill

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<sup>101</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 65/35/9, War Cabinet Conclusions, 14 July 1943.

<sup>102</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, 21 July 1943, reproduced in Churchill, *Closing the Ring*, pp. 159-60 and Kimball, *Alliance Forged*, pp. 334-6.

<sup>103</sup> Harvey, *War Diaries*, 14 and 21 July 1943, pp. 274-5 and p. 278.

<sup>104</sup> Dutton, *Eden*, p. 164, Carlton, *Eden*, p. 221.

<sup>105</sup> Harvey, *War Diaries*, 14 July 1943, p. 274.

back in the country, the Cabinet stayed somewhat quieter than it did in his absence.

In terms of foreign policy, this was a victory for Eden, though a smaller one than he would have liked. The determination to have a strong France, and have that France play a role in Europe in the future can be seen in all the post-war and world organisation plans that have been studied, and in his July memorandum to Churchill, so by this criteria Eden's actions had prevented the collapse of this pillar of his foreign policy. Having seen de Gaulle's position threatened after Casablanca by Roosevelt, he was determined that continued pressure from the President would not influence British policy, consequently preventing the wider danger Eden foresaw of Britain losing control of its foreign policy.<sup>106</sup> Whilst he may not have achieved formal recognition for the FCNL, he had convinced Churchill of its political requirements, with the latter noting by the end of July that his goal was for "the recognition of the Committee [...] and its eventual inclusion [...] in the array of the United Nations".<sup>107</sup> This was not a solo victory, however, and Eden had others to thank for the progress made. Cadogan stood by him in the Defence Committee meeting on 8 July, and received personal criticism from Churchill as a result.<sup>108</sup> Macmillan worked towards Eden's goal from Algiers, refusing to give into the Prime Minister's bullying telegrams, receiving criticism from Churchill for being too Gaullist.<sup>109</sup> Halifax too had played his part, being surprisingly pro de Gaulle over recognition, adding weight to arguments that the American policy was wrong and the British one correct.<sup>110</sup> Ultimately, it seems likely that Eden's quest would have been for nought were it not for "that wise American"<sup>111</sup> Eisenhower, who ignored his President's directives and worked with the British. It seems that his willingness to discuss issues with Giraud and de Gaulle helped end their squabbles over the military control, thus stabilising the military concerns in North Africa, and the news that he favoured recognition finally persuaded Churchill to

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<sup>106</sup> Charmley, *End of Glory*, p. 544.

<sup>107</sup> Dutton, *Eden*, p. 146.

<sup>108</sup> Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, editors text, p. 542 and Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 397.

<sup>109</sup> Charmley, *End of Glory*, p. 542, Mangold, *Britain and the Defeated French*, pp. 199-200.

<sup>110</sup> Barker, *Churchill and Eden*, pp. 76-77, Woodward, *British Foreign Policy, Vol. II*, pp. 443-5 and 452.

<sup>111</sup> Harvey, *War Diaries*, 7 July 1943, p. 272.

put the matter to Roosevelt. Eden had been helped by some powerful allies on the French issue, which not only prevented a breach with the Prime Minister that could have cost him his Office, but also ensured that, for the moment, Britain retained some say in the outcome of this part of its foreign policy, and that one of the cornerstones of the broader post-war policy the FO was trying to construct remained intact.

### 'Exceptional Difficulties'

As if dealing with the difficulty of French Union and post-war plans wasn't enough for the Foreign Office, they also had to contend with a further fluctuation in British relations with the Soviet Union. Their involvement in these affairs was, however, reduced because of the military nature of the argument that was ensuing, meaning it was Churchill who had to suffer the wrath of Stalin and try to diplomatically argue the British case. Having been unimpressed by the strategic decisions of Casablanca, Stalin was unhappy to hear that Churchill would be visiting Washington in May to discuss the next steps of allied strategy, once again without the inclusion of any Soviet representative.<sup>112</sup> He was, understandably, increasingly frustrated with his fellow allies when the results of those discussions were revealed to him in a post-conference communiqué. This set out that the enemy submarine threat was the primary consideration; that bombing efforts against axis targets would be intensified; that Italy was to be knocked out of the war as soon as possible; and lastly that forces would be transferred to England for an assault on the Continent in spring 1944.<sup>113</sup> Though assistance to the Soviet Union was put on a level footing with dealing with the submarine menace, this was little consolation to Stalin. In fact, Stalin saw little to be pleased about in the allied decisions, save for the fact they had notified him about them directly, and

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<sup>112</sup> Personal letter from Roosevelt to Stalin, reproduced in USSR, *Stalin, Roosevelt*, pp. 63-64.

<sup>113</sup> Communiqué on decisions made at Trident, sent from Roosevelt to Stalin, received 4 June 1943, reproduced in *Ibid*, pp. 67-69.

replied in very negative terms.<sup>114</sup> In his message he criticised the contradictions with the decisions made at Casablanca, the further delay of the Second Front from 1942 to 1944, and the fact this had been decided without the Russians being present.<sup>115</sup> It would, he argued, have implications for the morale of the Soviet Union, as well as cause “quite exceptional difficulties” in their ability to continue their “nearly singlehanded” war effort on behalf of the allies.<sup>116</sup> All of these were reasonable points as far as the Soviets were concerned, if not entirely accurate. The suggestion that they had been and would continue to be fighting almost singlehandedly for the entire allied cause was, however, a step too far, and was considered grossly unfair even by Harvey.<sup>117</sup> Given that Harvey was more sympathetic than most towards the Russia cause, if he felt this too far, Churchill, who had a propensity for violent emotional outbursts, must have done very well to hold himself and act in a correct manner, as the reply he sent to Stalin, delayed by Roosevelt’s indecision whether or not to concur, was well measured and reasonable.<sup>118</sup> Churchill’s reply set out the allied case against launching a cross-channel invasion, the advantages in taking out Italy, and offered seemingly sincere compassion for the exertions of the Soviet Union and its leader. He also suggested his willingness to take any risk and go to any place in order to have a tripartite meeting of the allied leaders.<sup>119</sup> Stalin remained unmoved and once again treated Churchill to a diatribe of apparent indiscretions by the allies, at the same time criticising their lack of suffering compared to the Soviet Union, and concluding that he could have little confidence in his allies.<sup>120</sup> A firm rebuff from Churchill led to a temporary suspension in correspondence between the two, and also resulted

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<sup>114</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/30A, Stalin to Churchill, Copy of text sent to Roosevelt in response to the Trident Communiqué, 11 June 1943.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>117</sup> Harvey, *War Diaries*, 14 June 1943, p. 267.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 26 June 1943, p. 269, Charmley, *Grand Alliance*, p. 76, Kimball, *Alliance Forged*, pp. 259-261, Roosevelt made two different draft replies to Churchill, who had sent him a draft of his response to Stalin, and then finally decided to send a message concurring with the Prime Ministers statement.

<sup>119</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/30A, Churchill to Stalin, 21 June 1943.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*

in the Soviet leader taking the major step of withdrawing his Ambassadors in London and Washington to Moscow for consultation.<sup>121</sup>

It should be noted that Stalin also ceased correspondence with Roosevelt, though for less time than with Churchill, as Roosevelt steered clear of engaging Stalin over the Second Front, leaving Churchill to fight this battle for him. Perhaps this approach was supposed to differentiate Roosevelt from Churchill,<sup>122</sup> as the former had been attempting for some time to convince Stalin of the need for a meeting between the two, with Churchill not attending.<sup>123</sup> Stalin responded warmly to this approach, and agreed to a meeting during the summer, though military conditions on the Soviet front caused the meeting to be postponed.<sup>124</sup> Churchill was not informed of this correspondence until 24 June, and sent Roosevelt a response resembling that of “a jealous suitor who had just learnt that the object of his affections had arranged a date with a richer, more handsome man”.<sup>125</sup> The message suggests Churchill was seeing, though not believing, the realities Eden had predicted about the possible decline in position of Britain relative to the United States and the Soviet Union were it not to stand firm and act on its own policy. Now, Churchill was watching his special relationship with Roosevelt being replaced by Roosevelt’s desire to seek an understanding with Stalin. Despite deceiving Churchill by saying that Stalin had proposed the idea, Roosevelt still extolled its virtues and, with Stalin’s wrath over the Second Front still stinging, Churchill reluctantly agreed to the merits of such a meeting.<sup>126</sup> Maisky and Clark Kerr often complained that the British consulted the Americans and then informed the Russians,<sup>127</sup> but it appears the only one listening was

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<sup>121</sup> Gillies, *Radical Diplomat*, p. 143, Maisky, *Memoirs*, p. 365.

<sup>122</sup> Kimball, *Alliance Forged*, Editors text, pp. 277-278.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 233 and p. 283. Roosevelt’s letter to Stalin, 5 May 1943, in USSR, *Stalin, Roosevelt*, pp. 63-64.

<sup>124</sup> Stalin to Roosevelt, 26 May and 8 August 1943, in USSR, *Stalin, Roosevelt*, p. 66 and pp. 78-9.

<sup>125</sup> Charmley, *End of Glory*, p. 540.

<sup>126</sup> Roosevelt to Churchill, R-297 and Churchill to Roosevelt, C-334, 28 June 1943, in Kimball, *Alliance Forged*, pp. 283-285.

<sup>127</sup> Maisky, *Memoirs*, p. 363, Gillies, *Radical Diplomat*, p. 144, TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/39596, Clark Kerr to Warner, record of a conversation with Maisky, 10 August 1943.

Roosevelt, who sought to employ this strategy with Stalin, and then invite Churchill to a conference afterwards.<sup>128</sup>

Given the nature of the correspondence it was Clark Kerr rather than the Foreign Office who had the most direct involvement in the flow of messages between the two leaders. During the communication with Stalin, Churchill had sought Clark Kerr's advice on some of his replies, trusting in the man he credited with getting him to Moscow in 1942. These messages often contained the frustration that he managed to leave out of the official message to Stalin, and make for a more realistic impression of his true feelings towards the Soviets. The responses from Clark Kerr were largely positive about the nature of Churchill's replies, and he suggested that Churchill should try to ignore the tone of the messages from Stalin, understand the genuine pressure the Russians felt they were under, and try to extend his patience with the bear.<sup>129</sup> Churchill felt this response rather too pro-soviet, and encouraged Clark Kerr to be robust in the face of criticism, and suggested he should drop a friendly hint to Stalin that it would be dangerous to offend the Western powers.<sup>130</sup> Clark Kerr was measured in his responses, and claimed that it was his duty to report the whole picture, even when he did not agree with all aspects of it, implying that he would not make for a very good Ambassador if he did otherwise.<sup>131</sup> His recommendation was that, whilst allowing things to simmer for a few weeks, Churchill should continue the correspondence, despite him fearing it had, perhaps, outlived its usefulness. This advice was also given to Churchill by Maisky before the latter's return to Moscow. Having enquired if Churchill had any message for Stalin, Maisky was informed that Churchill was "tired of being scolded" and did not see any point maintaining his personal correspondence just as a means of recrimination.<sup>132</sup> Maisky advised him to ignore tone; that Stalin's blunt messages were simply him expressing himself under stress; and nothing more sinister should be inferred. In fact, Maisky

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<sup>128</sup> Roosevelt to Churchill, R-297, 28 June 1943, in Kimball, *Alliance Forged*, pp. 283-284.

<sup>129</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 954/26A, Churchill to Clark Kerr, and Clark Kerr to Churchill, various dates between 15 June 1943 and 1 July 1943.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid*, Churchill to Clark Kerr, 16 June 1943.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid*, Clark Kerr to Churchill, 1 July 1943.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid*, FO to Clark Kerr 5 July 1943, record of Churchill's conversation with Maisky on 2 July 1943.



thought the best correspondence was that where both parties could speak bluntly to each other without causing offence.<sup>133</sup> The meeting ended on a friendly note, with Churchill even offering to send Eden to Moscow once again were it felt desirable, suggesting he had not entirely given up on Anglo-Soviet relations. It could also have been a sign of the danger the British felt at the recall of Maisky, as both Eden and Churchill expressed surprise and concern at his withdrawal, maybe thinking it was a signal of a changing Russian attitude towards collaboration.<sup>134</sup>

Despite the difficulty, correspondence was resumed in early August, as the Anglo-American conference in Quebec was approaching, and with it increased calls for the arrangement of a tri-partite meeting. It would still be a few months before it would occur, but the paths were beginning to wind together, and the final part of this chapter shall examine outcomes of the Quebec, Moscow and Tehran conferences, and their implications for British foreign policy objectives. For the time being, it seems the British were working on a damage limitation project with the Soviets, as relations were slowly deteriorating with each chastisement from Stalin, but they were doing what they could to keep Soviet anger and distrust to a minimum, though this appeared insufficient, meaning when the conferences occurred, it looked unlikely that the Soviets would be particularly forthcoming.

### The Big Three in Conference

The first of the Conferences was held in Quebec, and went ahead despite originally being the consolation prize for Churchill after the proposed Roosevelt Stalin meeting which never materialised.<sup>135</sup> There was, however, still a debate as to whether or not Stalin should be invited to attend, or to send a representative. Eden, having initially felt they should be informed of the talks with him going to Moscow after to explain the outcomes, appears to have been swayed by Clark

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<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> Churchill to Roosevelt, C-334, 28 June 1943, Kimball, *Alliance Forged*, p. 285 and Maisky, *Memoirs*, p. 365.

<sup>135</sup> Full reports of the conference can be found in Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, pp. 744-750, Woodward, *British Foreign Policy, Vol. II*, pp. 457-460 and 575-578, Charmley, *End of Glory*, p.545-550, Eden, *Reckoning*, pp. 402-404, Gilbert, *Road to Victory*, pp. 462-488.

Kerr's protestations that the Russians would not accept this ruse to keep them out, and would be highly critical of such action, so suggested to Churchill that perhaps the lesser of all evils was to inform the Russians in advance of Quebec, and invite them to attend.<sup>136</sup> For Eden, who would be going to Quebec in order to discuss, amongst other things, the recognition of the FCNL, it would have been useful to have a Soviet representative there to help him convince the Americans that this was a correct step to take. Unfortunately, Churchill was disinclined to acquiesce to this suggestion, stating that he'd rather the conference did not go ahead than have the Russians involved, and told Eden to be bold and push his initial idea on them.<sup>137</sup> This decision seems to have been made due to Churchill's assumption that, were a Russian representative present, it would have tipped the balance on military decisions towards the Second Front, and away from the Mediterranean.<sup>138</sup> With this decision from Churchill, and Roosevelt's apparent willingness to continue without Stalin, the British set out for Quebec in the middle of August, though Churchill had gone ahead having decided to travel by sea, intending to meet Roosevelt in Washington before the conference began.

Eden and Cadogan arrived to represent the Foreign Office on 18 August, in time for the main conversations, though work had already begun between the Chiefs of Staff.<sup>139</sup> Whilst Churchill, Roosevelt and the Chiefs of Staff argued over military strategy after the successful results of Husky, Eden and Cadogan were left to battle with Hull over recognition of the FCNL. Both make references to these long and difficult conversations, though Eden's are more diplomatic than Cadogan's, who described Hull as "A dreadful old man [...] and rather pig headed".<sup>140</sup> The impression gleaned from these references, along with messages sent back from Quebec, is that the American, and particularly Hull's, obsession with de Gaulle had not been abated by time or patience. After three meetings,

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<sup>136</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/26A, Eden to Clark Kerr, 29 July 1943, Clark Kerr to Eden, 30 July 1943 and Eden's minute to Churchill, 31 July 1943.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid*, Churchill's minute to Eden, 31 July 1943.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid*, Eden's minute to Churchill, 31 July 1943, Churchill's reply, 31 July 1943, and Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 23 July 1943, pp. 545-546.

<sup>139</sup> Kimball, *Alliance Forged*, editors text, p. 429.

<sup>140</sup> Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 20 August 1943, p. 553.

where no progress was made, the two 'politicians', failing to become 'Statesmen' as they could not agree, decided the best course of action would be separate proposals, with the British deciding to offer recognition with only implied limits on its scope.<sup>141</sup> Churchill had, however, finally been won round by Eden's persistence, and had written to Roosevelt, begging him to go as far as he could regarding recognition, and in a later conversation with Eden he agreed with the line his Foreign Secretary had taken over France with Hull.<sup>142</sup> His plea appears to have fallen on death ears, as Roosevelt didn't intervene to help the British, and suggested afterwards that he could have made more progress on France without Eden's presence.<sup>143</sup> Despite serious American opposition, Eden had, finally, been successful in achieving one of his goals, and ensuring the recognition of the FCNL. In a broader scale, this had significance, not just as a policy achievement, but as a sign that, when an impasse was reached, Britain could, albeit at great effort, carry out their own policy in areas of direct British interest, even against the wishes of the United States. In terms of post-war foreign policy goals, having a unified French committee added extra weight to Eden's suggestion that they should be associated with any post-war settlement, and for the moment at least, removed a source of friction between the British and the Americans. That Roosevelt felt he could more easily influence Churchill is no surprise, as Churchill's emotional investment in the special relationship brought with it greater loyalty to the President, whereas Eden remained more remote. This being the case shows how important Eden was for France and de Gaulle, as he was powerful enough at home, and in diplomacy, to achieve results for their cause when it was aligned with British foreign policy goals. It may have taken three years, but Eden had managed to pull the Americans away from Vichy, and then Giraud, so there was hope that they could be successful at influencing American opinion on less controversial topics.

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<sup>141</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, pp. 402-403, Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 20 to 24 August 1943, pp. 553-555, Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, Vol. II, pp. 457-459.

<sup>142</sup> Churchill's letter to Roosevelt, C-412/4, 15 August 1943, in Kimball, *Alliance Forged*, p. 421. Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 402.

<sup>143</sup> Dutton, *Eden*, p. 165.

The other important outcomes of Quebec for foreign policy were the decisions about Italian armistice terms and future strategy, particularly the reaffirmation of Overlord for 1944,<sup>144</sup> both of which necessitated further contact with the Soviet Union. Eden had come to Quebec prepared to go on to Moscow,<sup>145</sup> but this became unnecessary, as Stalin broke his silence, acknowledging the Quebec meeting, and replying to joint messages sent by Churchill and Roosevelt. Stalin's responses to the messages about Quebec were both troubling and positive in equal measure. On the one hand he criticised the decisions on Italy being made without consulting him, and used a similar line of argument to Clark Kerr, that the USA and Britain make a decision, then inform Russia as if it were a passive third party.<sup>146</sup> On the other, in light of this, and his personal difficulty attending a tripartite meeting, he suggested it would be expedient that both an allied military-political commission be set up to deal with the Italian Armistice situation, and that a meeting of responsible representatives should take place. Given his previous rejections of tripartite meetings, this opened the door for such meetings to occur instead of, or possibly before, a meeting of the big three, and possibly showed that Stalin realised he could not continue complaining about being left out whilst also refusing to participate when invited.<sup>147</sup> This was encouraging for Eden, who had been pushing for some kind of inter-allied commission to discuss European matters, and so this meeting would afford an opportunity for such consultation to occur, but on a grander scale. Jebb particularly was pleased, as he had been pushing for similar talks and combined planning for peace since his visit to Washington with Eden, and was in Washington again at this time to liaise with American post-hostilities planners, so felt the time had definitely come to involve the Russians in such important discussions.<sup>148</sup> It would also fit in well with an

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<sup>144</sup> Gilbert, *Road to Victory*, p. 477, Churchill agreed to Overlord despite lodging plenty of concerns about the operation.

<sup>145</sup> Dutton, *Eden*, p. 200.

<sup>146</sup> Stalin to Churchill and Roosevelt, 22 August 1943, in USSR, *Stalin Churchill*, pp. 148-149.

<sup>147</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/26A, Stalin to Churchill and Roosevelt, 11 August 1943.

<sup>148</sup> Greenwood, *Titan*, pp. 171-2, TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/35461, FO directive to Jebb, 9 August 1943.

American proposal, seen by Jebb and Eden, which was for a Four Power Joint Declaration covering the allies' responsibilities in war and peace.<sup>149</sup> The draft suggested allied agreement to: united action in the prosecution of the war and the organisation and maintenance of peace and security; disarmament of enemies and occupation of their territory; act against violation of requirements imposed on enemies; establishing a World Organisation; the creation of technical commissions to deal with military problems; no unilateral military action and finally to work together to regulate armaments.<sup>150</sup> This was put to the Cabinet by Eden upon his return, and it was agreed that a slightly amended version should be put to the Americans, with a view to their raising it at the Foreign Ministers Conference tentatively being arranged for October.<sup>151</sup> The contents of the declaration meant it was highly supported by Eden, as it set out in simple terms many of the core arguments that had found their place in the 'Four Power Plan' and its descendents.

With one of the agenda items now agreed and the British working on more, including a tacit agreement on Russian frontier claims that Eden had tried to encourage Hull to accept in Quebec, there was, unfortunately, an argument over the location of the Foreign Ministers conference. Eden and the Cabinet preferred London, Roosevelt either preferred somewhere in Britain that wasn't London (which Eden found insulting<sup>152</sup>) or somewhere remote in North Africa, Churchill was happy to accept any of these suggestions, but Stalin was adamant that it should be held in Moscow.<sup>153</sup> This argument, as Eden recalled, was to run for much of September as Roosevelt changed his mind, first agreeing to Moscow, then agreeing on London after deciding Hull had to attend the conference, though by then Stalin considered it too late to make alterations as the conference was to start in the middle of October.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> TNA, Prime Ministers Papers, PREM 4/30/5 Documents on and relating to Four Power Declaration including a Cabinet Paper on the topic, 4 September 1943.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid*, Draft Four Power Declaration, 4 September 1943.

<sup>151</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 65/35/34, War Cabinet Conclusions 6 September 1943.

<sup>152</sup> Eden's diary 10 September, quoted in Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 405.

<sup>153</sup> TNA, Cabinet Papers, CAB 120/107, Preparations for Foreign Secretaries Conference, Churchill to Eden and Eden to Churchill on 3 September 1943, Stalin to Churchill, 8 September 1943.

<sup>154</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, pp. 405-6.

So Eden found himself on his way to Moscow once more, although apparently he almost didn't go after an argument in Cabinet, referenced in both Harvey and Cadogan's diaries; though not in the official records of the two Cabinet meetings on the subject.<sup>155</sup> Eden had prepared diligently, with the Cabinet approving briefs on many topics, including the future of Germany, Russian frontiers and the scope of Stalin's proposed Politico-Military commission, and indeed his level of preparation was often cited as one of the reasons he was able to make the conference a success.<sup>156</sup> The conference was, as it turned out, one of the most successful Eden attended in an executive capacity, and was more businesslike than any other war-time conference.<sup>157</sup> Although a significant portion of time was taken up by the Second Front issue, with Molotov and the Russian delegation making this their major topic of discussion, the British military advisors successfully answered all the questions put to them, and confirmed that Overlord would go ahead in 1944.<sup>158</sup> The topic came up a couple more times throughout the conference, as Eden's telegrams to Churchill demonstrate, but despite being the dominant issue it did not affect the productivity of the conference.<sup>159</sup> Even when Churchill interfered, asking Eden to show Stalin documents that he felt altered the likelihood of Overlord due to developments in Italy, Eden notes Stalin was in good humour and did not offer any recriminations or complaints, though didn't change his mind as to the necessity of Overlord.<sup>160</sup> There was little agreement on the Russians other points for discussion, as neither Britain nor the USA could see much merit in trying to induce Sweden into the war, and neither felt able to offer

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<sup>155</sup> Harvey, *War Diaries*, 6 October 1943, p. 304, Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 5 October 1943, p. 564, TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 65/40/1 and 65/40/3, Confidential Conclusions, 5 and 8 October respectively.

<sup>156</sup> Dutton, *Eden*, pp. 202-3, Thorpe, *Eden*, pp. 288-9, Woodward, *British Foreign Policy, Vol. II*, p. 594, Keeble, Sir C. *Britain, the Soviet Union and Russia*, (London, 2000), pp. 183-4.

<sup>157</sup> Thorpe, *Eden*, pp. 289, Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, editors text, p. 571.

<sup>158</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 411.

<sup>159</sup> TNA, Cabinet Papers, CAB 120/ 113 and TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/26A both contain telegrams from Eden noting his conversations on the Second Front, and the Soviet insistence that it be carried out.

<sup>160</sup> TNA, Cabinet Papers, CAB 120/ 113, Eden to Churchill, 28 October 1943.

such assurances as would be required to try and lure Turkey into active participation, though did agree its belligerency would be desirable.<sup>161</sup>

With the military nature of the Russian topics dealt with, the Foreign Ministers were able to move on to political issues, though controversial subjects such as Poland and Soviet Frontiers were not discussed, although Eden did discuss these privately with Molotov. Here the conference made significant progress, coming to agreement on most matters and making definite decisions on some. For Eden, undoubtedly the highlight was the formation of the European Advisory Commission, which would be a high level political commission based in London to discuss the problems arising in Germany and elsewhere with the collapse of the Nazi regime. This was the sort of body Eden and others had been suggesting as a necessary vehicle both to improve allied co-operation, and facilitate decisions that could be both enforced and maintained. Jebb, however, felt this fell short of his vision for such a commission.<sup>162</sup> Many commentators on Eden did consider this a major achievement<sup>163</sup> even though the commission would prove largely unsuccessful, its adoption, not necessarily something favoured by the other allies, was a testament to Eden's abilities as a diplomat, and Eden himself felt such a result was justification alone for holding the Foreign Ministers Conference.<sup>164</sup> This was not the only success of the conference. The Four Power Declaration, proposed by Hull, also saw agreement, albeit in a rather longwinded fashion. The Russians, prior to the conference, rejected the proposal, thinking it irrelevant given only three powers were attending, which prompted the following minute from Churchill to Eden: "you see they do not want to be mixed up in all this rot about China as a Great Power anymore than I do".<sup>165</sup> Despite this objection, Hull brought up the declaration during the conference, and it was discussed sufficiently for Eden to send a set of amendments for Cabinet approval after the meeting on 21

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<sup>161</sup> *Ibid*, Eden to Churchill, 29 October 1943.

<sup>162</sup> Greenwood, *Titan*, pp. 172-173.

<sup>163</sup> For example, Barker, *Churchill and Eden*, p. 213, Rothwell, *Eden*, p. 69, Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, editors text, p. 572, Dutton, *Eden*, p. 167.

<sup>164</sup> TNA, Cabinet Papers, CAB 120/113, Eden to Churchill, 24 October 1943.

<sup>165</sup> TNA, Prime Ministers Papers, PREM 4/30/5, Churchill's minute to Eden, 8 October 1943, on a telegram from Clark Kerr to FO, 6 October 1943.

October, then an agreed text of the declaration on 26 October, only to inform them on 27 October that the declaration had been dropped. It was signed three days later.<sup>166</sup> Its composition was similar to the document shown to Eden and Jebb in August, save for the omission of the clause about technical commissions.<sup>167</sup> The conference had many minor achievements alongside these, including a decision over the future of Austria – it was to be independent whether it wanted to be or not; a decision to create a commission to deal with Italy – which would include a representative from Russia and also the FCNL; Eden raised the topic of Poland in a private talk with Molotov and the two managed to be diplomatic enough that it didn't torpedo the conference; Eden secured consent from Churchill to offer the Russians a share in the captured Italian fleet as a gesture of goodwill, and he managed to neutralise any fallout from Stalin over the supply convoys, which Churchill had potentially caused by refusing to accept a telegram from Stalin on the topic, much to the confusion of the new Ambassador, Fedor Gusev.<sup>168</sup> Given the lack of enthusiastic participation by Hull, and the relative stubbornness of Molotov for a significant portion of the conference, it was down to Eden that the conference was a success. It is often considered, because of his influence on the proceedings, that this was the last major allied conference where the British not only sat at the top table, but actively took the lead amongst the allied powers.<sup>169</sup> Gillies implies that this was a last hurrah for British power, which came, ironically, as Britain was rapidly sliding into decline, so this was even more, as Cadogan commented, “his [Eden's] show – and a very good one” to maximise the use of British influence.<sup>170</sup> Harvey commented that Eden was carrying the Americans, and Eden recalled Hull's lack of support, and his lack of standing with Stalin such that Hull authorised Eden to discuss matters with the Soviet premier on his

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<sup>166</sup> TNA, Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/ 35399, Eden to FO, 21 October 1943, 26 October 1943, 27 October 1943 and 30 October 1943.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid*, Eden to FO, 30 October 1943.

<sup>168</sup> TNA, Cabinet Papers, CAB 120/113, Moscow to FO, 1 November 1943, text of the communiqué issued after the Foreign Ministers Conference, Eden, *Reckoning*, pp. 410-412. Fedor Gusev replaced Maisky after the latter's 'promotion' to be Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>169</sup> Gillies, *Radical Diplomat*, p. 149, Rothwell, *Britain and Cold War*, p. 108.

<sup>170</sup> Gillies, *Radical Diplomat*, p. 149, Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 3 November 1943, p. 573.



behalf.<sup>171</sup> Perhaps, under the strains of the war and working under Churchill, Eden may have been even more successful as a diplomat, but that is a question for a different project.

The other notable achievement from Moscow, and again something where Eden holds a significant portion of credit, was that he convinced Stalin of the need to personally attend a meeting of the Heads of Governments, though unfortunately could not sway him on location.<sup>172</sup> In his private meetings with Stalin he was able to highlight the practical necessities of a meeting of the three leaders, as they would be able to discuss and reach agreements on issues that even the Foreign Ministers could not. It seems this was what swayed Stalin to agree, though he initially suggested sending Molotov in his stead if the location was not agreeable to him, but Eden, perhaps relying on his generally positive relations with Stalin, told him bluntly that this would not do, and that the other leaders would not travel so far to only meet Molotov.<sup>173</sup> Thus, after several months of communication, Eden had managed to gain Stalin's full agreement on the need to meet, and all that remained to be decided was the location, with Eden understanding Stalin's desire to go somewhere where he could stay in touch with Moscow, but also noting that Stalin seemed sincerely concerned that a meeting should happen.<sup>174</sup> Consequently, with Churchill and Roosevelt suggesting everywhere but Tehran, Stalin's only agreeable location, Eden proposed, after a conversation with Hull, that the President and Prime Minister base themselves somewhere, but "make a descent for a day or two on Tehran solely to meet U.J.", and with Churchill being willing to travel anywhere this would rely on the President, who would be responsible for the meeting failing to occur should he reject this proposal.<sup>175</sup> Churchill agreed, and Eden encouraged him to press the idea on Roosevelt. Eventually this was accepted by Roosevelt, and plans were

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<sup>171</sup> Harvey, *War Diaries*, 22 October 1943, p. 311, Eden, *Reckoning*, pp. 414-415.

<sup>172</sup> Thorpe, *Eden*, p. 289.

<sup>173</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 415.

<sup>174</sup> TNA, Avon Papers, FO 954/26A, Eden to Prime Minister, 22 October 1943.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid*, Eden to Prime Minister, 1 November 1943.

made for Anglo-American discussions in Cairo, to be followed by a short trip to Tehran to meet Stalin.

Churchill's desire for Anglo-American agreements before Tehran was, however, thwarted by Roosevelt, who successfully outmanoeuvred him by inviting the Chinese leader, Chiang Kai-shek, to Cairo, then arriving two days late, leaving no time for combined talks, much to Churchill's annoyance.<sup>176</sup> His mood was little improved at Tehran, where he was ignored by Roosevelt who, in attempting to prevent the impression of ganging up on Stalin, joined with him in mocking Churchill, causing the latter to walk out of one of the meetings.<sup>177</sup> Roosevelt's insistence on wooing Stalin led to public Anglo-American policy arguments, and added to the impression gained by most that Tehran was a rather haphazard conference, and one where Britain was relegated to its realistic place as the least of the big three.<sup>178</sup>

The conferences were to serve as the turning point in relations between the allies, as it became apparent that Britain's international standing was declining, and that the future would be decided mainly between Russian and America. Whilst Eden had managed one last push of British influence at Moscow, this was quickly reversed by Tehran, with Churchill largely shut out by Stalin and Roosevelt. In fact, the first meeting of the big three was a disaster for Churchill, but can, paradoxically, be seen as a victory for Eden. It saw the end, in one sense, of the 'special relationship', as Churchill began to realise that he did not fit Roosevelt's version of the future, and began to realise how small Britain was, likening it to a Donkey between the Buffalo and the Bear.<sup>179</sup> It also suggested that Eden's scepticism about putting all Britain's eggs in the American basket had been correct, and that Churchill's determination to base relations on his friendship with

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<sup>176</sup> Charmley, *End of Glory*, p. 552.

<sup>177</sup> Kissinger, H. *Diplomacy*, (New York, 1994), pp. 411-412, Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p. 790, Dilks, *Cadogan Diary*, 30 November 1943, p. 580, and editors text pp. 581-2, Carlton, *Eden*, p. 230 and Dimpleby and Reynolds, *An Ocean Apart*, p. 152-3.

<sup>178</sup> Rothwell, *Eden*, p. 64, Thorpe, *Eden*, pp. 291-2, Dimpleby and Reynolds, *An Ocean Apart*, p. 152-3, Charmley, *End of Glory*, p. 550.

<sup>179</sup> Charmley, *Grand Alliance*, p. 80, Thorpe, *Eden*, p. 291.

Roosevelt did not yield political results for Britain when it mattered, notably at Tehran but also in Moscow where Eden received little support from Hull. The key decision of Tehran was the setting of a date for Overlord, but politically, the decision on Poland was significant. Having made visual representations with matches, and then argued over maps,<sup>180</sup> it was decided that Poland was to be moved West, a significant step given that neither Churchill nor Roosevelt had thus far been willing to agree to any Soviet frontier demands, and was, therefore, another point on which Eden could claim partial victory for his ideas and arguments over those of his chief.<sup>181</sup> He was, however, left alone by Churchill to argue with Molotov over the specifics, such as the independence of Lvov, which wouldn't break the heart of his chief were it ceded to the Russians, although Carlton notes this was to have significance later.<sup>182</sup> That Roosevelt gained Stalin's agreement to his Four Policemen idea and the United Nations<sup>183</sup> suggests that Eden had been correct in taking up this policy in 1942, and had its development been less restricted and more supported by Churchill, far more progress could have been made. Despite these successes, Eden, though minimising the negatives in his memoirs, won't have looked back on Tehran with much fondness. Upon arrival he was used as the "decoy duck" to ensure the security of Churchill, and due to Churchill's presence his involvement and role were somewhat minimised, a trend that Rothwell and Sidney Aster note, suggesting Eden was generally a passive witness at gatherings where Churchill was present.<sup>184</sup> This was not so true of Quebec, however, where Eden had lengthy discussions with Hull and also the President over France. Eden also recalled being disturbed by Stalin's policy shifts and the American unwillingness to work with the British,<sup>185</sup> further evidence that British influence was declining and that America and Russia no longer needed Britain to determine the political direction of the allies.

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<sup>180</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 120/113, Record of a discussion between Churchill and Stalin at Tehran on 28 November 1943, Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 428.

<sup>181</sup> Carlton, *Eden*, p. 231.

<sup>182</sup> TNA, War Cabinet Papers, CAB 120/113, Prime Minister to Eden, Record of a discussion at Tehran on 1 December 1943, Carlton, *Churchill and The Soviet Union*, p. 108.

<sup>183</sup> Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, p. 412, Charmley, *Grand Alliance*, p. 79.

<sup>184</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 426, Rothwell, *Eden*, p. 70, Aster, *Eden*, p. 77 and p. 80.

<sup>185</sup> Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 429.

Overall the year 1943 was one of undoubted success for Eden and his policies, highlighted perhaps by the result of his struggle ever since regaining the Foreign Office to successfully prevent France being thrown to one side, and to ensure that the enigmatic, if challenging, character of de Gaulle was preserved and his position secured. This was probably Eden's biggest political victory, not least because it was pulled off, but because by this action France was to assume a role in the post-war world which was to be created at conferences the following year. Eden also managed success in 1943 through his vision, or more accurately in championing the vision of his Department, which actually began in 1942, of planning for the post-war world. Though much of this work was to get no further than a Cabinet paper, it was clearly on the right lines, with Roosevelt also pushing for a world organisation, and Tehran brought home the realisation that Britain had to be part of such a system to maintain its status as a great power, which the Four Power Plan set out in November 1942. In a historical sense, there is great irony here, as Churchill was famed for his vision, yet he was the obstacle to British progress on this topic, as his ideas differed from those of the Eden, Roosevelt and, tentatively, Stalin. Over Russia, Churchill could be an asset, as his personal correspondence with Stalin helped reduce some of the criticism coming in about the lack of Second Front, and also helped induce a meeting of the Big Three, thus assuring Britain's involvement in the international order for a bit longer. Eden's role here should not be understated, and his efforts with the Russians in Moscow, rather than Churchill's in Tehran, were probably the last great victory for the British in the political arena. Whilst counterfactuals never get very far, it is interesting to look back at 1943 particularly, and wonder whether or not, had Eden had his way, it was likely that Britain, having stood alone in 1940, would not have had to stand aside in 1943.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> Thorpe, *Eden*, p. 292.

## 12) Conclusion

This thesis set out to study an under-examined and often ignored aspect of the history of the Second World War, the British foreign policy that never was. This is an inaccurate description, however, as this foreign policy did indeed exist, and its development can be traced quite clearly through the period under investigation. Whilst not starting life as a vision of post-war collaboration as part of a great World Organisation, this was what was to become Foreign Office thinking during 1942 and 1943, built on the foundations of Anglo-Soviet co-operation and alliance; support of the Free French Movement; traditional British foreign policy; and the necessity to examine Britain's own war aims to enable discussions on the topic with other powers. This, once taking on board Roosevelt's Four Powers concept, and the sterling work of Gladwyn Jebb and the Economic and Reconstruction Department, resulted in a series of plans designed to examine Britain's role in the post-war world, and attempt to shape that world to one of its liking. That this was the case begs the question why this has not been studied in any great detail before. Historians have been taken in by the Churchillian legend, and the opening of the Second World War papers appears to have done little to change their perspective, at least as far as foreign policy is concerned.

Two quotes illustrate the problem and apparent assumptions about foreign policy quite nicely. Reynolds suggests that "The differences of approach between Churchill and the Foreign Office were real, but they should not be exaggerated when it came to concrete policy",<sup>1</sup> and Charmley asserts that "Eden wanted Britain to have a foreign policy of her own, and he would have liked to run it himself; in neither endeavour was he successful".<sup>2</sup> What has clearly been seen through this thesis is that these suggestions are largely incorrect. There was a definite difference between the approach of Churchill and the Foreign Office, not to mention Eden, and contra to Reynold's statement this did lead to a difference in

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<sup>1</sup> Reynolds, D. *Great Britain: Imperial Diplomacy*, in Reynolds, Kimball and Chubarian, *Allies at War*, p. 340.

<sup>2</sup> Charmley, *Grand Alliance*, p. 48.

policy. Whilst Churchill's may have been the concrete policy, as he wouldn't allow the Foreign Office vision to come to light, the Department, under Eden's stewardship, developed its own policy, one in line with traditional British foreign policy goals and the thinking of Britain's allies, and tried very hard to make it Britain's official policy. The 'Four Power Plan' was a key example of this, and was actually approved by the War Cabinet, subject to some modification, and thus should have been taken as the official principles which were to guide British foreign policy. This also disproves Charmley's first statement, as whilst Eden may not have had a direct hand in crafting policies such as the 'Four Power Plan', he was quick to champion them, and highlighted on numerous occasions the need for Britain to have its own policy and not become subservient to the United States. As the 'Four Power Plan' was approved it can be argued that Britain did have a foreign policy of its own, just one that Churchill disapproved of and did his best to interfere with and de-rail. Whilst this was ultimately not to be the official policy, which was retained by the Churchill strategy, Eden was still doing his best to run foreign policy himself. The numerous disagreements with Churchill, starting as early as 1941, and continuing throughout the period under investigation and beyond on topics relating to both wartime and post-war strategy, suggest that Eden was, as best as possible, running foreign policy how he wanted. Whilst Charmley's assertion that he was unsuccessful in running overall foreign policy is correct, as Churchill, or the United States, regularly frustrated his efforts, it has been seen throughout this work that Eden was not taking a back seat and willingly letting Churchill run the show. Over France, for example, we can see Eden being tenacious and determined in his often solitary support for de Gaulle, and through his tactical skill he was regularly able to force Churchill to hold back on threats or re-think demands to break with the General. The victory of this policy came in 1943 with the Union between Giraud and de Gaulle, an outcome that would have been unlikely had Eden not been there to resist Churchill and Roosevelt.

That Tehran was in many respects to see Eden's arguments and policy ideas come out victorious highlights his under-emphasised visionary qualities, ones which are certainly, though undeservedly, over-shadowed by Churchill's in the

historiography. Churchill's reluctant realisation that Britain was the least of the big three, and would thus need to work with its allies to avoid post-war irrelevancy, had been preached by Eden in early 1942 along with the need for an agreement with Stalin over Soviet Frontiers, which Roosevelt had blocked, though he subsequently agreed to it at Tehran. Although Eden was the Department's mouthpiece, on post-war foreign policy its star visionary was Gladwyn Jebb, who drafted some incredible papers, both serious and counterfactual, which presented detailed visions of the future, and Britain's likely part therein. In the 'Four Power Plan' he predicted Britain's position as an American outpost, and with the Cold War and Britain's failure to integrate fully with the European Union, it is not hard to present an argument that this is Britain's position today. He was also the man who predicted the likely result of an ideological conflict after the war, and whilst Foreign Office efforts were not specifically directed towards preventing this, it was hoped that one result of creating a post-war system of collaboration, either in Europe or on a Global scale, was that such a set of circumstances could not arise.

The fact a Cold War occurred makes it almost unfashionable to suggest that contemporary thinking was for great power collaboration and a post-war alliance with the Soviet Union, which of course Britain held since May 1942, and could well be one reason this sort of foreign policy thinking is not examined. Likewise the fact the 'Special Relationship' was to dominate British policy for decades to come makes its explanation seem more historically relevant than the policy examined here. Given the controversy of Suez and the creation and expansion of the United Nations, for example, the lack of study given to this area is all the more surprising. Many suggest Eden had lost his grip on the international situation or was acting rashly when trying to defend British interests in Suez, but his actions can be traced back to his post-war thinking, where we see him trying to assert and defend Britain's interests, thinking like many of his peers that Britain was and would remain a great power with an independent foreign policy. It was unfortunate that, when he became Prime Minister, the situation he had tried so hard to prevent during World War Two was in full effect, and Britain did not have the independence of action Eden felt it warranted. Had Britain been allowed,

either by Churchill or Roosevelt, to more clearly follow its own foreign policy course during the war, Suez may not have been the historically fascinating and controversial topic it is today, or spelled the end of Eden's Premiership leaving a black mark on his reputation, but just another episode in a long history of Britain defending its global interests. Similarly the fact the Foreign Office drew up a plan for a workable organisation of the United Nations in 1943 as a global body to maintain peace is surprisingly overlooked, even in works on the history of the United Nations, most of which start with Dumbarton Oaks in 1944. Whilst this is in some senses logical, as the first conference to deal with this topic, Eden and Jebb had been discussing it and pushing it since 1943, and some of the ideas in the United Nations plan were to be incorporated into the eventual charter and structure of the body that developed. All this clearly shows that Eden and his Department were pursuing a policy that was more relevant to both British and allied interests once Churchill's 'Grand Alliance' had come into being, and that the policy of the Foreign Office, whatever the motives behind it, was ultimately the one that would have been in Britain's best interests.

This was not the initial intention of the Foreign Office, though is a testament to its ability to adapt to the ever changing circumstances of the war. When Eden returned, the British priority was survival and to that end diplomacy and the maintenance of key relations was the order of the day, especially those where military advantage may be obtained. Once Churchill's 'Grand Alliance' came into being, the 'end of the beginning' had arrived, and it became logical to look forward as victory was now felt to be inevitable, and something would have to be done with the results of that victory. Not only did the military alliance and its likely results mean his sort of thinking became essential, but the political situation also factored into its necessity. Having to deal with the Soviet Union from 1941 meant the Foreign Office also became involved in the subject of war aims, having to try and establish what the British aims were so that they could have the discussions the Russians wanted over their own. This process led them to think



about the shape of the post-war world so they could understand how the war aims would fit with ensuring a peaceful Europe, and particularly a restrained Germany.

Coupled to this, Churchill's dominance in the American sphere, and the traditional Foreign Office antipathy towards the United States meant that this thinking was very much tinged with an anti-American caution, with the plans allowing for the fact the Americans may not want to be part of them. The irony that the Foreign Office, through the Four Power concept, was to end up championing Roosevelt's vision has been discussed, but it is important to note that this does not devalue the British project. Although cautious about American involvement, it was hoped they would realise, as Roosevelt appeared to, that America needed to be part of the worldwide system to ensure its own safety as much as that of Europe, and these plans built on his loose vision to provide a workable version of the League of Nations concept that could, if it had been allowed to develop more fully at an earlier stage, have been in a stronger position at the end of the war to ensure that the post-war world was one of greater stability and balance than was experienced. That Churchill was still resisting discussion of such topics in 1945 suggests how little conception he had about the post-war world, and makes one wonder whether his 'vision' of the Anglo-American alliance was, in reality, a self-fulfilling prophecy that was sustained by the march of events, and his efforts to curb any other thinking when he saw moves away from the American line.

Though these external influences are undoubtedly important, internal factors should not be discounted, most importantly, British foreign policy tradition, which was in fact very much alive during this time. British foreign policy had a traditional 'balance of power' outlook, and the effect on this was often the determining factor in British action or inaction. Eden's policy bares a striking resemblance to this. The 'Four Power Plan' talked of the need for a balance of power in Europe, though admittedly one directed against Germany, and it was often argued that France was needed to aide Britain in counter-balancing the likely post-war strength of the Soviet Union. The influence of Webster, an Historian with a specialised knowledge of the Vienna settlement, also suggests British policy was

concerned with history. Although it could be argued that this looking back and longing for alliance systems and great power diplomacy was out of date, and had even been a cause of conflict in the past, it had also been one of the main features of the relative European peace for a century since 1815. Indeed, it is not hard to imagine that, had America been willing to play a part after Versailles, the League of Nations system could have been far more successful than was the case. Wanting to collaborate with allies and other powers was also in keeping with the historic traditions of British policy, and by going down this route Eden was following in the footsteps of another of Britain's principle Foreign Secretaries, Viscount Castlereagh. He, like Eden, believed peace could be best reached then maintained by the co-operation of the interested powers, and had helped develop the congress system which Webster had so extensively studied, and so there are natural links between Britain's policy in 1815 and 1942. Though this definitely suggests foreign policy thinking had not moved very far, for a country with such a long history as Britain, much of which had been spent as the great world power, traditions such as these were not easily discarded, and thankfully so, as they helped influence the shape of the policies that the Foreign Office were correctly, if unsuccessfully, to pursue during the war.

Ultimately, as Charmley rightly asserts, Eden's vision "foundered on his inability to challenge Churchill",<sup>3</sup> though this, as demonstrated, was not for want of trying or lack of vision. Consequently, Britain could not continue to operate as a great power, despite Churchill believing it to be one, and was unable to maintain an independent foreign policy. Had it been able to do so, there are some interesting possibilities of a future that never came to pass. The Empire, or at least a significant portion of it, could perhaps have been maintained had Britain not been bound so closely to the Atlantic Charter and the hypocritical American attitude towards Imperialism. The integration of Europe could, as suggested on several occasions during the war, have occurred under the guidance and stewardship of Britain, rather than coming about through the difficult

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 48.

circumstances and need to survive squashed between two Superpowers. Equally had the United Nations been in place, and had Britain agreed to Stalin's 1941 frontiers in 1942, the Soviet Union could have been far more co-operative after the war, having gained the security it desired, and there may not have been a post-war power struggle that pushed the world to the edge of destruction through the nuclear arms race. These are all 'what ifs', but are important, as the historical picture we are presented with is the inevitability of the Anglo-American alliance and the Cold War.

Churchill's writing, an exercise in both vanity and Whig history, paints the picture of his grand vision of the Anglo-American 'special relationship', a relationship beneficial to Britain because it facilitated military victory, and which came to pass as a result of Churchill's determination and dedication to its cause. It is presented as if there were no other options, and the lack of investigation on this point suggests historians have believed this to be true. This thesis has argued, in an exercise in anti-Whig history, and concludes with the argument, that there were other options available to Britain; that Churchill's vision only succeeded because he made sure that no other vision could, not because his was inevitable; that the lack of success of these policies does not make them historically irrelevant; and that the effort of Eden and the Foreign Office's work was both important, a valuable addition to Britain's war effort and something worthy of historical study in its own right. Surveying the scene in 1945 Eden wrote that Britain's foreign policy was a sad wreck.<sup>4</sup> It was a sad wreck not because Eden and the Foreign Office had been inactive or had no vision, but because Churchill had allowed the Americans to steer the ship onto the rocks, apparently unconcerned at the results as, after all, he would write the history, so he could make these up as he went along.

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<sup>4</sup> Eden's diary, 23 March 1945, in Eden, *Reckoning*, p. 525.

### List of Principal Characters

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|-------------|---|
| Alexander   | Harold, 1st Earl: Commander British 1st Corps, 1940; British Commander in Chief Mediterranean, 1942-4   |
| Amery       | Leopold S.: Secretary for India and Burma, 1940-5.  |
| Attlee      | Clement R., 1st Earl: Lord Privy Seal, 1940-2; Secretary for Dominion Affairs, 1942-3; Lord President of the Council, 1943-5; Deputy Prime Minister, 1942-5.  |
| Auchinleck  | Sir Claude John Eyre: Commander of Land Forces in Norway, 1940; Commander-in-Chief in India, 1940; Commander-in-Chief in Middle East, 1941; Commander-in-Chief in India, 1943-7.                        |
| Beaverbrook | Aitken, Sir William Maxwell, 1 <sup>st</sup> Baron: Newspaper proprietor; Minister for Aircraft Production, 1940-1; Minister of State, 1941; Minister of Supply, 1941-2; Lord Privy Seal, 1943-5.       |
| Bevin       | Ernest: Minister of Labour and National Service, 1940-5   |
| Boothby     | Robert John Graham, Baron: Under-Secretary, Ministry of Food, 1940-1.   |
| Brooke      | Sir Alan Francis, Viscount: Commander-in-Chief, Southern Command, 1939-40; Commander-in-Chief, Home Forces, 1940-1; Chief of the Imperial General Staff (C.I.G.S.), 1941-6                              |
| Butler      | Sir Neville: Minister to the United States for Great Britain, 1941; Head of North American Department, Foreign Office, 1941-4.  |
| Butler      | Richard A (Rab), 1st Baron: Parliamentary Under-Secretary at Foreign Office, 1938-41; Minister of Education, 1941-5.  |
| Cadogan     | Sir Alexander George Montagu: Permanent Under-Secretary at Foreign Office, 1938-46.   |
| Castlereagh | Stewart, Robert, Viscount: Foreign Secretary and Leader of the House of Commons, 1812-22; Key Statesman of the Congress system of diplomacy, and British representative at the 1815 Congress of Vienna. |
| Catroux     | General Georges Albert Julien: Free French Representative in Middle East, 1940-3; Governor-General Algeria, 1943-4; Minister for North Africa, 1944-5   |

- Chamberlain Arthur Neville: Prime Minister, 1937-40; Lord President of the Council, 1940.
- Churchill Sir Winston S.: First Lord of the Admiralty, 1939-40; Prime Minister and Minister of Defence 1940-45.
- Clark Kerr Sir Archibald John Kerr, later Baron Inverchapel: Ambassador in China, 1938-42; Ambassador in Moscow, 1942-46.
- Cranborne Cecil, Robert, Viscount (later 5<sup>th</sup> Marquess of Salisbury): Secretary for the Dominions, 1940-2, 1943-5; Lord Privy Seal, 1942-3; Leader of the House of Lords, 1942-5; Known as Bobbety.
- Cripps Sir R. Stafford: Ambassador in Moscow, 1940-2; Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons, 1942; Minister of Aircraft Production, 1942-5.
- Daladier Edouard: Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence, 1938-40; Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1939-40.
- Dalton Dr Hugh, 1st Baron: Minister of Economic Warfare, 1940-2; President of Board of Trade 1942-5.
- Darlan Admiral Jean-Francois: Admiral of the French Fleet, 1937-40; Minister of the Navy, 1940-1; Minister of Foreign Affairs, Defence and of the Interior, 1941; Commander-in-Chief of French Armed Forces and High Commissioner in North Africa, 1942.
- de Gaulle General Charles: Under-Secretary for National Defence, 1940; Chief of Free French, then President of French National Committee, London and Brazzaville, 1940-2; President of French Committee of National Liberation, Algiers, 1943; President of Provisional Government of the French Republic 1944-6.
- Dill Field-Marshal Sir John: Commander I Corps in France, 1939-40; Vice-C.I.G.S., 1940; C.I.G.S., 1940-1; principal British representative on Combined Chiefs of Staff's Committee, Washington, 1941-4.
- Eden Sir Robert Anthony, 1st Earl of Avon: Dominions Secretary, 1939-40; Secretary for War, 1940; Foreign Secretary, 1940-5; Leader of the House of Commons, 1942-5.
- Eisenhower General Dwight David: Commander of U.S. troops in Europe, 1942; Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force, 1943-5.

Giraud	Henri-Honore: Commander-in-Chief of the French Forces, 1942; Co-President of French Committee of National Liberation, 1943.
Halifax	Wood, Edward, Viscount, later 1st Earl: Foreign Secretary, 1938-40; Ambassador in Washington, 1941-6.
Hardinge	Alexander (Alec) Henry Louis, Later Baron Hardinge of Penshurst: Private Secretary to the Sovereign, 1936-43.
Harriman	William Averell: President Roosevelt's special representative in London, 1941; chairman of special mission to Russia, 1941; U.S. representative in London of Combined Shipping Adjustment Board, 1942; U.S. Ambassador to U.S.S.R., 1943-6.
Harvey	Oliver C., later 1st Baron: Private Secretary to Eden 1941-3; Acting Assistant Under-Secretary of State, 1943-6.
Hitler	Adolph: German Führer, 1934-45; Commander-in-Chief German Fighting Forces, from 1938; Personal Commander of the Army from 1941; Supreme War Lord from 1942.
Hopkins	Harry: U.S. Secretary of Commerce, 1938-40; Roosevelt's Personal emissary to Churchill, then Special Adviser and Assistant to President Roosevelt to 1945.
Hull	Cordell: U.S. Secretary of State, 1933-44.
Inönü	Ismet: President of the Turkish Republic, 1939-46.
Ismay	General Hastings Lionel, Baron: Chief Staff Officer to Churchill, 1939-46.
Jebb	Gladwyn, later 1st Baron Gladwyn: CEO of Special Operations Executive in the Ministry of Economic Warfare, 1940-2; Acting Counsellor in Foreign Office, 1941; Head of the Economic and Reconstruction Department, 1942; Counsellor, 1943.
Jowitt	William Allen, Earl: Solicitor-General, 1940-2; Paymaster General, 1942-4.
Kerr	Philip Henry, 11th Marquess of Lothian: British Ambassador in Washington, 1939-40.
Lampson	Sir Miles Wedderburn, Baron Killearn: Ambassador in Egypt, 1937-46.

- Laval Pierre: Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Information, 1940; Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, 1942-4.
- Law Richard, 1st Baron Coleraine: Financial Secretary, War Office, 1940-1; Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Foreign Office, 1941-3; Minister of State, 1943.
- Leahy William Daniel: Ambassador to Vichy Government, 1940-2; Chief of Staff to Roosevelt, 1942-45.
- Legentilhomme General Paul Louis Victor Marie: Commander-in-Chief Free French forces in Sudan and Eritrea, 1940; Commander First Free French Division and Gentforce, 1941; High Commissioner of the French possessions in the Indian Ocean, 1942; Governor-General and General Officer Commander-in-Chief, Madagascar, 1943-5.
- Lenin Vladimir Ilich: Head of Soviet State, 1917-24.
- Litvinov Maksim Maksimovich: U.S.S.R. Ambassador to the United States, 1941-3; Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, 1943-6.
- Lyttelton Major Oliver: President of the Board of Trade, 1940-1; Minister of State Resident in Cairo, 1941-2; Minister of State for War Production, 1942-5.
- Macmillan (Maurice) Harold, Earl of Stockton: Under-Secretary at the Colonial Office, 1942; Minister Resident at Allied Forces HQ, Algiers, 1942-44.
- Maisky Ivan M.: Russian Ambassador in London, 1932-43; Assistant People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, 1943-6.
- Margesson (Henry) David Reginald, Viscount: Chief Whip, 1931-40; Secretary of State for War, 1940-2.
- Molotov Vaycheslav M.: Chairman of Council of People's Commissars, 1930-41; Commissar, later Minister, for Foreign Affairs, 1939-49; Deputy Chairman of Council of Ministers of U.S.S.R., 1941-57.
- Monckton Walter Turner, Viscount Monckton of Brenchley: Director-General of Ministry of Information 1940-1; Head of Propaganda and Information Services, Cairo, 1941-2; Minister of State, February - March 1942.
- Montgomery Bernard Law, Viscount Montgomery of Alamein: Commander Eighth Army, 1942-4; Commander-in-Chief, Land Forces, 1944.

Morrison	Herbert Stanley, Baron Morrison of Lambeth: Home Secretary, 1940-5.
Murphy	Robert Daniel: President Roosevelt's personal representative and Minister to French North Africa, 1942-4.
Muselier	Admiral Émile Henry, Commander-in-Chief Free French Naval forces and Commander of the Air Force, 1940-3.
Owen	Sir (Arthur) David Kemp: Personal Assistant to Sir Stafford Cripps, 1941-4; Officer in charge of League of Nations affairs, Reconstruction department, Foreign Office, 1944-5.
Parr	Martin Willoughby: British Governor of Equatoria, 1936-42.
Peake	Sir Charles Brinsley Pemberton: Head of News Department Foreign Office, 1939-41; Personal Assistant to Lord Halifax, 1941-2; British representative with French National Committee, 1942-3; Political Adviser to Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force, 1943-5.
Pétain	Marshal Henri-Philippe Benoni Omer Joseph: Head of Vichy Government, 1940-4.
Rashid Ali	Rashīd Alī al-Gaylānī: Prime Minister of Iraq, 1940-1.
Reynaud	Paul: French Minister of Finance, 1938-40; Minister of Foreign Affairs and Defence, 1940; interned by Vichy Government, 1940-2; interned by Germans, 1942-5.
Ribbentrop	Joachim von: German Foreign Minister, 1938-45.
Roberts	Sir Frank Kenyon: Foreign Office Diplomat, Central and Northern Departments, 1930-45.
Rommel	Field Marshal Erwin Johannes Eugen: Commander 7th Panzer Division, 1940-1; Commander of Afrika Korps, 1941-3.
Roosevelt	Franklin D.; President of the United States, 1932-45.
Sargent	Sir (Harold) Orme Garton: Under-Secretary of State Foreign Office, 1939-49.
Schulenburg	Friedrich Werner von der: German Ambassador to the Soviet Union, 1934-41; Leader of the Russia Committee, 1941-4.



Sinclair	Archibald Henry Macdonald, Viscount Thurso: Secretary of State for Air, 1940-5.
Spears	Sir Edward Louis, Baronet: Churchill's personal representative to French Government, 1940-2; British Minister to Syria and Lebanon, 1942-4.
Stalin	Generalissimo Joseph V: General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, 1922-1952; Chairman of the Council of Ministers, 1941-1953; Marshal of the Soviet Union, 1943-5.
Strang	William, later 1st Baron: Assistant Under-Secretary of State, 1939-43; British representative on European Advisory Commission, 1943-5.
Thomas	James Purdon Lewes, Viscount Cilcennin: Dominions Office, 1939; Government Whip, 1940-3; Financial Secretary to the Admiralty, 1943-5.
Vansittart	Sir Robert, later 1st Baron: Chief Diplomatic Adviser to H.M.G., 1938-41.
Vyshinsky	Andrey: Soviet Party Central Committee member and Deputy Commissar of Foreign Affairs, 1940-9.
Warner	Sir Christopher: Under-Secretary Foreign Office, Head of Northern Department, 1941-6.
Wavell	General Archibald Percival, Earl: Commander, Middle East, 1939-41; Supreme Commander American, British, Dutch and Australian (ABDA) command South-East Asia and South-West Pacific, 1941-2; Viceroy of India, 1943-7.
Webster	Professor Sir Charles Kingsley: Head of American Section of Foreign Research and Press Service, 1939-42; Departmental Advisor for Economic & Reconstruction Department, 1942-44.
Welles	Benjamin Sumner: U.S. Under-Secretary of State, 1937-43.
Weygand	Maxime: French Minister of National Defence, 1940; Vichy Delegate-General to North Africa, 1940-41.
Wilson	Charles McMoran, Baron Moran: Churchill's doctor, 1940-65.
Winant	John Gilbert: U.S. Ambassador in London, 1941-6.

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