

# WHY DID THE UK DECIDE TO JOIN THE EEC? BRITISH CONSIDERATIONS OF THE COMMONWEALTH AND OF THE 'SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP' WITH THE USA: AN OVERVIEW

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## BRITAIN'S PLACE IN THE WORLD

In 1945 Britain, with the Empire intact, emerged from the Second World War as the strongest state in Western Europe, that was militarily, politically and economically. The UK had not been invaded.<sup>1</sup> Yet, at the end of July 1961 it was proclaimed by Prime Minister Harold Macmillan that the United Kingdom would open negotiations with the intention of joining the European Economic Community (EEC). Britain would thereby turn its back on the Commonwealth and place the 'Special Relationship' with the USA in a subordinate role to a future in Europe. This article, which follows on from one published in *AREA STUDIES JOURNAL 17*, suggests reasons for why Britain found it impractical to have an extra-European political and economic orientation of greater importance than that of joining the Common Market. This analysis helps to answer the question: 'Why did Britain decide to join the EEC?'

Winston Churchill's idea of the three overlapping circles of British foreign policy consideration, with the United Kingdom at the intersection of them, found widespread acceptance. Of the circles - the Commonwealth, the USA, and Europe - most people claimed them to be in that order of importance.<sup>2</sup> Even as late as November 1951, H. A. Nutting, Joint Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs was able to state that "'We cannot . . . devote ourselves exclusively to any one of these three groupings ...'"<sup>3</sup> British politicians assumed that they possessed superpower status, and consequently did not realise the urgency to re-adjust to a diminished role.

Such thinking permitted the British involvement in the Korean War of 1950-53,

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1 The Channel Islands, though occupied by the Germans during the conflict, are considered as part of Britain but not of the political entity known as the UK.

Henceforth, for the purposes of this article 'Britain' and the 'UK' are treated as synonymous.

2 Lieber, Robert J. *British Politics And European Unity*. London: University of California Press. 1970. p. 17.

3 Hansard. *Parliamentary Debates (Commons)*. Vol. 494. November 20th 1951. c. 237.

despite the fact that the UK had no vital interests in the peninsula. The willingness to still undertake such global activities led Britain to be grossly overextended in its commitments. It was only after the 1956 Suez debacle that a slow, painful re-assessment of Britain's real capabilities tentatively began. The supremacy of the three circles idea continued until the late 1950s when the notion that preference for a European-orientated policy succeeded it. In the five years following the Suez Affair, post-war illusions crumbled. It demonstrated that even with France, Britain could not undertake military adventures against small Middle Eastern Arab states without due consideration to the wishes of the two superpowers.<sup>4</sup> The period of 1956-61 witnessed a steady but total reversal of British foreign policy. From rejecting commitments with Europe during the 1945-56 period, Britain came to recognize the potential of joining an economically, rapidly, growing community, in the near geographical proximity of Europe.

### CHRONOLOGY

In early 1949, Jean Monnet<sup>5</sup> suggested that Britain might like to contribute to the Schuman Plan which proposed that Franco-German coal and steel be placed under a common authority, thereby binding two major industries together so as to make war between those states less likely. Britain stood aside while the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was signed in April 1951 by the very six countries that were to create the Common Market in 1957. Along with the Labour Government of 1945-1951, the Conservative Party agreed that constitutional, military and economic factors were not to be compromised in any scheme. Likewise, the UK stood aloof from the creation of the European Defence Community (EDC) in 1952, signed by the same six states, with a view to creating a single European army.

Consequently, in March 1952, Anthony Eden in an attempt to surmount the problem of Britain's objections to supranational controls envisaged in the ECSC and the EDC, suggested a scheme whereby the Council of Europe be re-organized to supply the institutions for those organizations. However, as intergovernmental co-operation would still be channelled through the Council of Europe, Eden was still side-stepping the main desire of the participating European states for total integration, not association. Britain was greatly involved in the creation of the Western European Union (WEU), once again in association, not federation, with the other six states, that time as a substitute structure for the re-armament of Germany. Furthermore, it is the generally accepted view that

4 Kitzinger, Uwe. *The Politics And Economics Of European Integration*. Westport, Connecticut : Greenwood Press. 1976. p. 191.

5 French political economist and diplomat (1888-1979).

Britain withdrew, rather than being expelled from the Messina discussions of 1955 which were the crucial negotiations leading to the creation of the EEC. In all these ideas, the message given by Britain to the European states was summed up in Prime Minister Winston Churchill's words "'Where do we stand? ... We have our own Commonwealth and Empire.'"<sup>6</sup>

Britain's search for a new role in the late 1950s included negotiations for a free trade area which finally broke down in December 1958, and without a policy reversal, led to the formation of the European Free Trade Area (EFTA) during the following year.<sup>7</sup> The main thinking was still that economic association was sought without the necessity for political integration. Unlike the Common Market, EFTA contained no supranational element. Indeed there was the hope that the EEC and EFTA would one day unite. The Six faced the Seven but clearly the latter had fewer advantages than the former. The Six for example formed a geographical unit right in the heart of Europe, with over twice the population and far greater raw material and industrial resources than the Seven. Indeed, of the Seven, Britain was the most significant member in an overwhelming way, in terms of population and trade.

By 1960 it was apparent that joining the EEC was becoming the preference, for the Common Market had surged ahead economically and Britain's economic and political position had become more precarious. In July 1961, the UK declared its intention to open negotiations, only to be thwarted by President Charles de Gaulle's veto of 14<sup>th</sup> January 1963.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, Britain's economic and political position continued to decline so a further application was announced on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1967. A mere two weeks later occurred yet another of the General's vetoes; and in November the Pound Sterling was devalued to \$2.40; followed in January of 1968 by Prime Minister Harold Wilson's call for cuts in public spending, including the withdrawal of British forces from east of Suez by 1971.

The resignation of General de Gaulle in April 1969 resurrected British hopes of membership. Additionally, the return of a Conservative Government at the General Election of 1970, brought to the premiership, the man who had done so much to negotiate Britain's first efforts at joining the Community in the early sixties, Edward Heath. By June 1970, all three political parties were bent on taking Britain into Europe 'if the terms were right' and so the necessary legislation was passed enabling the UK to officially join the EEC on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1973.

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6 Hansard. *Parliamentary Debates (Commons)*. Vol. 515. May 11<sup>th</sup> 1953. c. 891.

7 See appendix 1.

8 Beloff, Nora. *The General Says No*. London: Penguin. 1963. p. 11.

Various alternatives to joining the EEC were debated throughout the period of 1955-75, that is from the Messina talks to the Referendum. Those suggestions ranged from being in association with the EEC; to greater Commonwealth integration; to forming a North Atlantic Free Trade Area (NAFTA); total British isolation; to attempting to adopt a 'holding operation' on Britain's part. This article gives incite into why the Commonwealth and US connections failed to be chosen instead of full EEC membership.

### THE COMMONWEALTH

The Empire had been the source of Britain's economic and military power. In both World Wars it had come to the aid of the mother-country despite the loosening bonds of attachment. In 1919 the White Dominions had sent their own representatives to attend the Versailles Conference. In the inter-war period they moved by gradual constitutional changes towards independence, so that by the Balfour arrangement of 1926 they were described as 'autonomous communities equal in status'<sup>9</sup> in the British Commonwealth. The establishment in 1932 of imperial preference helped maintain the illusion of a Commonwealth myth of identity, which was upheld by Winston Churchill's idea of the 'three circles.' The Commonwealth was a convenient transition from Empire, allowing Britain to avoid becoming over dependent on the US hegemony or becoming just an ordinary European state.

The importance of the Commonwealth in official circles in Britain can be ascertained from part of Anthony Eden's speech in 1952 in New York. Having rejected the call to join a European Federation as '...something which we know, in our bones, we cannot do,' he went on to say :

...Britain's story and her interests lie far beyond the Continent of Europe. Our thoughts move across the seas to the many communities in which our people play their part, in every corner of the world. That is our life : without it we should be no more than some millions of people living on an island off the coast of Europe.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Frankel, Joseph. *British Foreign Policy 1945-1973*. London : Oxford University Press. 1975. p. 222.

<sup>10</sup> Miller, J.D.B. *Survey Of Commonwealth Affairs. Problems Of Expansion And Attrition 1953-1969*. London : Oxford University Press. RIIA. 1974. p. 308. Speech at Columbia University, January 11<sup>th</sup> 1952.

also :

See appendices 2-6.

Even as late as January 1958, Prime Minister Macmillan emphatically re-assured people at Christchurch in New Zealand :

...it is obvious that in view of all our long history, all our obligations to our Commonwealth partners, especially in respect of food and other agricultural products, we clearly could not join this European Customs Union. We decided without the slightest hesitation that we could not join it.<sup>11</sup>

And yet the UK's international position was to change so rapidly that on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1961 Harold Macmillan was able to say in the House of Commons :

I think...that most of us recognize that in a changing world, if we are not to be left behind and to drop out of the main stream of the world's life, we must be prepared to change and adapt our methods. All through history this has been one of the main sources of our strength.<sup>12</sup>

Until the late 1950s the Empire had stayed intact, but then followed a decade and a half in which everything appeared to change, and to all intent and purposes, for most people, the Empire came to an end. About 700 million people were granted independence, with only about 5 million still tied to Britain by the time the UK actually joined the EEC in 1973.

There were a variety of reasons for why the Commonwealth was seen to have failed as a serious alternative to Britain's joining the EEC. Four main areas of concern to the UK encompassed the gambit of problems facing Britain in relation to the Commonwealth. They consisted of: the part the Commonwealth played in British foreign policy; changes in individual countries of the Commonwealth; strains upon the structure of the Organization in its entirety; and changing economic trends.<sup>13</sup>

In 1951 the UK was the Commonwealth's largest customer and (Canada excepted) the largest supplier. It was one of the world's great trading areas. However, by 1961 trade between the UK and the Commonwealth had considerably diminished, while Britain's had substantially grown with western Europe. From the political perspective, the UK was also finding the Commonwealth more of a liability than an asset. As the number of newly independent members grew, so did the dissension over international

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11 Miller, J.D.B. *ibid.* p. 309.

12 Hansard. *Parliamentary Debates (Commons)*. Vol. 645. August 2<sup>nd</sup> 1961. c. 1494.

13 Frankel, Joseph. *ibid.* p. 223.

matters. Additionally, those countries chose to discuss one another's internal affairs, thereby contributing to the lack of cohesion. The UK was no longer experiencing the benefits of leadership but suffering the strains of being just one among many of equal standing. An analysis of those factors illustrates why the UK decided to abandon the Commonwealth in order to join the EEC.

A fundamental reason for Britain's disillusionment with the Commonwealth was that the latter gradually became a political liability for the UK. Even until the early 1950s, Britain found the Commonwealth to be of use in propagating the UK's policies globally. For example, in East Asia, Commonwealth forces were involved in the Korean War along with British forces. Likewise Malaya, Australia and New Zealand worked with the UK in upholding the security of south-east Asia from 1955, which permitted the British withdrawal from east of Suez in the late 1960s.

However, from the late 1950s relations between the UK and various parts of the Commonwealth became a quagmire, starting with the Suez crisis of 1956. In the latter case, only Australia was supportive of British involvement. When Commonwealth countries became involved in conflict with non-Commonwealth countries, such as in the case of the Sino-Indian War of 1962, UK connections were an embarrassment. When Commonwealth countries fought amongst themselves, as occurred twice in 1965 between India and Pakistan, British foreign policy struggled to reconcile itself to the difficulties of trying to please both sides. In the case of the Nigerian civil war, the UK astutely remained aloof, refraining from any military involvement in the conflict.

A further reason for Britain's disappointment with the Commonwealth was the growth of non-democratic trends. In many of the newly independent Commonwealth countries the original constitutions appeared to be temporary aberrations. Military coups, such as in Pakistan in 1960, swept away many of the democratic governments established at independence. Consequently, the UK was not always dealing with Commonwealth administrations that it would otherwise have chosen to have relations with.

India has still remained the world's largest democracy. However, even that country came close to losing it, for on 26<sup>th</sup> June 1975, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi declared a state of emergency throughout the country ; arresting and jailing hundreds of politicians ; harshly censoring the press ; and declaring strikes to be illegal. She assumed wide powers to try and halt inflation, as well as to improve the efficiency of the public services. She even altered the country's constitution to enhance her authority. Only in 1977 was the state of emergency rescinded.

Racial problems wracked some Commonwealth countries, such as apartheid in

South Africa, and also created tensions in East Africa.<sup>14</sup> Periodic racial rioting has been all too frequent in India and Pakistan.

Another area of Commonwealth concern to the UK, that was encouraging the latter to jettison the Organization, was that the entire structure suffered from great stresses. These were caused principally by the three phenomena of growing membership; the insistence of its members to debate other members internal matters; and the decline of British control of the Organization.<sup>15</sup>

The very growth in the number of states belonging to the Commonwealth caused Britain problems. The number of new members rose sharply as the speed of decolonization progressed rapidly. Nigeria gained independence in 1960; Cyprus, Sierra Leone and Tanganyika in 1961; in the following year Uganda, Jamaica and Trinidad; followed by Malta, Kenya, Malawi, Zambia and Zanzibar by 1964. Gambia and Singapore joined them in 1965, and in 1966 Barbados, Botswana, Guyana and Lesotho, just to name a few so as to indicate that as most of the countries were Afro-Asian the character of the Commonwealth radically altered. It was no longer a white man's grouping. Indeed a 'wind of change'<sup>16</sup> had blown not just through Africa but also through the Commonwealth as a whole.

Problematic for the UK, was the fact that as independent sovereign states, the new members of the Commonwealth felt free to discuss the internal affairs of other members. For example, the issue of racialism was a matter about which the black African states were particularly sensitive. They criticized not just South Africa for its apartheid system but also the UK for continuing to trade with that country. South Africa declared itself a republic in 1960 and in the following year left the Commonwealth over the issue.<sup>17</sup>

With Commonwealth countries in the Indian subcontinent, African states also criticized the British restrictions on immigration to the UK, as seen in the passing of the 1962, 1965 and 1968 reduction in entry quotas. The fact that an estimated quarter of the world's population had been legally entitled to come to the UK<sup>18</sup> had been ignored and

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14 Cyr, Arthur. *British Foreign Policy And The Atlantic Area*. New York: Holmes And Meier Publishers, Inc. 1979. p. 23.

15 Frankel, Joseph. *ibid.* p. 224.

16 Sampson, Anthony. *Macmillan: A Study In Ambiguity*. London: Allen Lane. 1967. p. 186. Speech to both Houses of the South African Parliament, February 3<sup>rd</sup> 1960.

17 See appendix 7.  
also:

South Africa re-joined the Commonwealth on June 1<sup>st</sup> 1994, as the 51<sup>st</sup> member, following the political abandonment of the apartheid policy.

18 Sked, Alan and Cook, Chris. *Post-War Britain*. Bungay, Suffolk: Penguin. 1988. p. 178. Estimate attributable to R.A. Butler.

the British Government was considered racist to act in the ways that it did.

The charge of racial bias was not easily brushed aside, for neither the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act nor the 1965 White Paper made any attempt to control the inflow of Irish or alien peoples, but showed the clearest intention to impose strict controls on movement from the New Commonwealth. To help smooth the passage of the 1965 legislation, Mountbatten was sent on a special mission to those countries which were the source of greatest exodus. However, the depth of animosity was so intense that he achieved nothing, and he was even refused entry to Pakistan. Layton-Henry puts the impact of that misadventure as strongly as to say that :

The White Paper marked the end of the role of the Commonwealth as an important factor in domestic British politics. The Mountbatten mission was a last obeisance to the Commonwealth ideal, though it had been undertaken mainly to fulfil the manifesto pledge and promises in Parliament. The failure of the mission was further evidence of the decline of the Commonwealth ideal as a viable principle of British policy and increased the likelihood that from then on purely national considerations would determine both foreign and domestic policy priorities.<sup>19</sup>

Those sentiments were exasperated by the Rhodesian Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in 1965. Though economic sanctions were applied by Britain to Rhodesia, to the former's subsequent great cost, many African Commonwealth countries thought that action to be half-hearted, and thereby further evidence of the UK pursuing racial bias. They wanted, like the Labour left, to see Britain use military force against Ian Smith. After all, the Commonwealth did aspire to being an Organization purporting to uphold multiracial equality.

With the 1968 Commonwealth Immigrants Act the major provision was that unconditional rights of entry to Britain were restricted to those with close ties to the UK by birth, descent or naturalisation. Critics of it maintained that two classes of citizens were created, one being subject to immigration controls and the other not. The Bill, which was rushed through Parliament in three days, was in specific response to the inflow of Kenyan Asians with British citizenship. As Leyton-Henry strongly stated :

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<sup>19</sup> Layton-Henry, Zig. *The Politics Of Race In Britain*. London : George Allen & Unwin. 1984. p. 64.



The Act finally buried the ideals of *Civis Britannicus sum* and showed that Britain wished to rid herself of the obligations of Empire and Commonwealth.<sup>20</sup>

The further Immigration Act of 1971<sup>21</sup> was overshadowed by President Idi Amin of Uganda's announcement on 4<sup>th</sup> August 1972 that all Asians were to be expelled from his country. Most of the 50-60,000 Asians held British passports and the UK Government accepted a degree of moral and legal obligation to accept them. After much consultation with Commonwealth governments, the UK finally admitted 28,000, while India and Pakistan also took significant numbers. This matter fuelled the fears of those who sought stringent restrictions or total exclusion of immigrants to Britain from the Commonwealth. Support for the views of Enoch Powell and for the National Front rose to new heights. The situation did nothing to endear the UK to the Commonwealth and illustrated that the responsibilities of British membership of the Commonwealth seemed to outweigh the benefits.

The other factor that produced structural strains within the Commonwealth, besides the growth in the number of members and their desire to discuss one another's domestic affairs, was the relinquishing by the UK of its leadership of the Organization. Britain had to re-adjust to the reality of being just one among many equals. Even in the 1950s it had been difficult to get the agreement of Commonwealth countries on foreign affairs. For example, the UK had been charged with neo-colonialist behaviour over its decision to undertake the Suez invasion. There existed the Commonwealth expectation that the UK ought to govern her own policy, not just in her own interests, but also in those of the other members. The fact that those interests often diverged, caused Commonwealth strains, as seen for example over South Africa. Anyway, Britain was no longer able to mobilize the resources of those independent states in the ways that she had been able to do in the days of Empire, even when on those occasions they might agree.<sup>22</sup>

Additionally, it is doubtful in the long-term, whether the UK as one among so many equals in the Commonwealth, would have wished to have accepted a situation in which most of the members consisted of Asian and African peoples, and in which the largest Power would be India. The UK would consist of just 50 million people in Europe, out of 700 million in such a far-flung Organization.<sup>23</sup> There simply was not the political will, neither in Britain nor amongst the members of the Organization, for creating a closer knit

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20 Layton-Henry, Zig. *ibid.* p. 69.

21 Which came into effect on the very day that the UK joined the EEC, January 1<sup>st</sup> 1973.

22 Frankel, Joseph. *ibid.* p. 228.

23 Kitzinger, Uwe. *The Politics And Economics Of European Integration.* *ibid.* p. 170.

community of nations in the form of the Commonwealth.

Overall therefore, the Commonwealth was seen by the UK to be a liability rather than an asset. The emphasis in Commonwealth affairs seemed to be more orientated towards British responsibilities, rather than opportunities. Instead of relations improving between the UK and the ex-colonies, as one would expect as they had been freely granted their independence, often the opposite was the case. The UK felt compelled to make its position clear on virtually all Commonwealth discord. Such were the cases, for example, with the internal affairs centring on the Nigerian civil war; and also the international dispute between India and Pakistan. Unfortunately, in trying to make all-embracing arrangements for the Commonwealth, Britain did not develop those relationships fully which might have been most fruitful in the long-term. It has been suggested that that was the case with Australia and New Zealand, where clearly the people were of overwhelming British origin, and yet they were compelled to suffer the restrictive immigration rules when their citizens wished to settle in the UK. Likewise, Anglo-South African relations would have been better, especially in view of the amount of trade between the two countries, if the UK had not had to consider the racial sentiments of those members of the Commonwealth who opposed apartheid so strongly. Britain found herself increasingly in the position of 'trying to please everyone but ending up pleasing no-one.'

The range of disagreements leading towards a divergence of the Commonwealth countries was not just confined to racialism however, for there were differences over attitudes to colonialism itself, and to communism. In the post-Suez period, most of the new Commonwealth members increasingly supported the anti-colonialist moves of those African and Asian colonies that had yet to acquire independence from European as well as British control. That trend showed itself in the growth of the non-aligned states of the world and in their increasingly vocal participation in the United Nations. Indeed, the USA often sided with them so as to appear to champion their cause, thereby undercutting the possibilities that the Soviet Union and its allies might fulfil that role. This did not help the UK in its desire to establish a meaningful organization in the form of the Commonwealth, for Britain's good intentions were often mistakenly interpreted as neo-colonialism. The US, for example, failed to understand the difference between the Commonwealth and the Empire, and suspected Britain of wishing to prolong her imperialist activities.<sup>24</sup>

Different Commonwealth states had different approaches to communism, which was

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24 Frankel, Joseph. *ibid.* p. 232.

the main international threat of the time. India, for example, shunned the South-East Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) and sought close relations with China, and then the USSR. On the other hand, New Zealand and Australia moved closer to the US, as the former two states felt endangered by the spread of communism in south-east Asia. They sent troops to Vietnam to support the American effort.<sup>25</sup> The UK refused to aid the USA in the Vietnam conflict, despite the fact that President Johnson was primarily after moral support. He maintained that '...it was not the number of troops that he was concerned about, but the number of 'flags' represented by units, however small, from different nations.'<sup>26</sup>

The various countries of the Commonwealth, realizing that their regional interests would not be safeguarded by Britain in the future, naturally felt the need to re-orientate themselves towards their neighbours. Canada, Australia and New Zealand had long since understood that the UK could not protect them in time of conflict, and therefore they sought to re-orientate their defence reliance towards the USA.<sup>27</sup> The ANZUS agreement was Australasia's answer to the military problem. The closeness of such ties between the USA with Australia and New Zealand, could be witnessed in the timing by those three countries of the recognition of the communist government of China in the 1970s. Britain had chosen to recognize the PRC in 1950.<sup>28</sup>

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25 Miller, J.D.B. *ibid.* p. 69.

26 Walker, Patrick Gordon. *The Cabinet*. London: Jonathan Cape. 1970. p. 125.

A great similarity with the 1991 Gulf War existed in that US attitude.

also :

See appendix 8.

27 See appendix 9.

28 See appendix 10.

also :

October 1<sup>st</sup> 1949 PRC established.

Full diplomatic recognition :

December 9<sup>th</sup> 1949 by Burma (first non-communist government to recognize the PRC)

December 30<sup>th</sup> 1949 by India

January 4<sup>th</sup> 1950 by Pakistan

January 6<sup>th</sup> 1950 by Ceylon and UK

October 13<sup>th</sup> 1970 by Canada

December 21<sup>st</sup> 1972 by Australia

December 22<sup>nd</sup> 1972 by New Zealand

January 1<sup>st</sup> 1979 by USA

Source : Keesings *Contemporary Archives*.

also :

If one claims that British control of Hong Kong was a factor in early recognition of the communist government, then one would expect Portugal to have followed suit in view of its possession of Macao. However, such was not the case. Portugal recognized the PRC as much later as January 6<sup>th</sup> 1975. Furthermore, it could be argued that this was as a result of a more ideologically sympathetic centre-left government coming to power in Portugal since the previous May, after a military coup.

Furthermore, the regional pulls that Commonwealth countries experienced, accelerated as trade with the UK declined.<sup>29</sup> Once Britain's intentions of joining the EEC became known, such trends became urgent necessities.

The actual decision by the UK to enter the EEC produced the greatest strain on the Commonwealth. For once there was a matter upon which the members seemed to agree :

In 1961 the idea of Britain's becoming a member of a close European regional grouping was unpalatable to all the members of the Commonwealth and united the old and the new ones in disliking the British move.<sup>30</sup>

The reasons for such unanimity lay in the fact that there were vested interests that the individual Commonwealth countries were about to lose. Not only was Commonwealth preference to end, but their goods would actually be discriminated against.<sup>31</sup> Throughout the period of the various applications for UK membership of the EEC, the most difficult interests to accommodate were the dairy produce of New Zealand, and sugar from the West Indies.<sup>32</sup>

Throughout the 1960s, the continued existence of ties between the Commonwealth and Britain produced a credibility gap between the latter and its proclaimed commitment to joining the EEC. General de Gaulle actually cited the Commonwealth link (along with that of the 'Special Relationship') as evidence of the UK not being ready yet to join the EEC, that is to say, not being orientated enough towards Europe. As de Gaulle expressed it :

You who eat the cheap wheat of Canada, the lamb of New Zealand, the beef and potatoes of Ireland, the butter, fruit and vegetables of Australia, the sugar of Jamaica - would you consent to feed on continental - especially French - agricultural produce, which would inevitably cost more?<sup>33</sup>

It is not surprising that the General had such doubts in his mind, for even as late as 18<sup>th</sup>

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29 Cyr, Arthur. *ibid.* p. 100.

30 Frankel, Joseph. *ibid.* p. 233.

31 Boyd, Laslo V. *Britain's Search For A Role*. Farnborough, Hampshire : Saxon House/Lexington Books. 1975. p. 37.

32 See for example : Kitzinger, Uwe. *The Second Try*. Oxford : Pergamon Press. 1968. p. 195. Doc. 25. Para. 32. Speech by George Brown : 'The British Case', given to the WEU at The Hague, July 4<sup>th</sup> 1967.

33 Sked, Alan and Cook, Chris. *ibid.* p. 173.

March 1966, Prime Minister Harold Wilson made an election campaign speech in Bristol in which he emphatically claimed :

We must be free to go on buying food and raw materials, as we have done for 100 years, in the cheaper markets, in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and other Commonwealth countries...<sup>34</sup>

Indeed in 1964 the Labour Party manifesto had clearly stated :

Though we shall seek to achieve closer links with our European neighbours, the Labour party is convinced that the first responsibility of a British government is still to the Commonwealth.<sup>35</sup>

The decline in British Government support for the Commonwealth could be dated from 1961.<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, unfortunately, the continued importance of the Organization in British foreign policy was perpetuated in such a way that '...the Commonwealth Myth, substituting for the imperial role, imposed limits on British policy in the hope of pleasing her Commonwealth associates.'<sup>37</sup>

The first public pronouncement authoritatively questioning the continued value of the Commonwealth, was expressed in the second of three articles in *The Times*, published on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1964, called 'Patriotism Based On Reality Not On Dreams' and written 'By A Conservative.' In it, the anonymous writer (thought to have been Enoch Powell), derided the continued Commonwealth in the strongest possible terms and expressed the opinion that it was holding the UK back from becoming more involved in European affairs :

The lateness, the reluctance and the partial failure to date of Britain's attempts to enter into closer commercial relations with western Europe, have been due to the still persisting illusion that "there is a world elsewhere," which could afford Britain the advantages and security of a closed or protected trading area.

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34 Uri, Pierre (Ed.). *From Commonwealth To Common Market*. Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire : Penguin. 1968. p. 67.

35 *The Times* newspaper. September 12<sup>th</sup> 1964.

36 Miller J.D.B. *ibid.* p. 356.

37 Strange, Susan. *Sterling And British Policy*. London : Oxford University Press. 1971. p. 336.

Even as late as April 1966, Arnold Smith, the Commonwealth's first Secretary-General, told the students of the University of Michigan that 'What matters most in shaping history are such intangibles as attitudes, values, intuitions, motivations, faith. It is in this field that the Commonwealth operates.'<sup>38</sup> Such comments seemed to be far removed from the realities of power politics as conducted, for example, by the super-powers. For someone of that position to make such claims, further illustrates how strongly the wishful thinking had continued about the Commonwealth's existence.

The continuance of the Commonwealth illusion complicated Britain's foreign policy because of the ramifications of the international issues involved :

It became inextricably intertwined with the maintenance of the international currency role of sterling, blurring and confusing the feasibility parameters of British policy, and resulting in an international economic policy which was detrimental to British national interests.<sup>39</sup>

The dissolution of the Overseas Sterling Area (OSA) in 1968, deprived Britain of an economic lever that could have been used against individual members of the Commonwealth, at a time when the UK was finding it increasingly difficult to put political or economic pressure on them.<sup>40</sup> That move added to the belief that if there were no such political or economic benefits to be gained by Britain from the Commonwealth, then there was no point in allowing the Commonwealth to hinder Britain's relations with the Community. Joining the EEC therefore, became the main priority in the UK's international relations, thereby helping to dispel a great deal of the 'Commonwealth Myth.'

The main trading trend between the UK and the Commonwealth during the 1950s and 1960s also encouraged the UK to decide to join the EEC, because whereas trade with the Commonwealth decreased, trade with the whole of western Europe increased.<sup>41</sup> British trade with the Commonwealth stagnated, so that between 1951 and 1961 UK exports to it fell from 50% to 39%. Most of British investment in the Commonwealth showed itself to be unprofitable. Meanwhile, exports to the EEC countries had increased from 25% to 32%.<sup>42</sup> In 1970, the UK's exports to the EEC exceeded those to the whole of the Commonwealth.<sup>43</sup>

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38 Smith, Arnold with Sanger, Clyde. *Stitches In Time*. London : Andre Deutsch Ltd. 1981. p. 39.

39 Frankel, Joseph. *ibid.* p. 229.

40 Sanders, David. *Losing An Empire, Finding A Role*. London : Macmillan. 1990. p. 149.

41 Cyr, Arthur. *ibid.* p. 99.

42 Frankel, Joseph. *ibid.* p. 224.

43 CMND 4715. *The United Kingdom And The European Communities*. London : H.M.S.O. 1971. p. 11. para. 37.

Antagonism towards the Commonwealth was exasperated by the decline in economic relations between Britain and its members. Trade since the early 1950s had fallen away, so that Commonwealth preferences operated to the UK's detriment. There existed the attitude that the sterling area made the UK's balance of payments worse.

A distinct feature of the British balance of payments during 1958-68 from that of its European neighbours, was the enormous spending on overseas matters of defence and aid. As Susan Strange summarized the dilemma :

As quickly as overseas investments began to pay off with an increase in invisible earnings, in the shape of dividends and profits, the benefits to the balance of payments was wiped out by another increase in government spending overseas.<sup>44</sup>

She proceeded to estimate that during that time-span, if the UK had managed to keep to the 1958 level of spending abroad, the problems with the balance of payments would have been diminished, possibly to the point of non-existence.

Likewise, Alan Day, an economist and writer, who had actually worked in the Treasury, and Andrew Shonfield, the economic editor of *The Observer* newspaper, held similar opinions. Shonfield calculated that as much as £250m could have been added to the favourable side of the balance of payments. Additionally, with postponing the repayments of US loans and encouraging an inflow of capital to create another £100m, the net gain would be somewhere in the region of £400m annually. He calculated in 1958, that over five years, that order of re-adjustment would have produced twice the amount of the original American loan to the UK in 1946. Susan Strange explained that 'The remedy he proposed was ruthlessly to cut defence spending and to 'claw back for domestic use the foreign exchange being wasted on overseas investment.'<sup>45</sup> It is interesting that Shonfield, writing in 1958, recommended the withdrawal from all overseas bases unless they were of major strategic value. He named Hong Kong and Gibraltar as the prime targets, and yet the UK did not leave the former until almost 40 years later, and even now still has not relinquished its hold on the latter.<sup>46</sup>

Unfortunately, as the arrangements concerning the sterling area were the only jointly consented Commonwealth policy of any significance, the UK had an incentive to

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<sup>44</sup> Strange, Susan. *ibid.* p. 178.

<sup>45</sup> Strange, Susan. *ibid.* p. 150.

<sup>46</sup> Shonfield, Andrew. *British Economic Policy Since The War*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex : Penguin. 1958. p. 106.

maintain the agreements as a contribution to continued links with the Organization. At the same time, the arrangements obscured the reality of the loosening of those links. Sterling was a major issue, so that throughout the 1960s, whenever the Pound came under pressure, its defence had top priority at the expense of other matters. Fear that the balance of payments crises would produce runs on the Pound made the results of those recurrent crises worse.<sup>47</sup>

Furthermore, Britain needed an economic boost that would modernize her industries and make them more competitive. Yet a Conservative Party study group was able to point to the fact, that between 1945 and 1967 nearly £2,000m had been given or loaned to countries of which 90% went to the Commonwealth. Critics claimed that the UK simply could not afford to help developing countries unless its economic fortunes improved.<sup>48</sup> One line of argument was the attitude that large investments in the stable, newly independent Commonwealth countries, and in Australasia, Canada and South Africa might be of value, for the essential thing was to invest in areas where political risks were low and a good return was certain. The argument was that Britain ought not to invest simply in order to maintain the sterling area. This theory was despite the fact that the UK's natural markets lay in the developed world, not in the still developing markets of the majority of the Commonwealth countries.

The reality was different, for during early 1962 the UK's exports to western Europe surpassed those destined for the Commonwealth.<sup>49</sup> Indeed Britain's share of Commonwealth markets had fallen even faster than exports. The UK's share in exports between 1954 and 1960 to India and Pakistan fell from 48% to 37%; to South Africa from 53% to 42%; to Australia from 72% to 51%; and to New Zealand from 85% to 72%. Quite apart from the fact that British businessmen had not been as competitive as their counterparts from the USA, Japan and the EEC, the Commonwealth countries had naturally discovered a wider range of products from other countries than the UK.

Undoubtedly, a major reason for the British decision to join the EEC besides the fall in trade with the Commonwealth, was the corresponding trade increase with western Europe from the late 1950s onwards. An estimated 20% of Britain's trade was with the

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47 Frankel, Joseph. *ibid.* p. 273.

48 Miller J.D.B. *ibid.* p. 359.

49 Kitzinger, Uwe. *The Politics And Economics Of European Integration.* *ibid.* p. 165.

Total UK exports worth \$903m a month :

\$286m to the Commonwealth.

\$316m to western Europe of which :

\$168m to the EEC.

\$123m to EFTA.



EEC, Ireland and Denmark in 1960, and by 1971 that figure had risen to about 30%.<sup>50</sup> It continued to grow right up to the time of the UK joining the EEC, and after. Britain's exports to the OSA rose by £403m between 1955 and 1965, whereas those to western Europe and the USA rocketed to £1390m. From the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s the share of the OSA on the one hand, and western Europe with the USA on the other, reversed. OSA's share of total exports declined from 49% in 1955 to 34.8% in 1965, while that of the other grouping rose from 34.2% to 50.5% during the same period.<sup>51</sup> It was simply easier for British businessmen to sell their goods in the richer expanding markets of the industrialized countries, than in the much poorer Commonwealth countries.

In reality, some of the Commonwealth countries had increased their trade with the EEC, as they had seen the latter to be the largest and most rapidly expanding importer in the world. For example, between 1955 and 1959, Ghana and Nigeria doubled exports to the Community, while those to the UK fell by 15%.<sup>52</sup> By 1960, Pakistan was selling as much to the EEC as to Britain, while Ghana and Malaysia were selling one and a half times.<sup>53</sup> Additionally, Canada was increasingly orientated towards the USA, while Australia increased her sales with Japan. In talking specifically of tropical products, Uwe Kitzinger has written that :

...the interests of the Commonwealth producers lie in gaining free access to the Common Market and any other expanding markets, rather than in retaining preferences in the United Kingdom.<sup>54</sup>

Once the UK had made its intentions clear about joining the EEC, Commonwealth countries naturally speeded up their search for alternative markets to that of Britain. As Pierre Uri stated :

Some African countries have gone ahead and negotiated with the European Community without even waiting for Great Britain to think again of applying for entry. In the case of Canada, Asia, Australia, and New Zealand, exports have been very rapidly re-directed in particular towards Continental Europe, Japan and sometimes Communist China. The changes in governments have had

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50 Sanders, David. *ibid.* pp. 150-151.

51 Sanders, David. *ibid.* p. 119.

52 Kitzinger, Uwe. *The Politics And Economics Of European Integration.* *ibid.* p. 166.

53 See appendix 11.

54 Kitzinger, Uwe. *The Politics And Economics Of European Integration.* *ibid.* p. 168.

some influence on these changes in attitudes, but the determining factor has been economic.<sup>55</sup>

Against that economic backdrop of shifting trading patterns away from the Commonwealth was the ever-increasing financial burden that the UK bore in its international military commitments. In 1957, 320,000 service personnel were costing £190m. Malaysia took 40% of the military spending. However, by 1967, the cost of maintaining only 160,000 had risen sharply to £257m.<sup>56</sup> It was increasingly felt that the UK's defence commitments to the Commonwealth, including the costs of operating overseas bases, was clearly beyond the capabilities of Britain's economy.

Furthermore, defence undertakings with the new members of the Commonwealth were very difficult to uphold. For example, the Anglo-Ceylonese agreement was revoked in 1957, while the arrangement with Nigeria lasted only a year after the initial signing in January 1961. Sierra Leone, immediately on gaining its independence, refused to undertake commitments that had been agreed to earlier. There was the feeling that such undertakings were tainted with the idea of neo-colonialism. The UK Minister of Defence for the Navy, Christopher Mayhew, let it be known in 1966, that 'It was clear to him that there was little or no expectation of Commonwealth unity in defence, economics, and politics, and he wanted this to be recognized.'<sup>57</sup> That was accepted gradually. Consequently, British forces were withdrawn from east of Suez from 1968 onwards.

### THE 'SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP' WITH THE USA

Of the 'Three Circles' notion, Winston Churchill made that with the USA the most important sphere of influence for the UK.<sup>58</sup> The exceptional level of co-operation between the two countries had originated in wartime, when it was found necessary to confront the peril of total German domination of Europe and of the threat to the British Empire and American interests in East Asia. Doubts have been cast on the very existence of there being a 'special relationship' by such writers as Max Beloff,<sup>59</sup> Coral Bell<sup>60</sup> and

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55 Uri, Pierre. (Ed.). *ibid.* p. 16.

56 Strange, Susan. *ibid.* p. 184.

Calculated by Richard Fry, once Financial Editor of the *Guardian* newspaper.  
also:

See appendix 12.

57 Miller, J.D.B. *ibid.* p. 363.

58 George, Stephen. *An Awkward Partner*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1998. p. 14.

59 Beloff, Max. 'The Special Relationship: An Anglo-American Myth' in:

Gilbert, Martin. *A Century Of Conflict 1850-1950*. London: Hamish Hamilton. 1966. pp. 151-171.

60 Bell, Coral. *The Debatable Alliance*. London: Oxford University Press. 1964.

Paul Einzig<sup>61</sup>. Nevertheless, it is generally accepted by most analysts that there have been occasions since the Second World War when co-operation between the two countries has appeared to be exceptionally good, involving diplomatic practice and understanding above that of the ordinary exchange between nations. Certainly, attempts to explain that closeness have varied considerably. They range from the fact that both countries use the same language and have a common heritage; to good rapport between individual leaders, such as in the case of Macmillan and Kennedy; and even to the very fact that their international interests have so often closely coincided.

Since 1945 the threat from the spread of communism has been personified principally in the military might of the Soviet Union. The Soviet acquisition of nuclear weaponry in 1949; and the uncompromising attitude to its east European satellites, convinced the Anglo-Saxon world of the need for the rapid re-building of the shattered economies of western Europe in the late 1940s. Interestingly enough, the UK was the largest recipient of Marshall Aid, even though the country was neither conquered, nor devastated to the same degree that its continental neighbours had been.<sup>62</sup>

It has been suggested that the continued belief in a 'special relationship' inhibited Britain's leaders from realizing the need for joining the integrative moves in western Europe. Quite apart from the failure by British leaders to correctly re-assess and update the UK's international political standing,<sup>63</sup> there was another interpretation based on the British notion that the Americans needed help in conducting international affairs from an English nation which had also once been hegemonic. The idea survived the reality that the US had no intention of taking British advice. Therefore the fact that the US was encouraging the UK to join the EEC, led the British to the assumption that the Americans could be making an error of judgement.<sup>64</sup>

The US attitude remained consistently that the UK ought to join the moves towards closer co-operation generated by the states of western Europe in the form of the ECSC, EDC and the EEC. There were many reasons for why the Americans persistently encouraged the UK to join in west European integration. They have to be seen in the context that the US desired European integration above that of the maintenance of the 'special relationship' itself. Miriam Camps wrote in 1966 that 'In the longer term it is to

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61 Einzig, Paul. *The Case Against Joining The Common Market*. Edinburgh: Macmillan. 1971. pp. 110-111.

62 See appendix 13.

63 Charlton, Michael. 'How and Why Britain Lost The Leadership Of Europe (1) "Messina! Messina!" or, The Parting Of The Ways' in *Encounter*. Vol. 57. No. 2. August 1981. p. 12.

64 George, Stephen. *An Awkward Partner*. *ibid.* p. 15.

“Europe” not to the United Kingdom alone that we should look to share our responsibilities.’<sup>65</sup>

The US was anxious for strengthening the west European states so that they acted as a bulwark against any further Soviet expansion.<sup>66</sup> In particular, the strongest reason for European unification that the Americans perceived, was to give West Germany an alternative to re-unification, when the latter would have brought Soviet influence as far west as the Rhine.<sup>67</sup> The USA wanted West Germany to be politically and economically firmly tied to the West. It was hoped that the very size of the EEC market would satisfy German industry; and that the EEC could act as a unit more effectively vis-à-vis eastern Europe. The US wanted an end to conflict between west European states.<sup>68</sup>

The Americans wanted a long-term settlement in Europe. They were interested in seeing how European unity could be achieved, as its success would prove to be quite a novel phenomenon that might be useful as an example for improving other areas of international relations.<sup>69</sup> Consequently, in terms of priorities, the USA was more concerned with maintaining the unity of the Common Market, than with actually persuading the UK to join the EEC.

The US wanted Britain to join the EEC as a full member, not as an associate. That was because the USA was prepared to suffer economic discrimination against itself from the EEC in return for the political benefits of dealing with a single west European entity.<sup>70</sup> The Americans did not wish to suffer economically from the EEC’s external tariff and yet see each European state pursue its own foreign policy. In 1958, for example, the US gave no help to the UK in order to save the FTA negotiations. In fact,

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65 Camps, Miriam. *European Unification In The Sixties*. New York : McGraw-Hill Book Company. 1966. p. 250.

66 CMND 4715. *ibid.* p. 10. para. 35.

67 Camps, Miriam. *European Unification In The Sixties*. *ibid.* p. 251.

68 Kitzinger, Uwe. *The European Common Market And Community*. London : Routledge And Kegan Paul. 1967. pp. 166-167.

From President Kennedy’s ‘Declaration Of Interdependence’, Philadelphia, July 4<sup>th</sup> 1962.

69 Camps, Miriam. *European Unification In The Sixties*. *ibid.* pp. 253-254.

70 Kitzinger, Uwe. *The Second Try*. *ibid.* p. 39.

also :

Camps, Miriam. *Britain And The European Community 1955-1963*. London : Oxford University Press. 1965. p. 337.

also :

Charlton, Michael. ‘How (and Why) Britain Lost The Leadership Of Europe (II) : A Last Step Sideways’ in *Encounter*. Vol. 57. No. 3. September 1981. p. 29.

also :

Charlton, Michael. ‘How (& Why) Britain Lost The Leadership Of Europe (III) : The Channel Crossing’ in *Encounter*. Vol. 57. No. 4. October 1981. p. 32.

afterwards, the Americans supported the EEC in rejecting the UK's attempts at 'bridge building' between the Six and the Seven.<sup>71</sup>

President Kennedy in April 1961 summed up in two reasons the US desire for the UK to seek full EEC membership. It was maintained from the economic viewpoint, that the Americans considered it more convenient to deal with one large group rather than two because tariff and trade negotiations would be smoother. The political argument that Kennedy put forward was the hope that the UK would mould and lead the Community.<sup>72</sup> Of course it was for fear of the latter reason that General de Gaulle vetoed Britain's first application to join the Common Market in January 1963. He had regarded the application by Britain to be a case of America's 'Trojan Horse', whereby US influence would come to dominate the Community instead of France, which at that time was the leading state in the Common Market.

General de Gaulle's hostility to the Anglo-Saxon world,<sup>73</sup> like the 'special relationship,' dated back to the Second World War. Such bad feeling, was not helped by such blunt speaking, as when expressed, for example, by Winston Churchill to the General, when the former stated that if Britain had to choose between France or the United States, then the UK would always support the Americans :

"This is something you ought to know : each time we have to choose between Europe and the open sea, we shall always choose the open sea. Each time I have to choose between you and Roosevelt, I shall always choose Roosevelt."<sup>74</sup>

The affinity between the UK and USA in contrast to any relationship with France was stated on the American side, for example, by Dean Rusk :

"We can't break with Britain. We have to be able to discuss world problems with someone. We can't discuss them with de Gaulle...We and the British don't always agree. But we discuss."<sup>75</sup>

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71 Camps, Miriam. *European Unification In The Sixties*. ibid. p. 241.

72 Macmillan, Harold. *Pointing The Way 1959-1961*. London : Macmillan. 1972. pp. 350-351. also :

George, Stephen. 'Nationalism, Liberalism And The National Interest : Britain, France, And The European Community' in *Strathclyde Papers On Government And Politics*. No. 67. 1989. p. 4.

73 See appendix 14.

74 Gaulle, General de. *War Memoirs. Unity 1942-1944*. London : Weidenfeld And Nicolson. 1959. p. 227. Spoken on June 4<sup>th</sup> 1944.

75 Boyd, Laslo V. ibid. p. 142.

The Suez debacle of 1956 was clearly just such an occasion on which neither the US nor the UK agreed, but within just two years the closeness of the relationship seemed to have been re-established. The rapidly repaired Anglo-American relationship was shown in that by 1958 the UK agreed to the installation of 60 Thor missiles by the US in Britain. Even more significantly, de Gaulle had suggested in the same year, in vain, a three nation directorate in the nuclear field to direct the Atlantic Alliance.<sup>76</sup> The fact that it was the Anglo-Saxon countries that rejected the offer underlined the desire to keep the relationship distinct. Additionally in 1958, the US amended the McMahon Act regarding restrictions on sharing information concerning nuclear knowledge with other countries. That permitted the free exchange of research and development findings between the USA and the UK.<sup>77</sup>

Further evidence that the 'special relationship' was active, and which convinced de Gaulle that the UK would choose America rather than the Community in a time of divided loyalties, arose over the Skybolt issue. In 1960, the USA offered Britain that missile system, but chose to cancel the arrangement just two years later, due to technical faults with it, that would cost large sums of money to rectify. Indeed, the Americans even offered to share equally with the UK the cost of rectifying the missile system, but the latter refused.<sup>78</sup> Likewise, the shorter range variant named 'Hound Dog' was offered to the UK, but likewise turned down. Initially, the termination of the Skybolt deal had the making of a first rate diplomatic setback, for each country waited for the other to instigate discussions on its replacement. The Americans expected the British to request a replacement, while the latter expected simply to be offered something rather than have to ask for it. Fortunately, the increasing animosity was defused and considerably abated by the American offer to the UK, at the Nassau Conference in December 1962, of the Polaris sea-launched missile system. Despite the fact that the deal clearly showed the UK to be reliant on the US for an effective nuclear deterrent, it also illustrated that the 'special relationship' still existed. As such, it must have cleared any doubts that General de Gaulle may have had as to where Britain's prime interests lay.

Interestingly, Miriam Camps suggests<sup>79</sup> the counter-argument, that whereas it was assumed that the UK would act as an American Trojan Horse within the EEC, it could also be argued that Britain inside the Community would not only be increasingly

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76 Cyr, Arthur. *ibid.* p. 136.

77 Reynolds, David. 'A 'Special Relationship'? America, Britain And The International Order Since The Second World War' in *International Affairs*. Vol. 62. No. 1. Winter 1985/6. pp. 11-12.

78 Boyd, Laslo V. *ibid.* p. 145.

79 Camps, Miriam. *European Unification In The Sixties*. *ibid.* p. 243.

independent of America, but would help make the Common Market that much stronger in its dealings with the USA. Clearly UK membership could make it more independent of the US, because if Britain were supported by the other Community members, then Britain would be less likely to succumb to American pressure on international matters. The assumption that the EEC would follow policies similar to those of the US, even though the UK belonged to the Community, was short-sighted, as the EEC was certain to take a more independent line on some issues as its economic strength continued to grow. An instance was in the very year of Britain joining the EEC, when there occurred the first occasion on which the Community was capable of upholding a united stand in opposition to the USA over a major international crisis, namely the Arab-Israeli conflict of October and the subsequent Arab threat to oil supplies. The west Europeans avowed a less pro-Israeli stance than that of the Americans.<sup>80</sup> The UK, like West Germany, did not permit the USA to use bases in their countries as staging posts during the conflict.<sup>81</sup> That was further evidence that the 'special relationship' had badly deteriorated. It was also an example of an independent attitude by the UK vis-à-vis the USA.

Other examples that could be cited as UK independent stances from those of the USA were to follow throughout the rest of the 1970s. The downfall of Salazar in Portugal, and the succeeding anti-Portuguese revolutions in Angola and Mozambique in 1974-75, were greeted by alarm in America but apparent calmness in the UK. Likewise, with the American emphasis on obtaining a peace agreement between Egypt and Israel during the period of 1976-79, the UK with the other EEC members were far more concerned about the fate of the Palestinians than the USA. Also, whereas the USA financially and militarily supported the right-wing dictatorships in Chile after 1973, and in Nicaragua until 1979, the UK showed sympathy to the assassinated Marxist, Chilean President Allende, as well as for the left-wing Sandinista movement in Nicaragua. David Sanders stated that 'All of these developments, inevitably, did little to endear London to Washington. Britain was merely behaving like any other self-regarding West European state...'<sup>82</sup>

An economic argument used by the USA to encourage the UK to join the EEC was that British industry needed re-vitalizing. It was in American interests to see the UK with a healthy economy in view of the amount of US investment already in Britain. Also, a stronger British economy would add to the UK's political ability to shape and lead the Community, thereby permitting the country to regain some of her prestige and power.

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80 Sanders, David. *ibid.* p. 162.

81 Watt, D. Cameron. *Succeeding John Bull*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1984. p. 156.

82 Sanders, David. *ibid.* p. 177.

Additionally, the US wanted the UK to be able to afford to keep her military commitments overseas. That was despite the American anti-colonialist attitude and understanding that the US had no intention of prolonging the existence of the British Empire. The UK's forces were acting as a policing agent in many parts of the world where it was realized that otherwise that would have to be done by American forces, such as in the Middle East to safeguard oil supplies.

It was also felt that the British forces were holding positions that kept communism at bay and that likewise would otherwise have to be filled by a country from the 'Free World.' As no European country was capable or willing to fulfil that role in East Asia, or in the Indian Ocean, or the Persian Gulf areas, it fell to the Americans to do so. In talking of Eisenhower's approach to foreign policy, for example, William Roger Louis stated that '...in the competition in the American mind between the 'Special Relationship,' 'anti-colonialism,' and 'anti-Communism,' the last always prevails.'<sup>83</sup>

Indeed, the British withdrawal from east of Suez could hardly have come at a worse time for the USA as it was so heavily involved in the Vietnam War. In the words of Max Beloff '...the Americans began to worry that the pressures on Britain of her economic weakness might lead to a premature abandonment of her 'East of Suez' role.'<sup>84</sup> And yet again, in the account of a British diplomat, about Harold Wilson's visit to Washington in 1964 :

'Concerned over Britain's balance of payments difficulties, they [that is, the Americans] were afraid that the Labour Government would suddenly do in the Far East what they had done in Greece, pull out and leave the burden of resisting the spread of Communism entirely to the USA.'<sup>85</sup>

The Americans reconciled their consciences over the continuance of British forces overseas, by taking the attitude that rather than the continued existence belonging to the last of the British Empire, they were the first of a new, non-colonialist, benevolent European presence.

Quite apart from the idea that by joining the EEC, Britain would regain her influence, power and prestige by moulding and leading the Community, there was also the notion that the UK had a duty to join in order to bring political stability to the states

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83 Louis, William Roger and Bull, Hedley (Ed.). *The 'Special Relationship'*. Oxford : Clarendon Press. 1986. p. 283.

84 Louis, William Roger and Bull, Hedley (Ed.). *ibid.* p. 255.

85 Louis, William Roger and Bull, Hedley (Ed.). *ibid.* p. 256.



of western Europe. One criticism of the latter idea however, was that as there were so many states in need of stability, there was no reason why Britain should not be adversely effected by them and become unstable herself.<sup>86</sup> The contention claimed that such continental instability could well be caused by the very institutions of the Community that the UK was seeking to join. In response to the widely-held Anglo-American hope that the UK could lead western Europe as a full member of the EEC, it was maintained that the likelihood of a Franco-German domination of the Community was just as possible as an Anglo-French or Anglo-German supremacy, and that those combinations were far more likely to occur than the UK moulding and leading the Common Market on its own.<sup>87</sup>

The USA also wanted the UK to join the EEC because full membership of the Community would end the internal tensions within the Common Market over the issue of possible British membership, which were distracting the EEC from further development. There was a feeling that once the UK membership matter was settled, then the EEC could get on with sorting out other issues, such as the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). It was felt that Britain ought to join first, so that it could contribute to the CAP's solution, rather than having it imposed on it after membership. There was also the opinion, that to deal simultaneously with Britain's application for membership as well as to argue over the CAP issue, could produce circumstances whereby the strains of doing both together would be too much and the Community might break-up under the pressure.

The other five governments of the EEC were incensed at de Gaulle's unilateral veto of Britain's application for membership. They believed that the vision of Europe that de Gaulle held was one dominated by France<sup>88</sup> in which a return to intergovernmental action would occur. They believed that though the UK lacked enthusiasm for supranationalism, the British would want the Community to work democratically, and therefore would be less likely to undermine the EEC than would be the case with the strident nationalism of Gaullism.<sup>89</sup>

Furthermore, the other five countries did not appreciate de Gaulle's emphasis on the development of France's independent nuclear arsenal, and felt, unlike the General, that for the indefinite future, the Atlantic Alliance was the key to their security. Like the

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86 See also : George, Stephen. 'Nationalism, Liberalism And The National Interest : Britain, France, And The European Community'. *ibid.* p. 2.

87 Pickles, William. *Not With Europe : The Political Case For Staying Out*. Dorking, Surrey : Fabian Society, 1962. p. 29.

88 Camps, Miriam. *Britain And The European Community 1955-1963*. *ibid.* p. 515.

89 See appendix 15.

British, they saw the need for increasing links with the USA, not diminishing them.<sup>90</sup> De Gaulle had seemingly disappointed every states' interest in the UK joining the EEC, when in his press statements on 15<sup>th</sup> May 1962 and 14<sup>th</sup> January 1963 he had derided 'integration' and 'interdependence' either on a European or an Atlantic venue.

The US also encouraged the UK to join the EEC because it would put an end to the uneasy triangular relationship between France, the UK and the USA. France, for example, had wanted to continue the Suez expedition in 1956, whereas the UK was prepared to consent to US pressure. France also resented her exclusion from sharing Anglo-American nuclear knowledge, which ultimately in 1966, led to her withdrawal from the NATO command structure and the expulsion of its headquarters from Paris to Brussels.

The Americans found there to be tensions with the UK and France because of the possession by the latter two of overseas empires. The US wished to distance itself from such colonialism because it wanted to appear to the Third World that it championed their cause, rather than allowing the USSR to assume that role.

The British felt badly let down by the US over the Suez affair in which the UK was clearly made to look and feel a second-rate Power. Likewise, the Skybolt matter was, to begin with, an area of US-UK disillusionment. For the British, prestige rested on the acquisition of such weaponry; whereas for the Americans, Skybolt was just one relatively small part of their armoury, and one of many international matters that they had to attend to.<sup>91</sup> Once the British had acquired Polaris from the US, the French were upset by what appeared to be blatant special treatment between the two Anglo-Saxon countries.

Even before the first application for EEC membership, Britain looked to the undisputed American leadership in the 'Free World' to guarantee security, and was consequently worried about the prospect of a third force emerging in Europe under French domination. France in turn wanted to reject US hegemony as it wished to be the principal state itself in western Europe. Additionally, the US encouragement that the UK should become a full member of the EEC had to overcome British anxieties over the loss of sovereignty, and also the reluctance to break economic ties with the Commonwealth.<sup>92</sup>

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90 Camps, Miriam. *Britain And The European Community 1955-1963*. *ibid.* p. 503.

also :

George, Stephen. 'Nationalism, Liberalism And The National Interest : Britain, France, And The European Community'. *ibid.* pp. 2-3.

also :

See appendix 16.

91 Kitzinger, Uwe. *The Politics And Economics Of European Integration*. *ibid.* p. 176.

92 George, Stephen. *An Awkward Partner*. *ibid.* p. 19.

After the veto of 1963, and as the UK continued its steady economic and political decline, Britain became less important to the Americans in the latter's international priorities. The USA increasingly subsumed its relationship with Britain to that of western Europe as a whole. The US became increasingly involved in non-European affairs as it rapidly built-up its forces in Vietnam during the 1965-68 period. Additionally, the fact that China acquired nuclear weapons during the 1960s could not be disregarded in US policy-making.<sup>93</sup> As Miriam Camps has pointed out,<sup>94</sup> the possibilities loomed of the US showing too little, rather than too much interest in the development of western European politics.

It has been claimed that the Skybolt matter could be said to have been a turning-point, if not marking the beginning of the end of the 'special relationship'. Set in the context of world events it could so be argued. In December 1959 western leaders had met in Paris, and with Macmillan's persuasion, agreed to hold an East-West Summit there in the following year. The British feeling of anticipated mediating between the two super-powers, 'holding the ring' so to speak, naturally enhanced the UK's international political prestige. However, when the meeting was cancelled, following the Soviet shooting down of the US U-2 spy plane, that shattered the hopes that Britain had of benefitting from such a conference and exposed the UK's reduced international political standing.<sup>95</sup>

Indeed, the first meeting between Macmillan and the newly-elected Kennedy in April 1961 did not augur well, for it was reputed that when the Prime Minister asked the President what he thought of the 'special relationship', the latter replied: "What 'special relationship'?"<sup>96</sup> Whether that retort is true or not, certainly Macmillan and Kennedy thereafter seemed to get on exceptionally well together.

During the Cuban crisis of 1962, Kennedy kept Macmillan informed by telephone of developments, but did not seek the latter's advice. It is reputed to have been virtually a series of monologues with only an occasional approving interjection by the Prime Minister.<sup>97</sup> It was the two superpowers that were deciding the fate of the world.

The American offer of Polaris to the British the month after the crisis, has been suggested as an off-the-cuff deal, where the political ramifications had perhaps not been fully thought through. Maybe there had not been the time to have done otherwise with

93 Kitzinger, Uwe. *The Second Try*. *ibid.* p. 12.

94 Camps, Miriam. *European Unification In The Sixties*. *ibid.* p. 247.

95 Charlton, Michael. 'How (& Why) Britain Lost The Leadership Of Europe (III): The Channel Crossing' *ibid.* p. 26.

96 Boyd, Laslo V. *ibid.* p. 144.

97 Louis, William Roger and Bull, Hedley (Ed.). *ibid.* p. 92.

the all-absorbing Cuban crisis.<sup>98</sup> Anyway, the Macmillan years are generally accepted to have been good years for the 'special relationship' compared to those that followed in the period 1963-1979.

The year 1967 is also considered a turning-point. In May, the second application by the UK to join the EEC was made, thereby repeating the political gesture indicating the end of the 'special relationship.'<sup>99</sup> If anyone had any doubts about that, they were dispelled by Lord Chalfont's official denial that any such relationship existed with the US.<sup>100</sup> In July of the same year, the UK took the primary decision to withdraw British forces from East of Suez, thereby closing a chapter in the history of the British Empire. The American reaction to the speeding up of that policy was sour :

We regret the British Government's announcement regarding its forces in South-east Asia and the Persian Gulf and the F-111 contract... The United States has no plans to fill the gap left by Britain's accelerated withdrawal.<sup>101</sup>

The main reason for such defence cutbacks was the enormous cost in the face of a declining British economy. Indeed, the third significant event of 1967 was the devaluation of the pound sterling in November, which underlined the continuing weakness of the economy.

Tensions over Vietnam also strained the Anglo-American relationship. The UK refused to militarily aid the US by declining to send even 'a platoon of bagpipers'<sup>102</sup> as President Johnson requested. The British attitude was in keeping with that of the EEC, and despite the fact that the Commonwealth countries of Australia and New Zealand sent forces. When in February 1965, Prime Minister Wilson tried to moderate US policy following the bombing of North Vietnam, Johnson sharply rebuffed the British : "I won't tell you how to run Malaysia and you don't tell us how to run Vietnam."<sup>103</sup> Laslo Boyd has maintained that 'Indeed, the decreasing British leverage in Washington has been widely cited as one reason for Britain's joining the EEC.'<sup>104</sup>

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98 Cyr, Arthur. *ibid.* p. 134.

99 See appendix 17.

100 Boyd, Laslo V. *ibid.* p. 146. As reported in the *Guardian* newspaper of October 10<sup>th</sup> 1967.

101 Boyd, Laslo V. *ibid.* p. 100. From *International Herald Tribune* newspaper of January 17<sup>th</sup> 1968.

102 Louis, William Roger and Bull, Hedley (Ed.). *ibid.* p. 101.

103 Reynolds, David. *ibid.* p. 14.

also :

See appendix 18.

104 Boyd, Laslo V. *ibid.* p. 47.

also :

See appendix 19.

By the time the UK joined the EEC in 1973 the 'special relationship' seemed distinctly faded, to the extent that one could certainly question its very existence. Edward Heath was determined to achieve his political ambition of full UK membership of the EEC, so he deliberately played down the 'special relationship', so as to make it look as if it was something of the past.<sup>105</sup> Joseph Frankel states that '...the end of the 'special relationship' was formally declared in the communique issued after the Nixon-Heath meeting in Bermuda in December 1971...'106

The essence of Heath's foreign policy was that the 'special relationship' should become the 'natural relationship'.<sup>107</sup> He valued the ties with the US as important ones in the West's stand against communism, but whereas the term 'special relationship' referred to '...an association of exceptional intimacy, based upon close and continuous international co-operation'<sup>108</sup>, he wished to see the 'special, exceptional' element removed from those relations, and to witness a strong, united Europe balanced in power as an equal with the USA.<sup>109</sup> In the words of Andrew Roth :

Heath was sure he would have the last laugh at the end of the decade beginning in January 1973, during which he would help put Britain at the head of a West European Super-power able to stare down either the Americans or the Russians.<sup>110</sup>

Heath wanted the UK to be undisputedly committed as part of the EEC as a matter of first priority, and yet seeing good relations exist with the US - an Atlantic Alliance.

Heath realized that western Europe would need US troops and nuclear protection for some years to come. He certainly hoped to improve Anglo-American relations since they had sunk so low in the Wilson-Nixon period of 1968-70. He tried to indicate that, by retaining a small token British force in Malaysia, thereby giving the impression that he had done something to reverse the 1968 decision to withdraw totally from east of Suez.

Unlike any of his predecessors as Prime Minister, he was a totally committed

105 Watt, D. Cameron. *ibid.* p. 155.

106 Frankel, Joseph. *ibid.* p. 212.

107 Roth, Andrew. *Heath And The Heathmen*. London : Routledge And Kegan Paul. 1972. p. 219.

108 Frankel, Joseph. *ibid.* p. 204.

109 Heath, Edward. *A British Approach To European Foreign Policy*. Leeds : Leeds University Press. 1976. pp. 11-12.

also :

Heath, Edward. *Old World, New Horizons*. London : Oxford University Press. 1970. p. 68.

110 Roth, Andrew. *ibid.* p. 234.

European, who was prepared to put Europe first if need be, whereas others chose to think first about what the American reaction might be.<sup>111</sup> Heath chose to ignore US overtures so as to placate the Six.<sup>112</sup> He was determined to show the Community members that Britain's first obligations were in the European direction. Consequently, not surprisingly, he was kept totally uninformed of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's visits to China in 1971, with a view to preparing the ground for an American policy volte-face vis-à-vis the PRC.

Heath snubbed Henry Kissinger's 'Year of Europe' of 1973, and furthermore, showed solidarity with the Community during the Arab-Israeli war of that year in refusing to allow US planes to use British bases for airlifts. As Henry Kissinger wrote in his memoirs :

...Heath dealt with us with an unsentimentality totally at variance with the "special relationship." The intimate consultation through which British and American policies had been coordinated during the postwar period was reduced to formal diplomatic exchanges.<sup>113</sup>

Kissinger proceeded to claim, that Heath disliked the telephone calls from the British Ambassador in Washington that were instigated by the Americans. Heath wanted to avoid being accused by France of the 'Trojan Horse' charge that de Gaulle had made.

Anyway, the UK was simply not so important to the US anymore. As Britain's economy had declined, so had its military capabilities, and therefore its political value in the global considerations that the Americans had. Britain was now a regional power. David Reynolds summarized the UK's appearance to the Americans by the time of the Heath government :

Germany had replaced Britain as the principal European pillar of NATO, the EEC was a major focus for America's alliance diplomacy, the United Kingdom had little influence on superpower relations, and Britain's economic decline had forced it to abandon its global commitments more rapidly than it intended or the Americans desired. During this period Britain had often seemed importunate rather than important - begging for IMF loans to shore up

111 Heath, Edward. *Old World, New Horizons*. *ibid.* p. 67.

112 Kissinger, Henry. *Years Of Upheaval*. London : Weidenfeld And Nicolson and Michael Joseph. 1982. p. 141.

113 Kissinger, Henry. *ibid.* p. 141.

the pound, begging for entry into the EEC, begging still to be taken seriously on the international stage.<sup>114</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Therefore in summary, it can be seen that there were many international considerations inducing the UK to decide to join the EEC. Though there existed a mix of political and economic reasons which intertwined with one another, the political ones seemed to have been uppermost in the minds of the decision-makers of the time.<sup>115</sup> It was felt that the sooner the UK joined the EEC the better, because the UK could lead and help shape the future development of the Community. The longer Britain delayed in joining, the slimmer the prospects became of dominating the EEC, as Britain's economy became gradually weaker and those of the other members stronger.

The main political pressure compelling the UK to join the EEC consisted of the failure to find a serious alternative to doing so, once it was realized that Winston Churchill's idea of the 'Three Circles' was fading. The 1956 Suez debacle had revealed Britain's reduced international standing in relation to the two superpowers. Britain was militarily grossly overstretched. Moreover, it had clearly signalled the UK's dependence on the USA in what world order was to exist. The Suez affair cast doubts on the continued long-term existence of the 'Special Relationship.' By 1962 the UK relied on the US for its nuclear capability.

The chief drawback to the Commonwealth being a serious alternative for Britain to joining the EEC was that the Commonwealth lacked any form of unity.<sup>116</sup> As Britain's ability to keep the Commonwealth together by force had long since passed, it was only by common agreement that anything was achieved. There was no geographical, eco-

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114 Reynolds, David. *ibid.* p. 15.

115 Camps, Miriam. *Britain And The European Community 1955-1963.* *ibid.* pp. 274, 281, 293 and 359.  
also :

Camps, Miriam. *European Unification In The Sixties.* *ibid.* p. 159.

also :

Charlton, Michael. 'How (& Why) Britain Lost The Leadership Of Europe (III) : The Channel Crossing'. *ibid.* p. 33.

also :

George, Stephen. 'Nationalism, Liberalism And The National Interest : Britain, France, And The European Community'. *ibid.* p. 4.

also :

Sked, Alan and Cook, Chris. *ibid.* p. 169.

also :

Uri, Pierre (Ed.). *ibid.* p. 80.

116 Cyr, Arthur. *ibid.* p. 102.

conomic, military, political, religious or racial unity, for the Commonwealth contained every permutation conceivable within its bounds.<sup>117</sup> In October 1960, the Commonwealth Finance Ministers, when they were in London, were told of the UK's consideration for joining the EEC. No doubt the controversy over South Africa had greatly influenced the UK to change course, for as Miriam Camps stated, it :

...underlined the fundamental lack of cohesion in the Commonwealth and probably facilitated the decision to seek to join the Common Market by making it easier for the British Government to think in new terms about the whole basis of the Commonwealth relationship.<sup>118</sup>

Conversely, the Six formed a geographical bloc in one continent; having a shared continental identity; having one racial affinity; more or less the same state of economies; and only two religious denominations of any significant numerical size. The EEC members professed democratic ideals, and furthermore, sought eventual political unity so as to avoid warring conflicts amongst themselves. Moreover, the EEC was the world's most rapidly growing economic area.

The futility of any economic and political revival of the Commonwealth was underlined by its lack of unity.<sup>119</sup> Indeed, Miriam Camps in commenting on the Commonwealth countries' attitudes to the first British attempt to join the EEC, stated :

There is nothing to suggest that any Commonwealth country put forward any alternative suggestions. The general impression created by the communiqués and by the press comment at the time was that the Commonwealth countries felt they had few obligations to, but strong claims on, the United Kingdom ; in short, that the relationship was a rather one-sided one.<sup>120</sup>

Anyway, even if the Commonwealth could have found some form of unity based on political grounds, it was clear that it could not have acted as an alternative for Britain to joining the EEC. This was because so many of the industries of the Commonwealth countries would not have been able to compete successfully with those in the UK. The

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117 See appendix 20.

118 Camps, Miriam. *Britain And The European Community 1955-1963*. *ibid.* p. 340.

119 Kitzinger, Uwe. *The Second Try*. *ibid.* pp. 33-34.

120 Camps, Miriam. *Britain And The European Community 1955-1963*. *ibid.* p. 350.



EEC was a 'rich men's club.'<sup>121</sup>

The point was also made, that if Britain were to contribute to the Commonwealth's future, it would need to be politically influential and economically strong. As it was envisaged that any substantial economic growth for Britain was only possible in the EEC, it was concluded that the UK could actually help the Commonwealth in the best possible way by joining the Six.<sup>122</sup> Nevertheless, that argument did not carry much weight, as most people recognized that membership of both the Commonwealth and the EEC was unrealistic, as the two were incompatible, being rival trading blocs.

In reality, the claim by Foreign Secretary, George Brown, that 'The balance of economic advantage is a fine one...'<sup>123</sup> simply was not the case, and became even less so as time progressed. As Harold Wilson had discovered, the Commonwealth '...however prestigiously or humanly valuable, had become an economic and financial liability.'<sup>124</sup> Every Commonwealth meeting seemed to be an opportunity for the members to expect credit concessions, assistance, or markets from Britain. Preference was being undermined and whittled away to protect domestic markets. Long-term bulk purchases and product agreements were unrelated to the rigours of contemporary international trading. The UK could no longer obtain cheap raw materials in exchange for manufactured items, except of course when the UK's manufactured items were better or cheaper than those from other sources.

The Commonwealth served as a transitional phase for Britain in the latter's relinquishing of its Empire and helped to fill a gap in the UK's foreign policy during its search for a new international role. After the Suez disaster of 1956, the Commonwealth helped to maintain the illusions surrounding the UK's global power in the post-1945 world and also kept sterling as an international currency. As such, the Commonwealth's continued existence actually held the UK back from joining the EEC. During the twenty years before the UK joined the Community, trade patterns fundamentally shifted, with a diminution between that of the Commonwealth and the UK, and an increase between the latter and western Europe. Meanwhile, the Commonwealth members re-orientated their

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121 Kitzinger, Uwe. *The Politics And Economics Of European Integration*. *ibid.* p. 172.

122 Miller, J.D.B. *ibid.* p. 315.

also :

Kitzinger, Uwe. *The Politics And Economics Of European Integration*. *ibid.* p. 171.

123 Uri, Pierre. *ibid.* p. 81. Speech by George Brown : 'The British Case', given to the WEU at The Hague. July 4<sup>th</sup> 1967.

also :

Kitzinger, Uwe. *The Second Try*. *ibid.* p. 189. Doc. 25. Para. 4. Footnote.

124 Uri, Pierre. *ibid.* p. 59.

relations away from Britain to those countries within their particular geographical regions and to more promising markets. The EEC actually appeared as a more attractive trading bloc for some of them than the UK.

Many of the newly independent Commonwealth countries experienced military coups and non-democratic forms of government, which Britain with its long parliamentary tradition did not appreciate. Additionally, the growing numbers of new members changed the character of the Organization from being a 'white man's club' to being dominated by the Afro-Asian cultures. The fact that they chose to discuss each others internal affairs created an atmosphere of dissent over so many issues that Britain could not possibly 'please' every state and still, more importantly, always protect her own interests. The UK was no longer leading the Commonwealth but being compelled to act as one among many equals. Consequently, the benefits of leadership had gone and the responsibilities outweighed the opportunities. The Commonwealth became more of a liability to the UK than an asset and therefore made membership of the EEC a much more attractive prospect. The Commonwealth was a distinct disappointment as an alternative to joining the EEC.

From a primarily political viewpoint, the US envisaged an integrated western Europe with Britain playing the dominant role in it. The US maintained a consistent policy of encouraging the UK to join the EEC as a full member, not as an associate state, because it felt that the UK could bring political stability to western Europe. Furthermore, as far as the Americans were concerned, tensions within the EEC would diminish once the question of British membership was settled; and because UK membership would end the strained relations between France, the UK and the USA. In particular, it was felt by the Americans that western Europe would be in a better position to deal effectively with the Soviet Union. The USA preferred, for economic purposes, to deal with one grouping in western Europe rather than two, the Six rather than the Seven.<sup>125</sup> The Americans felt that the British economy would receive a boost which would strengthen the UK's ability to lead the Community and also to carry out its global commitments more easily.

Those American reasons for encouraging the UK to join the EEC, were set in the context of a steadily declining British economy that in turn, produced increasing strains on the latter's ability to maintain her world-wide military commitments. As Britain declined in its military and political importance globally, so did its value to the USA,

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125 Charlton, Michael. 'How (and Why) Britain Lost The Leadership Of Europe (II): A Last Step Sideways' *ibid.* p. 29.

hence the closing-off of one of the 'three circles,' the end of the 'special relationship,' resulting in even greater importance that the UK should join the EEC.<sup>126</sup>

## POSTSCRIPT

Events of the 1980s and 1990s have shown that Britain, though still a member of the EEC, has still not felt at ease in its new role. The UK's foreign policy varied in its degree of harmony with its fellow members over some very important issues. In May 1982, for example, UK relations with the rest of the EEC reached their lowest point over the matter of budgetary contributions.

At about the same time in 1982 the naval expedition to retake the Falkland Islands, following their military seizure by Argentina, indicated that the British government was still prepared to become involved in defending what it saw as its few remaining overseas commitments. Though it gave an opportunity to demonstrate that Anglo-American relations were good, it is questionable as to whether it could have been said to have been a revival of the 'special relationship,' even though it seemed to be based on the Thatcher-Reagan similarity of political outlook. The EEC members supported the UK's action despite the possible damage to their considerable investments in Latin America.

It was only the following year that the US chose to invade the Caribbean Commonwealth island of Grenada in order to overthrow the socialist government, against the advice of Britain. On that occasion the UK chose to support its EEC partners in order to protect its image in the Third World. Privately the British government was thankful to the US for upholding the West's interests and quickly subordinated the issue to continuing good relations with the US.<sup>127</sup> As if to underline the Atlantic interests of the UK, on 15<sup>th</sup> April 1986 Britain alone favoured the US and upset her continental neighbours by permitting the Americans to use British bases to fly on the bombing raids of Tripoli and Benghazi in Libya. By failing to inform her EEC partners of the arrangement whereby US planes would use British bases, Thatcher had demonstrated an Atlanticist approach in preference to a European one.<sup>128</sup>

The greatest consternation for pro-European supporters however was delivered by Margaret Thatcher on 20<sup>th</sup> September 1988 when she delivered a speech while in Bruges criticizing the Commission. She portrayed the ideas of Jacques Delors, President of the Commission, as means for the spread of socialism. In October however, Helmut Kohl

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126 Boyd, Laslo V. *ibid.* p. 156.

127 Sanders, David. *ibid.* p. 182.

128 Sanders, David. *ibid.* p. 184.

Chancellor of West Germany, Wilfred Martens of Belgium, Ruud Lubbers Prime Minister of the Netherlands and Jacques Santer Prime Minister of Luxemburg, all being Christian Democratic statesmen, openly supported Delors and called for, amongst other things, constitutional and legal alterations needed to achieve European union. The implications of the 'Bruges' speech were the apparent denial of the commitment to European union as expressed in the Single European Act that emerged from the 1984 conference at the Milan European Council.

Indeed Henk Overbeek has described Thatcher's policy following the Fontainebleau Summit of June 1984 as being to produce a situation in which UK membership amounted to a free trade area and to create the type of inter-governmental system that Winston Churchill had conceived.<sup>129</sup> By claiming that Europe extended beyond the frontiers of the existing EEC she was including eastern Europe. She also maintained that the EEC was part of an Atlantic Community thereby including the USA in her calculations.<sup>130</sup>

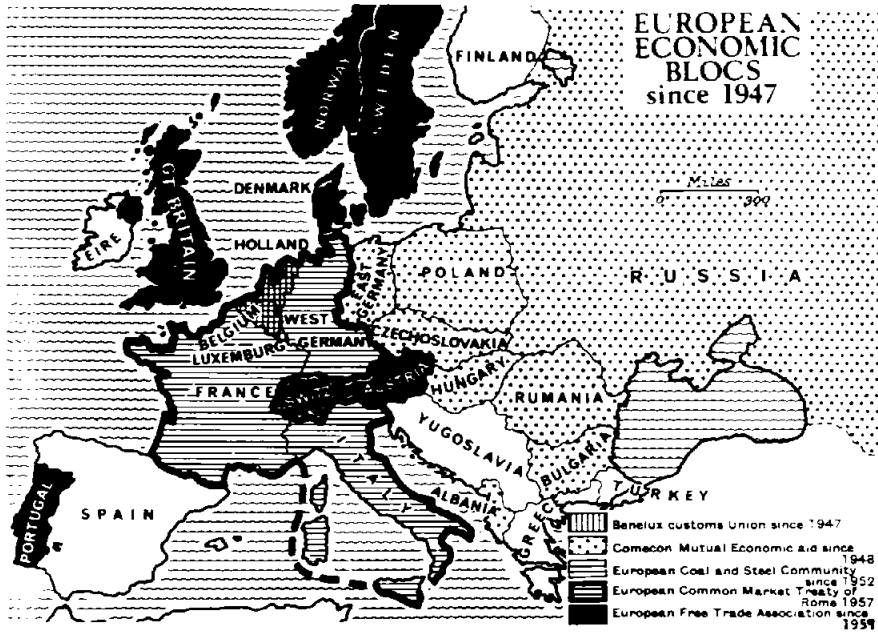
Relations between the UK and the rest of the Community did not improve under Prime Minister John Major but have done so since Tony Blair came to office in May 1997. Ties with the USA are still strong as witnessed in January of 1991 when the UK fielded the second largest expeditionary force from the West in support of the Americans in the Gulf War. Other EEC countries contributed to the effort as well, but nothing like so enthusiastically. Also, in December 1998 the UK alone chose to join the USA in bombing Iraq. Even in the NATO war over Kosovo in the Spring of 1999 it was noted that the British Government was aggressively supportive of America's stance. Furthermore, Britain sent the largest occupation forces to Kosovo despite having no historical connections with the area nor having any vital national interests at stake. Was Britain's foreign policy merely 'holding on to America's coattail', or did it indicate a genuine desire to play an active role in European affairs now that the UK is no longer a global power?

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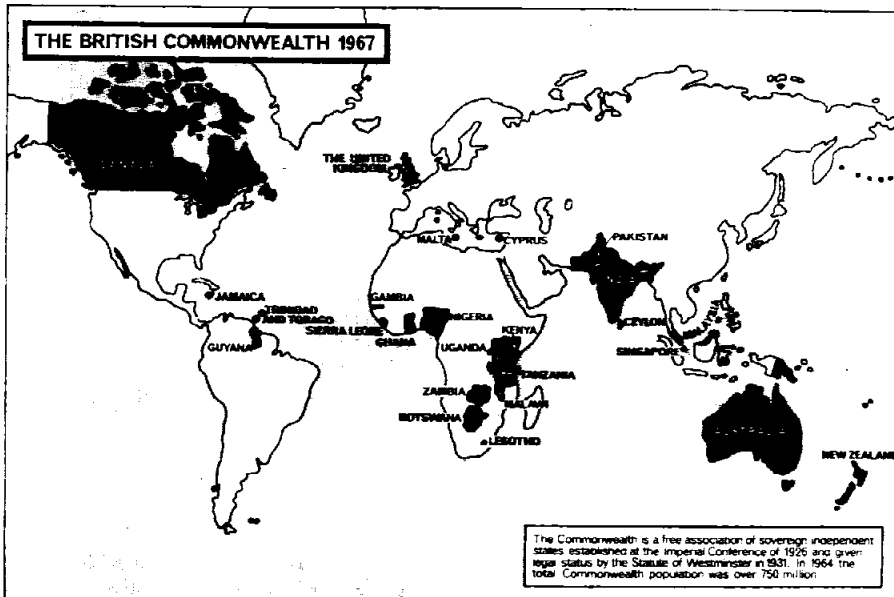
129 Overbeek, Henk. *Global Capitalism And National Decline*. London : Unwin Hyman. 1990. p. 184.

130 Overbeek, Henk. *ibid.* p. 210.

APPENDIX 1



APPENDIX 2



GILBERT, MARTIN  
*BRITISH HISTORY ATLAS.*  
 MACMILLAN.  
 NEW YORK 1968.  
 p. 116 (WITH MODIFICATION)

## APPENDIX 3

*Resources and products of the Commonwealth,  
1952***Wheat**

Canada	18.4 million tons
Australia	5.2 million tons
India	6.0 million tons
	29.6 million tons
World total	162.4 million tons
% main Commonwealth producers	18.2

**Rice**

India	35.2 million tons
Pakistan	12.3 million tons
	47.5 million tons
World total	159.1 million tons
% main Commonwealth producers	29.8

**Tea**

India	278,000 tons
Ceylon	142,000 tons
	420,000 tons
World Total	581,000 tons
% main Commonwealth producers	72.0

**Jute**

Pakistan	1,222,000 tons
India	952,000 tons
	2,174,000 tons
World total	2,250,000 tons
% main Commonwealth producers	96.2

**Sheep**

Australia	118 million
New Zealand	35 million
United Kingdom	22 million
Pakistan	7 million
Sudan	6 million
Kenya	3 million
	191 million
World total	781 million
% main Commonwealth producers	24.5

**Rubber**

Malaya	585,000 tons
Ceylon	97,000 tons
	682,000 tons
World total	1,700,000 tons
% main Commonwealth producers	40.1

**Cocoa**

Gold Coast	248,000 tons
Nigeria	109,000 tons
	357,000 tons
World total	741,000 tons
% main Commonwealth producers	48.1

**Manganese**

India	685,000 tons
Gold Coast	406,000 tons
South Africa	346,000 tons
	1,437,000 tons
World total	2,760,000 tons
% main Commonwealth producers	52.0

**Tin**

Malaya	57,000 tons
Nigeria	13,900 tons
	70,900 tons
World total	171,000 tons
% main Commonwealth producers	41.4

**Gold**

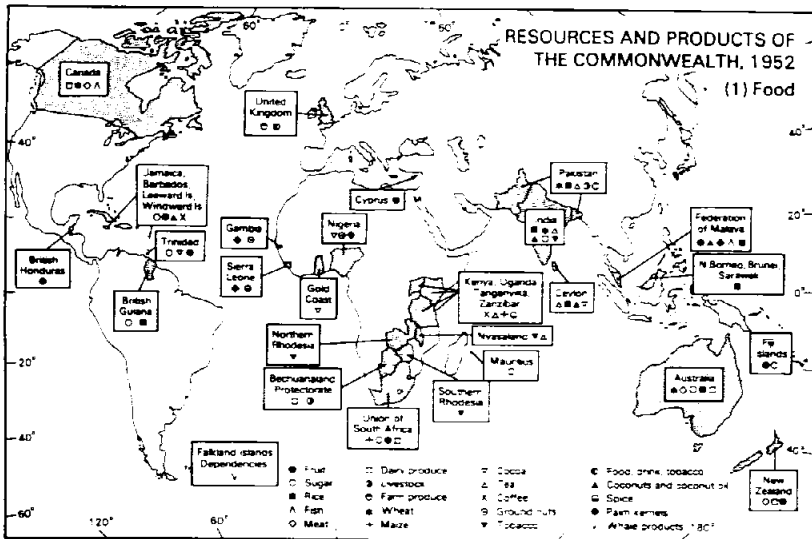
South Africa	809 tons
Canada	307 tons
Australia	67 tons
Gold Coast	48 tons
Southern Rhodesia	34 tons
	1,265 tons
World total	1,672 tons
% main Commonwealth producers	75.6

**Diamonds**

South Africa	2,383 tons
Gold Coast	2,059 tons
Sierra Leone	453 tons
Tanganyika	331 tons
British Guiana	35 tons
	5,261 tons
World total	18,694 tons
% main Commonwealth producers	28.1

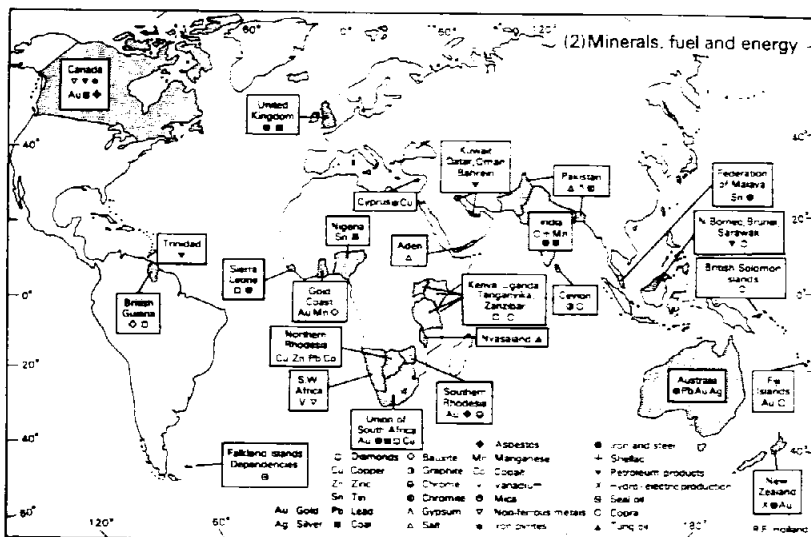
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*ATLAS OF BRITISH OVERSEAS EXPANSION.*  
 ROUTLEDGE.  
 LONDON, 1991.  
 p. 190.

APPENDIX 4



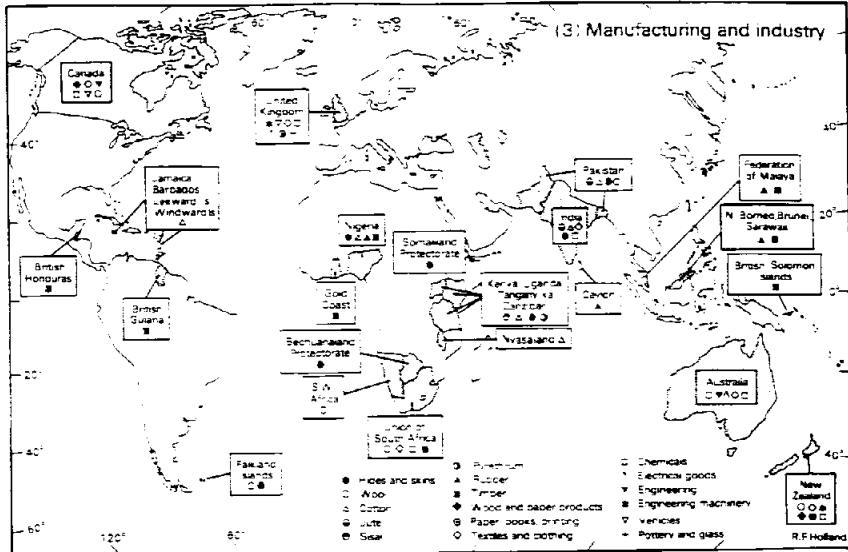
PORTER, A.N.  
**ATLAS OF BRITISH OVERSEAS EXPANSION.**  
 ROUTLEDGE.  
 LONDON, 1991.  
 p. 188.

APPENDIX 5



PORTER, A.N.  
**ATLAS OF BRITISH OVERSEAS EXPANSION.**  
 ROUTLEDGE.  
 LONDON, 1991.  
 p. 188.

APPENDIX 6



PORTER, A.N.  
**ATLAS OF BRITISH OVERSEAS EXPANSION.**  
 ROUTLEDGE.  
 LONDON, 1991.  
 p. 189.

APPENDIX 7



MILLER, J.D.B.  
**THE COMMONWEALTH IN THE WORLD**  
 GERALD DUCKWORTH AND CO. LTD.  
 LONDON, 1965.  
 p. 201.  
 BY DAVID LOW FOR *EVENING STANDARD*.



## APPENDIX 8

*United States and 'third country' military personnel in South Vietnam, 1965-6*

	Numbers of military personnel			Numbers of battalions	
	1964	1965	1966	1965	1966
United States	23,300	184,300	385,300	33	70
South Korea	200	20,620	45,566	10	22
Australia	200	1,557	4,525	1	2
New Zealand	30	119	155	-	-
Philippines	17	72	2,061	-	-
Thailand	16	16	244	-	-
Total	23,763	206,684	437,851	44	94

NOTE: All figures are approximate end of year totals.

SOURCES: Larsen and Collins (1975) pp. 23, 26; Heiser (1974) p. 14; *Pentagon Papers* (Gravel) vol. iv, pp. 318-19.

SMITH, R.B.

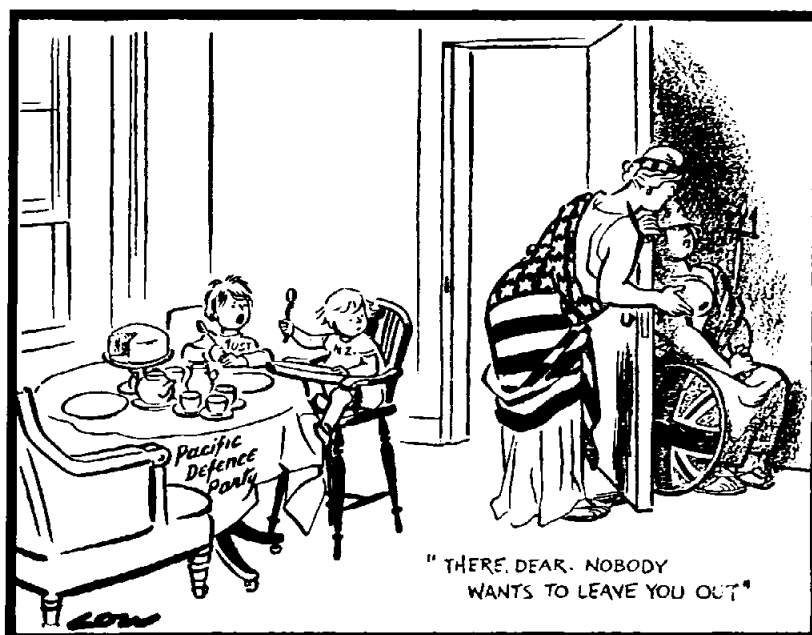
*AN INTERNATIONAL HISTORY OF THE VIETNAM WAR.  
VOLUME III. THE MAKING OF A LIMITED WAR, 1965-66.*

MACMILLAN.

LONDON. 1991.

p. 372.

## APPENDIX 9



BEHIND THE DOOR

MILLER, J.D.B.

*THE COMMONWEALTH IN THE WORLD*

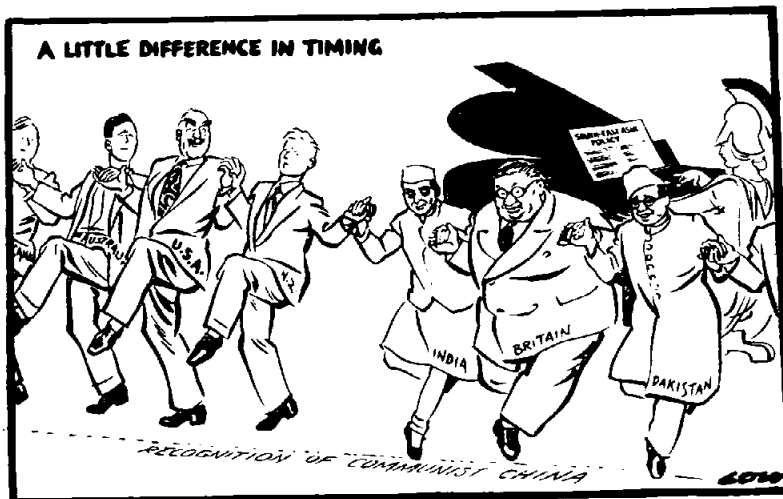
GERALD DUCKWORTH AND CO. LTD.

LONDON. 1965.

p. 162.

BY DAVID LOW FOR *EVENING STANDARD*.

## APPENDIX 10



MILLER, J.D.B.

*THE COMMONWEALTH IN THE WORLD*

GERALD DUCKWORTH AND CO. LTD.

LONDON. 1965.

p. 95.

BY DAVID LOW FOR *EVENING STANDARD*.

## APPENDIX 11

EXPORTS FROM COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES BY DIRECTION.  
1960

TO	£m. WORLD	% TO	
		UK	EEC
FROM:			
NEW ZEALAND	302	53	17
NIGERIA	165	78	30
RHODESIA AND NYASALAND	206	44	20
TANGANYIKA	55	29	25
CYLON	134	28	10
INDIA	476	28	8
AUSTRALIA	704	24	18
GHANA	105	24	37
CANADA	1982	17	8
PAKISTAN	140	17	17
HONG KONG	246	15	5
MALAYA AND SINGAPORE	532	12	18

H.M.S.O.

*BRITAIN AND THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES.**BACKGROUND TO THE NEGOTIATIONS.*

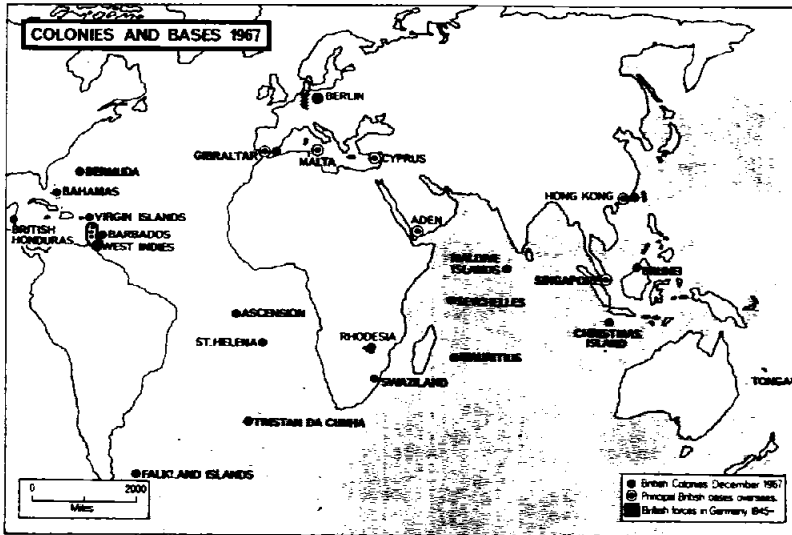
INFORMATION DIVISION OF THE TREASURY

AND THE CENTRAL OFFICE OF INFORMATION.

LONDON. 1962.

p. 36. (WITH MODIFICATION)

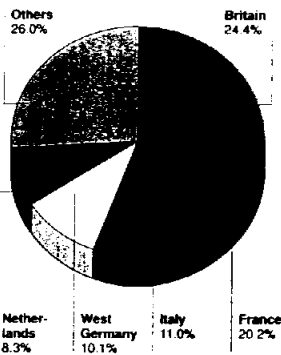
APPENDIX 12



GILBERT, MARTIN  
*BRITISH HISTORY ATLAS.*  
 MACMILLAN.  
 NEW YORK 1968.  
 p. 117. (WITH MODIFICATION)

APPENDIX 13

Marshall Aid 1948-52  
 \$13 billion



Source: *Akuafe Landkarte* 595

Direct American aid channeled to western Europe under the Marshall Plan totalled \$13 billion over the period 1948-52, with allocations to the main recipients shown. The flow of aid was not all one-way traffic. For example, the British contributed some \$6 billion in reciprocal military aid to the US during the war, plus a wealth of scientific and atomic know-how.

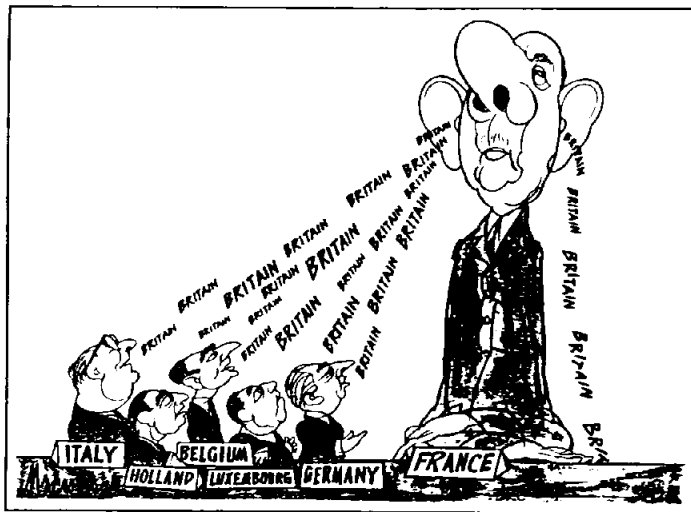
BUCKLEY, RICHARD  
*UNDERSTANDING GLOBAL ISSUES.*  
*EUROPE 1945-1995*  
*HOPES AND REALITIES.*  
 EUROPEAN SCHOOLBOOKS PUBLISHING LTD.  
 CHELTENHAM, ENGLAND. 1995.  
 p. 3.

APPENDIX 14



KITZINGER, UWE  
*THE SECOND TRY*  
 PERGAMON PRESS  
 OXFORD. 1968.  
 p. 187.  
 'RACE DISCRIMINATION.'  
*THE TIMES* 18.5.1967.

APPENDIX 15



KITZINGER, UWE  
*THE SECOND TRY*  
 PERGAMON PRESS  
 OXFORD. 1968.  
 p. 318.  
 'IN ONE EAR...' *THE TIMES* 31.5.1967.

## APPENDIX 16



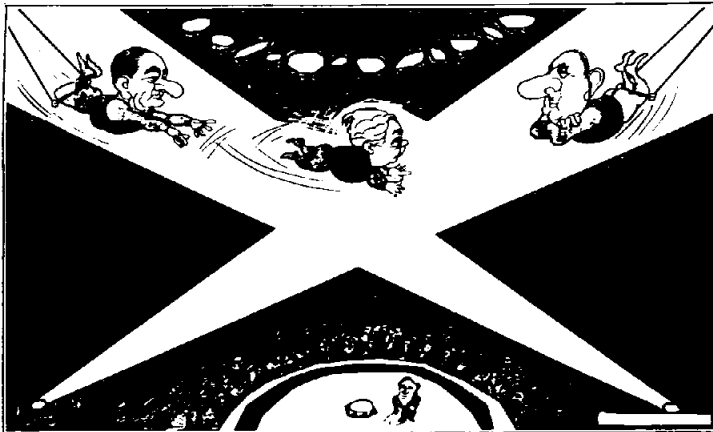
*Britain has 'Special Links' with America.*

KITZINGER, UWE  
*THE SECOND TRY*  
 PERGAMON PRESS  
 OXFORD. 1968.

p. 185.

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## APPENDIX 17

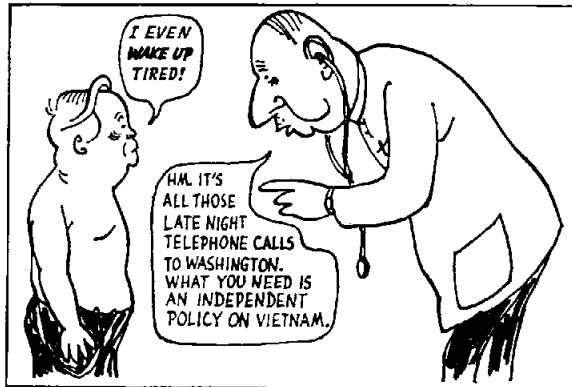


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## APPENDIX 18



WILSON, HAROLD

*THE LABOUR GOVERNMENT 1964-1970. A PERSONAL RECORD.*

WEIDENFELD AND NICOLSON AND MICHAEL JOSEPH.

LONDON. 1971.

p. 81.

BY ABU FOR THE *OBSERVER*. 3-5-1965.

## APPENDIX 19



'er . . . don't phone us - we'll phone you'

WILSON, HAROLD

*THE LABOUR GOVERNMENT 1964-1970. A PERSONAL RECORD.*

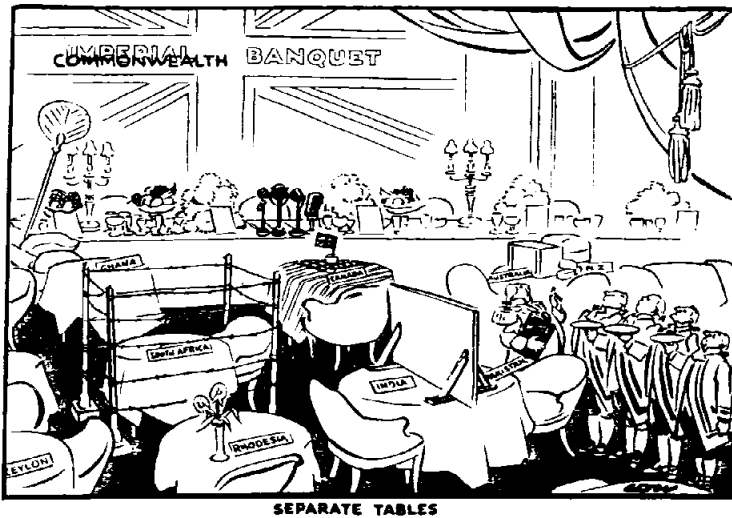
WEIDENFELD AND NICOLSON AND MICHAEL JOSEPH.

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## APPENDIX 20



SEPARATE TABLES

MILLER, J.D.B.

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