

TRANSATLANTIC BRINKSMANSHIP: THE ANGLO-AMERICAN  
ALLIANCE AND CONSERVATIVE  
IDEOLOGY, 1953-1956

by

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this transatlantic dissertation is to produce a new post-revisionist history of Anglo-American relations from 1953 to 1956 that seriously re-assesses Eisenhower's "middle path" foreign policy and the differing responses to it from Churchill and Eden. This reexamination challenges the notion that Eisenhower's foreign policy represented a mere continuation of Truman's containment policy or a "middle path" between Democrats and far-right Republicans. Instead, Eisenhower intentionally adopted a distinctly far-right Republican foreign policy that overwhelmed two Conservative British prime ministers and accelerated the end of the British Empire.

This transatlantic history argues that American foreign policy went from one of accommodation and cooperation with the British to one that proved intrinsically hostile to the British Empire. The Eisenhower administration's anti-communist ideology set aside a balance of power model of diplomacy, in favor of a policy of rolling back communism, while severely undermining British national security and economic interests in both the Middle East and the Far East. Eisenhower and Dulles engaged in a new confrontational "brinkmanship" that diametrically opposed long-term British diplomacy and interests. Their unilateral use of American power against perceived communist threats and their new anti-colonial policies in the Third World put them on an inevitable collision course with Churchill and Eden.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Few historians have discussed the significant differences between Dwight D. Eisenhower, Winston Churchill, and Anthony Eden during the Cold War. John Lukacs, an eminent Hungarian-born American historian known for his admiration of Winston Churchill, observed that “in none of the numerous biographies of Eisenhower is there a substantial description of how this seemingly simple (though in reality rather complex) military man, with his easygoing and liberal reputation, shed his pro-Russian and sometimes pro-Democratic opinions to become a rigid anti-communist, a Republican, and eventually even a self-styled conservative.”<sup>1</sup> Lukacs, like Churchill, believed that Eisenhower missed a great opportunity to end the Cold War with the death of Stalin in 1953.

Eisenhower’s conservatism actually exceeded the conservatism of the “Old Right.” This study challenges the notion that Eisenhower’s transatlantic foreign policy represented either a continuation of Truman’s containment policy or a “middle path” between Democrats and far-right Republicans. If Eisenhower had been a mere continuation of Truman or a “middle path” Republican president, as many historians contend, Winston Churchill and Anthony Eden would have easily anticipated and adapted

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<sup>1</sup> John Lukacs, “Ike, Winston, and the Russians,” *The New York Times*, 10 February 1991, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9D0CED91430F933A25751C0A9679582...> (5 July 2008).

their pragmatic foreign policy to mesh with the foreign policy of the new president. Instead, Eisenhower intentionally adopted a distinctly far-right Republican foreign policy that overwhelmed two Conservative British prime ministers and accelerated the decline of the British Empire.

In 1953, President Dwight D. Eisenhower introduced a new, radical, and dangerous U.S. foreign policy called “brinkmanship” that fundamentally altered the special relationship between the United States and Great Britain. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles described brinkmanship in a *Life* interview in 1956: “The ability to get to the verge without getting into the war is the necessary art. If you cannot master it, you inevitably get into a war. If you try to run away from it, if you are scared to go to the brink, you are lost.”<sup>2</sup> This perilous American policy ran into direct conflict with Churchill’s and Eden’s pragmatic-based foreign relations.

Eisenhower’s ideologically driven brinkmanship clashed significantly with Churchill’s and Eden’s policies of detente with the Soviet Union and communist China. It divided the transatlantic alliance and caused numerous crises in the partnership. The most significant crises occurred in Korea, Indochina, China, Iran, Guatemala, and Suez. On taking office, Eisenhower immediately downgraded the importance of Anglo-American relations by rejecting Churchill’s call for a grand global Anglo-American alliance.

Churchill and Eden learned that Eisenhower and Dulles did not represent a “middle way” in foreign policy, but really represented the return of the “Old Right.”

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<sup>2</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 151.

Eisenhower adopted Douglas MacArthur's strategy to end the Korean War with the threat to use atomic weapons. The American president also threatened President Syngman Rhee of South Korea with a proposed military coup called, "Operation Everready," if he did not cooperate with armistice talks in Panmunjom. Lord Salisbury, the acting British Foreign Secretary, seemed genuinely shocked by the possibility of a global thermonuclear war and a military coup against Rhee occurring at the same time.

In his campaign for the Republican presidential nomination against Senator Robert A. Taft in 1952, Eisenhower had championed collective security agreements. He had directed a large military coalition in the Second World War and had been the leader of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Eisenhower advocated the development of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) in the Far East in 1954. Ironically, by practicing "brinkmanship," Eisenhower and Dulles moved further toward a unilateral foreign policy. Furthermore, in the Third World, they often rejected a collective approach to resolve problems or even the peaceful negotiations that Churchill and Eden often promoted.

For their part, Churchill and Eden completely rejected Eisenhower's "domino theory" in the Far East that warned of a communist takeover in Asia. The British believed that the problems of Indochina could be solved diplomatically at the Geneva Conference in 1954 and genuinely feared the possibility of jungle warfare in Southeast Asia. Many historians have wrongly credited Eisenhower with restraint and for avoiding a war in Vietnam. Instead Eisenhower believed that the British foreign policy of Winston Churchill and Anthony Eden played into the hands of the communists in Asia by giving

them time to develop military advantages over the West. Eden correctly concluded that his efforts toward peacemaking in Geneva had been continually undermined by Eisenhower and Dulles.

The extreme ideological differences between the Americans and the British can be seen most readily in the Quemoy-Matsu Crisis of 1955. The British argued that the coastal islands of Quemoy and Matsu belonged to the communist Chinese. The Americans believed that the coastal islands belonged to the nationalist Chinese on Formosa. Eisenhower threatened global nuclear war over two small islands located near China's mainland. Churchill and Eden could not understand Eisenhower's and Dulles's policy of brinkmanship and feared that it could lead to World War III. For them, the great question concerning Quemoy and Matsu is whether Eisenhower was bluffing China or would have indeed been willing to engage in nuclear warfare.

Although Eisenhower did work with Prime Minister Churchill in "Operation Ajax" to overthrow Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh in Iran, the British had been excluded from "Operation PBSuccess" in Guatemala. Eisenhower took a completely unilateral approach to Guatemala by ignoring British interests in the Western Hemisphere. Eisenhower and Dulles had antagonized the British Foreign Office with their naval blockade of Guatemala. Consequently, Churchill acted against the advice of Eden and the British Foreign Office when he sided with the Americans and opposed a United Nations investigation of Guatemala.

The Suez Crisis in 1956 completely broke the transatlantic relationship between the United States and Great Britain. British Prime Minister Anthony Eden believed

President Gamel Abdel Nasser of Egypt was a new Hitler or Mussolini and an agent of Soviet expansionism. When Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal, Eden argued that it represented an attack against not just Britain but the international community.

Eisenhower, for his part, viewed Nasser as an Arab nationalist who strongly opposed British imperialism. He thought that Nasser had the legal right to nationalize the Suez Canal. Eisenhower chose to support Arab nationalism over Anglo-French colonialism in North Africa and the Middle East. Eisenhower and Dulles supported evolutionary change in the Middle East because British and French colonialism fostered Islamic revolutions.

In November 1956, Eisenhower used economic brinksmanship not to overthrow Nasser, but to turn Anthony Eden out of office. Eden had double-crossed the United States and lied to Eisenhower about Nasser and the Suez Crisis. Eisenhower retaliated by threatening Great Britain with economic ruin by using the Federal Reserve to manipulate the value of the pound sterling on international markets. He devalued the pound, which threatened Great Britain with massive price inflation for economic goods. In addition, Eisenhower made a secret deal in the middle of the crisis with King Saud of Saudi Arabia to cut off all Middle Eastern oil going to Great Britain or France. Eisenhower then instigated a political coup, which led to the resignation of Anthony Eden that effectively ended the Suez Crisis. Ironically, Eisenhower's economic brinksmanship destroyed his closest and most important transatlantic ally.

Ultimately Eisenhower's Third World foreign policy moved from one of accommodation and cooperation with the British to one that proved intrinsically hostile to

the British Empire. The Eisenhower administration's anti-communist ideology set aside balance of power diplomacy in favor of a policy of rolling back communism, while severely undermining British national security and economic interests in both the Middle East and the Far East. Eisenhower and Dulles engaged in a new confrontational "brinkmanship" that diametrically opposed long-term British diplomacy and interests. Their unilateral use of American power against perceived communist threats and their new anti-colonial policies in the Third World put them on an inevitable collision course with Churchill and Eden.

## CHAPTER 2

### ANGLO-AMERICAN HISTORIOGRAPHY

Dwight D. Eisenhower's election in 1952, the first Republican president of the United States in twenty years, represented a radical break from the past, especially in foreign affairs. Eisenhower completely rejected Truman's European-based diplomacy, which had reflexively backed British colonial interests in the Third World. Instead, he favored a global-oriented foreign policy that put forth new ideas of "brinkmanship" and anti-colonialism to combat the communist threat, not just as a European problem, but as a worldwide danger. Eisenhower waged an all-out ideological war on the men in the Kremlin in order to stop an international Marxist revolution.

Yet, Eisenhower did not appear to be any kind of radical. He presented himself as a moderate Republican who accepted New Deal legislation and who gave careful consideration to Democratic proposals in the domestic arena. Indeed, Eisenhower the domestic president can best be described as a centrist.<sup>1</sup> In dealing with foreign affairs, conversely, he demonstrated, contrary to most public perceptions and historical consensus, that he was a radical right-wing Republican.

A close analysis of both Eisenhower's and his Secretary of State John Foster Dulles's speeches about international relations makes absolutely clear the identical nature

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Vol. 2 The President, 1952-1969* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), 160.

and radicalism of their anti-communist ideology. Both men's speeches encouraged an ideological war against communism. Yet, many historians have accepted the spurious notion that this was mere rhetoric. Even after Stalin's death, there could be no political compromises with communist expansionism or moral justifications for summit meetings with the Soviets. In his Manichaeic world, Eisenhower's strident language about the evils of communism and the Soviet Union often politically traumatized both British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and his Foreign Secretary Sir Anthony Eden.

After his inauguration, Eisenhower deliberately downgraded the "special relationship" with Great Britain because he dreaded being tied politically to British colonialism. As he wrote in his diary, "no such special relationship can be maintained or even suggested, publicly. In public relationship all nations are sovereign and equal."<sup>2</sup> Eisenhower and Dulles quietly dispensed with Churchill's proposed plan for an Anglo-American global alliance preferring instead to support Third World nationalist movements if they proved to be anti-communist. Churchill and Eden faced a new American government that no longer sanctioned or safeguarded their colonial interests and seemed completely indifferent to the long-term interests of the British Empire.

Eisenhower's brand of Republicanism resurrected the "Old Right" foreign policy of General Douglas MacArthur, Senator Robert A. Taft, and former president Herbert Hoover. Eisenhower's confidants, who in the 1960s often wrote admiringly of Douglas MacArthur's military plan to end the Korean War, stand in stark contrast to scholars and historians of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s who have all but ignored MacArthur or gone so

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<sup>2</sup> Dwight David Eisenhower and Robert H. Ferrell, *The Eisenhower Diaries* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1981), 232.



far as to trivialize Eisenhower's nuclear threats to end the Korean War.<sup>3</sup>

For his part, Eisenhower generously credited MacArthur's strategy for ending the Korean War, while dismissing British objections and concerns about the possible use of atomic weapons.<sup>4</sup> This nuclear brinksmanship, which MacArthur advocated, illustrated a radical break with the Truman administration and two British governments of differing parties, all of which viewed the MacArthur plan for Korea as far too dangerous. It risked possible war with the Soviet Union. Eisenhower totally accepted the risk. Indeed, his success in ending the Korean War may have led to overconfidence about the possible use of nuclear weapons in Asia. For this reason, MacArthur, not Secretary of State Dulles, should be considered the true author of Eisenhower's "brinksmanship."<sup>5</sup>

Senator Robert A. Taft of Ohio also encouraged a radical and extreme right-wing global foreign policy as well. The former isolationist now argued against American isolationism in favor of a policy based in part on the nineteenth-century writings of Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan.<sup>6</sup> Taft's and Mahan's ideas would become the basis of Eisenhower's "New Look," with military emphasis on the air force and the navy over army ground troops. Taft had fought to reduce military expenditures, exemplified by large numbers of American ground troops in Europe, while at the same time expanding the power and scope of the American military, specifically through the strategic use of

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<sup>3</sup> See Edward Friedman, "Nuclear Blackmail and the End of the Korean War," *Modern China* 1, no. 1 (Jan. 1975): 75-91.

<sup>4</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Mandate for Change 1953-1956* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1963), 180.

<sup>5</sup> See Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964).

<sup>6</sup> Robert A. Taft, *A Foreign Policy for Americans* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1951).

the navy and air atomic power.<sup>7</sup>

Eisenhower and Taft vigorously disagreed on the importance of collective security agreements, the leading reason for Eisenhower's candidacy for the Republican nomination in 1952. After the election, however, Eisenhower dramatically adopted Taft's ideas about U.S. foreign policy, as written into the Republican platform by John Foster Dulles. The Republican platform, with its underlying unilateralism, harkened back to the nineteenth century, which ultimately undermined British national security and economic interests.

Herbert Hoover, a fervent supporter of Robert Taft in 1952, had himself called for the United States to implement a "Gibraltar" defense of the Western Hemisphere. Eisenhower's actions in Guatemala in 1954, and later in Cuba, demonstrated his serious disregard for international laws, organizations, and especially Western allies whenever he perceived a communist threat to the United States in the Western Hemisphere. The influence of Taft and Hoover in hemispheric defense can most readily be seen in Guatemala, where Eisenhower and Dulles moved swiftly and unilaterally to overthrow the government of Jacobo Arbenz despite British objections to their plans.<sup>8</sup>

Eisenhower shook up the political and military establishment in Washington by rejecting Paul Nitze's NSC 68, because it placed far too heavy a financial burden on the

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<sup>7</sup> See H.W. Brands, "The Age of Vulnerability: Eisenhower and the National Insecurity State" *The American Historical Review* 94, No. 4 (Oct. 1989): 963-989. Brand argues, mistakenly, that Eisenhower helped create the very military industrial complex that he deplored. The military industrial complex began with Kennedy's massive increase in nuclear weapons due to the "missile gap." It continued with Lyndon Johnson's expansion of the Vietnam War.

<sup>8</sup> Herbert Hoover, *Addresses Upon the American Road, 1950-1955* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1955).

United States. He quickly moved to replace it with the more economical “New Look,” intended to assure the military and the public “more bang for the buck.” George F. Kennan's relatively safe but reactive containment policy, ineptly employed, Kennan insisted, by Truman’s Secretary of State Dean Acheson, had led to a disastrous and hugely unpopular stalemate in Korea.<sup>9</sup> Eisenhower scrapped Kennan’s policy in favor of a far more risky but potentially more successful policy of “brinkmanship.”

Unlike President Truman, who had often lectured about the need to save the United States from communism, Eisenhower discoursed about the “long term” needs of the United States and about saving “the American way of life.”<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, Eisenhower understood the vital importance of maintaining the health of the economy in providing for an essential military defense. Truman's inert and torpid foreign policy had too often relied on standard military strategies.<sup>11</sup> Eisenhower preferred a nuanced, proactive, covert, and even “hidden hand” foreign policy in order to defeat the communists by outplaying them at their own subversive game.<sup>12</sup>

Sherman Adams, Eisenhower’s chief of staff, described in 1961 how the Korean War had ended. Adams maintained that MacArthur's plan to threaten China with an expanded war and the possible use of atomic bombs had forced the Chinese and the North Koreans to sign an armistice. He wrote, “MacArthur was sure that there was not

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<sup>9</sup> George F. Kennan, *Realities of American Foreign Policy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1954).

<sup>10</sup> Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*.

<sup>11</sup> See David G. McCullough, *Truman* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992).

<sup>12</sup> Fred I. Greenstein, “Eisenhower as an Activist President: A Look at New Evidence,” *Political Science Quarterly* (Winter 1979-80): 94.

the remotest chance we would actually have to carry out the threat; the communists would simply throw up their hands and the war would be over. Although not as blunt and specific as MacArthur had suggested, it was indeed the threat of atomic attack that evidently did bring the Korean War to an end on July 26, 1953.”<sup>13</sup> The earliest accounts of Eisenhower’s foreign policy, written by people close to Eisenhower, gave full credit to the administration’s “take charge” attitude, particularly in speedily ending the Korean War.

In contrast to this rather blunt and surprisingly candid assessment from Adams, Eisenhower historians have denied this claim. They have written instead that Eisenhower “understood that, in lieu of a nuclear monopoly, nuclear weapons were not easily usable tools of statecraft that produced predictable result.”<sup>14</sup> Eisenhower revisionists writing in the 1980s openly doubted whether or not Eisenhower really threatened to use nuclear weapons against the Chinese.<sup>15</sup> Jung Chang and Jon Halliday have recently pointed out that while Stalin hated the idea of giving atomic weapons to Mao, he feared the new American president might use nuclear weapons and for this reason concluded the Korean War needed to end.<sup>16</sup>

Eisenhower further raised the nuclear stakes in Southeast Asia in 1954 by deliberately devising the “domino theory.” In a now famous press conference on April 7,

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<sup>13</sup> Sherman Adams, *First Hand: The Story of the Eisenhower Administration* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961), 48-49.

<sup>14</sup> Stephen G. Rabe, “Eisenhower Revisionism,” *Diplomatic History* 17 (Winter 1993): 103-104.

<sup>15</sup> See McGeorge Bundy, “Atomic Diplomacy Reconsidered,” *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, 38, no. 1 (Oct. 1984): 25-44.

<sup>16</sup> Jung Chang and Jon Halliday, *The Unknown Story: Mao* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf., 2005), 374.

1954, while explaining the situation in French Indochina, the president stated: “You have a row of dominoes set up, and you knock over the first one... and what will happen to the last one is the certainty that it will go over very quickly. So you have the beginning of a disintegration that would have the most profound influences.”<sup>17</sup> Churchill and Eden, not really fearing a complete communist takeover of the region, differed drastically with Eisenhower’s assessment.

Many Eisenhower revisionists, including historian Robert A. Divine, have praised Eisenhower’s superior judgment in not getting involved in the French-Indochina War.<sup>18</sup> In reality, Eisenhower requested an early internationalization and militarization of the Indochina War as part of his vast battle plan against global communism.<sup>19</sup>

Eisenhower and Dulles thought that by threatening a wider war they could stop the dominoes from falling in Southeast Asia. Churchill and Eden, trusting in the greater efficacy of their diplomatic efforts at the Geneva Conference, actually labored feverishly to restrain the United States from entering into the quagmire of the French-Indochina War by refusing to participate in it themselves.

In 1954, the United States and Great Britain grudgingly helped create the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization to stop communist subversion in Indochina. This new international organization substantiated the claims that collective security or United Action did not work in the fight against communism in Southeast Asia. The British and

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<sup>17</sup> Robert J. Donovan, *Eisenhower: the Inside Story* (New York: Harper, 1956), 261.

<sup>18</sup> Robert A. Divine, *Eisenhower and the Cold War* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1981), 54-55.

<sup>19</sup> See George C. Herring and Richard Immerman, “Eisenhower, Dulles, and Dienbienphu: ‘The Day We Didn’t Go to War’ Revisited,” *The Journal of American History* 71, no. 2 (Sept. 1984): 343-363.

the French consistently evaded their responsibilities under the Manila Pact, leaving the United States virtually alone, without Western allies, in the battle against communism in Asia.<sup>20</sup> For Eisenhower, the situation in Asia went from bad to worse. Sherman Adams recorded: “Dulles said emphatically that the British and the French were giving us no military support in Asia and were opposed to our use of atomic weapons in a defense of Formosa. But we could not allow our policies in Asia to be dictated by our European allies.”<sup>21</sup> The United States, under Eisenhower’s deliberate guidance, began moving away from a collective security approach in Asia to an even more unilateral foreign policy.

Some Eisenhower revisionists have applauded the president for the way he avoided war over Quemoy and Matsu, the nationalist-controlled offshore islands of China. They have celebrated his “deliberate deception and ambiguity” with regard to a possible nuclear attack against mainland China. Robert Divine, for example, has written that “the beauty of Eisenhower’s policy is to this day no one can be sure whether or not he would have responded militarily to an invasion of the offshore islands, and whether he would have used nuclear weapons.”<sup>22</sup> Of course this raised the serious and interesting question of whether Eisenhower’s “brinkmanship” was all bluff, a question repeatedly asked in 1956 by Democratic presidential candidate Adlai Stevenson.

Historian Yi Sun has insisted that Eisenhower’s dangerous stand on Quemoy and

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<sup>20</sup> See David L. Anderson, *Trapped by Success: The Eisenhower Administration and Vietnam, 1953-1961* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991); George M.T. Kahin, *Intervention: How America Became Involved in Vietnam* (New York: Knopf, 1986).

<sup>21</sup> Adams, 132.

<sup>22</sup> Divine, 65-66.

Matsu paid off. Sun thinks that “This strategy seemed effective. There is evidence to suggest that Mao at this time began to take the American nuclear threats more seriously. Although he continued to embrace the concept of ‘people's war’, Mao came to realize nuclear weaponry, which he had discounted as a ‘paper tiger’, could be a ‘real tiger’ capable of mass destruction.”<sup>23</sup> But beyond this latest assertion, historians have consistently disagreed on whether Eisenhower established himself as a prudent statesman by threatening nuclear war over these tiny Chinese islands.<sup>24</sup>

The danger in pursuing deliberately ambiguous or deceptive policies proved to be that they confused not only the Chinese but American and British policymakers as well.<sup>25</sup> Eisenhower even became frustrated trying to explain his own policies to Winston Churchill. In fact, Churchill and Eden battled against Eisenhower's policies on Quemoy and Matsu and thought that the threats of U.S. military actions were far too militant and unnecessarily threatened Europe with the possibility of a third world war.<sup>26</sup>

British and American policymakers widely diverged on ideology, strategy, and tactics throughout the Cold War but especially during the first Eisenhower administration. James C. Hagerty, Eisenhower's press secretary, revealed in his diaries

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<sup>23</sup> Yi Sun, “Militant Diplomacy: The Taiwan Strait Crises and Sino-American Relations, 1954-1958,” *The Eisenhower Administration, the Third World, and the Globalization of the Cold War*, edited by Kathryn C. Statler and Andrew L. Johns (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 2006), 125.

<sup>24</sup> See John Lewis Gaddis, *The Long Peace: Inquiries into the History of the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); David A. Mayers, *Cracking the Monolith: U.S. Policy against the Sino-Soviet Alliance, 1949-1955* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1986).

<sup>25</sup> See Gordon H. Chang and He Di, “The Absence of War in the U.S.-China Confrontation over Quemoy and Matsu in 1954-1955: Contingency, Luck, Deterrence,” *The American Historical Review* 98, no. 5 (Dec. 1993): 1500-1524; Leonard H. D. Gordon, “United States Opposition to Use of Force in the Taiwan Straits, 1954-1962,” *The Journal of American History* 72, no. 3 (Dec. 1985): 637-660.

<sup>26</sup> Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Vol. 2 The President, 1952-1969*, 238-240.

that even on Guatemala, the Americans and the British fiercely contested each other's policy. Eisenhower declared that his administration, in fact, had been "too damned nice to the British" and complained that the "British expect us to give them a free ride and side with them on Cyprus and yet they won't even support us on Guatemala. Let's give them a lesson."<sup>27</sup> One persistent and serious question for historians continues to be, what did Eisenhower really think of collective security?

In using the CIA, Eisenhower employed various covert operations to overthrow communist-oriented regimes, yet he cannot be held fully responsible for what happened later in Iran and South Vietnam, and he certainly cannot be blamed for the mistakes less experienced presidents made years later.<sup>28</sup> His complicated and nuanced diplomacy, although at times confusing and even dangerous, today seems far more attractive to many historians than the catastrophic policies that led later presidents into wars in Vietnam, Kuwait, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

The greatest crisis of the Eisenhower years proved to be the Suez Affair of 1956. As one member of the Eisenhower administration stated in the 1960s, "The snarl of the Middle East, throughout the political campaign of 1956, made of Dulles a nettled Secretary and a distraught lawyer. Zealous to press the crucial case against Soviet world policy, he deplored the whole Middle Eastern scene as a kind of irritating distraction to

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<sup>27</sup> James C. Hagerty and Robert H. Ferrell, *The Diary of James C. Hagerty: Eisenhower in Mid Course, 1954-1955* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), 75.

<sup>28</sup> Fred I. Greenstein and Richard H. Immerman, "What Did Eisenhower Tell Kennedy about Indochina? The Politics of Misperception," *The Journal of American History* 79, no. 2 (Sept. 1992): 568-587.



be fought off as it was immaterial and even inadmissible evidence.”<sup>29</sup> This assessment has provoked the intriguing question of whether the Americans really wanted to control the Middle East or were forced into it by a faltering and possibly incompetent British government. Whatever the case, Eisenhower maintained a cool and calm deliberative decision-making process in the Suez Crisis. The U.S. government ardently rejected the gunboat diplomacy of the Eden cabinet along with the British colonialism that it entailed. Ultimately, Eisenhower and Dulles wanted to stop the spread of Soviet communism in the Middle East far more than they worried about the hurt feelings of their Western allies. The British and the Americans shared some strategic goals, but serious differences persisted on the tactical level.

Several historians recently have claimed that “the Eisenhower administration had grossly exaggerated the Soviet threat, misunderstood Arab nationalism, and stimulated Arab anti-Americanism.”<sup>30</sup> The historical evidence indicates a truth far more complicated. A Soviet threat did exist in places like Egypt and Syria. Moslem faith and culture, anti-democratic and authoritarian, had a far greater affinity with communism than it did with Western values. Eisenhower and Dulles ultimately decided that they needed to replace British power with American power to deal with the difficult and intractable political problems of the troubled Middle East. As historian Robert F. Burk has boldly alleged:

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<sup>29</sup> Emmet John Hughes, *The Ordeal of Power: A Political Memoir of the Eisenhower Years* (New York: Atheneum, 1963), 210-211.

<sup>30</sup> Rabe, “Eisenhower Revisionism,” 109.

Eisenhower took his action in the Suez Crisis on the ground that the imperialistic actions of the British and the French had alienated world opinion and served as a pretext for Russian penetration of the region and for new threats to American oil interests. His unilateral policy on Suez won immediate and overwhelming approval in the Third World, and it thrust the United States into the position of Middle Eastern power broker.<sup>31</sup>

America's historical anti-colonialism reasserted itself in this most ideological of administrations.

John Foster Dulles, perhaps the most ideologically-driven Secretary of State in American history, organized an all-out Cold War against the Soviet Union. As early as 1960, historians and journalists professed “underlying differences between his fundamental approach to the Cold War and that which he felt he detected in London. He said he found the British too inclined to regard the Soviet government as another imperialistic Russian regime along traditional lines, with whom one could do business as one had done with the Czars.”<sup>32</sup> This fundamental distinction, between the Americans and the British, noted even before the Eisenhower administration had left office, corroborated the differences in their perception of the ideological threat posed by the Soviet Union. Dulles persevered in an all-out ideological war against the Soviet Union, while the British, particularly Eden, continued in a pragmatic balance of power approach.

Dulles and British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden not only had policy differences but personality differences as well. As early as the 1960s, Richard Goold-

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<sup>31</sup> Robert F. Burk, *Dwight D. Eisenhower: Hero and Politician* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1986), 133.

<sup>32</sup> Roscoe Drummond and Gaston Coblenz, *Duel at the Brink: John Foster Dulles' Command of American Power* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1960), 163.

Adams wrote: “They have been described as ‘the Roundhead and the Cavalier’, with differences as profound as those between the two elements in the English Civil War. There was much that was Cromwellian about Dulles, and his disdain for Eden as well as Eden’s complete distrust of him brought to an end the whole wartime era of Anglo-American partnership, with effects that can be felt to this day.”<sup>33</sup> These policy differences aggravated real personality differences between Dulles and Eden. Profound ideological deviations went beyond mere policy and personality differences. Unquestionably, each one’s entirely different outlook on the world, and how to order it, substantiated the shocking differences between the two men.

In addition to the contrast between Dulles and Eden, some historians have attempted to separate Eisenhower from Dulles and have professed that somehow these two men may have significantly differed on anti-communist ideology or U.S. foreign affairs. Dulles has a reputation as one of the most unpopular secretaries of states in American history. While historical revisionism in the 1980s and 1990s attempted to move toward rehabilitating Eisenhower, historians unremittingly denounced Dulles as a bombastic, anti-communist ideologue who threatened world peace.<sup>34</sup> Historians should more correctly portray Eisenhower and Dulles as a team, who worked together intimately. Dulles routinely showed the president his speeches, letters, policy papers, and proposals well in advance so that Eisenhower could personally approve or modify them. The two men and their perspectives on foreign policy cannot be separated. Eisenhower

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<sup>33</sup> Richard Goold-Adams, *John Foster Dulles: A Reappraisal* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1962), 3.

<sup>34</sup> See Rabe, “Eisenhower Revisionism,” 97-115.

and Dulles stood as one in implementing U.S. diplomacy in the 1950s.

The analytical problems with early assessments of Eisenhower's foreign policy can be best seen in Townsend Hoopes's *The Devil and John Foster Dulles*. He concluded that "Taft had voted against NATO, argued for no commitments in Europe, flirted with MacArthur's thesis of unilateral action in Asia, and that of American military force solely in terms of air power. Eisenhower was the living embodiment of global interdependence, free trade, collective security and Europe-first."<sup>35</sup> Hoopes distorted nearly everything: he changed Taft's record since Taft actually supported limited American ground troops in Europe; Eisenhower more than "flirted" with MacArthur's thesis of unilateral action in Asia by disregarding his British allies and the past policies of the Truman administration. Eisenhower unilaterally threatened the Chinese with atomic bombs over Korea, French Indochina, and Quemoy and Matsu; and he completely abandoned the Truman and Acheson "Europe First" foreign policy in favor of a global, anti-communist, and militarized foreign policy.

While it is true that Eisenhower supported NATO and the creation of SEATO in 1954, these collective security organizations never undertook any significant military action under Eisenhower's auspices.<sup>36</sup> Eisenhower utterly disregarded collective security and British advice in the numerous crises that he faced as president. His foreign policy, contrary to the view of most historians, should only be described as unilateral.

Many of the journalists and historians who despised Dulles had not read his

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<sup>35</sup> Townsend Hoopes, *The Devil and John Foster Dulles* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973), 129.

<sup>36</sup> See Roger Dingman, "John Foster Dulles and the Creation of the South-East Asia Treaty Organization in 1954," *The International History Review* 11, no. 3 (Aug. 1989): 457-477.

voluminous speeches, press conferences, or interviews. His words have been recklessly parsed and sometimes intentionally misinterpreted: “Dulles ‘rattled ideas as he rattled weaponry’, one representative of the 1950s press remembered. ‘From the time he stalked down the aisle of the departmental auditorium it was an adversary relationship’, recalled another.”<sup>37</sup> Dulles, a long-time attorney, unquestionably fostered an adversarial relationship with the press by his anti-communism, self-righteousness, and claims to moral superiority.

Dulles’s unpopularity and the press’s antagonism to him could be blamed on his very intense anti-communist ideology. His anti-Marxist, dense, legalistic rhetoric and prose hardly appealed to left-leaning or liberal historians of the past thirty years, or even to many others. Dulles tenaciously persisted in seeing the world only in terms of good and evil, with the communists obviously in league with the devil. This more than tested the patience of both journalists and historians, especially those trained as Realists. Historians have avowed that, in their foreign policy speeches, Eisenhower and Dulles deliberately distinguished themselves, somewhat self-righteously, from those who did not believe in God, who had no morality, and who believed in the absolute power of the state. Eisenhower and Dulles knew that the American people believed in God, recognized the difference between right and wrong, and expected their leaders to do right in foreign affairs, all the while supporting limited federal government.

Dulles’s copious speeches demonstrated his credentials as a hard-core cold warrior in the battle against communism, even as his critics maintained that Dulles

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<sup>37</sup> Richard Immerman, ed., *John Foster Dulles and the Diplomacy of the Cold War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 11.

offered few or very simple solutions to highly complex problems. In his own article in *Life*, entitled “A Policy of Boldness,” Dulles proposed that American foreign policy should be active rather than reactive.<sup>38</sup> He endorsed the liberation of the satellite countries and the rollback of communism in Eastern Europe. Dulles backed a new strategy to attack the communist threat that included the possibility of “massive retaliation.”<sup>39</sup>

Many historians have criticized Dulles for the huge gulf between his speeches and his actual policies. Some have admired Eisenhower for avoiding military action in French Indochina, on Quemoy and Matsu, and at Suez. Divine contended “Yet in the aftermath of Vietnam, it can be argued that a president who avoids hasty military action and refrains from extensive involvement in the internal affairs of other nations deserves praise rather than scorn.”<sup>40</sup> Dulles, though, seems to deserve some credit from historians for the foreign policy successes of the Eisenhower years.

A closer review of the archival record makes abundantly clear that Eisenhower and Dulles worked as a team while promoting a profoundly far-right Republican foreign policy agenda. The two men conferred on the possible use of nuclear weapons in Korea, French Indochina, and on the Chinese mainland. Eisenhower and Dulles also plotted a possible military ouster of Syngman Rhee in South Korea shortly before the North Korean government signed an armistice. They actively sustained the highly unpopular

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<sup>38</sup> John Foster Dulles, “A Policy of Boldness,” *Life*, 19 May 1952.

<sup>39</sup> See H. W. Brands, Jr., “Testing Massive Retaliation: Credibility and Crisis Management in the Taiwan Strait,” *International Security* 12 (Spring 1988): 124-151.

<sup>40</sup> Divine, 154.

and authoritarian Diem regime in South Vietnam. Eisenhower and Dulles aggressively planned the overthrow of Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh in Iran and President Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala.<sup>41</sup> They not only initiated the overthrow of hostile dictators, but together they also manipulated the internal affairs of Western allies. The president and secretary of state covertly supported those members of the British Conservative Party, such as Harold MacMillan and R.A. Butler, who wanted Anthony Eden removed as prime minister in 1956.

In spite of historians' tendency to vilify Dulles, he should be given his fair share of the credit in creating an active, anti-communist foreign policy that allowed Eisenhower to shape events and avoid major wars throughout the 1950s. Revisionist historians frequently pointed out that Dulles should not be defined by his speeches but by his specific policies. The problem with that analysis is that Dulles's speeches cannot be separated from his policies because during the Eisenhower years, Dulles's speeches were U.S. policy. Eisenhower often actively reviewed, edited, and commented on Dulles's proposed foreign policy speeches. Interestingly, a close review of the president's comments indicates that his zealous anti-communism often exceeded Dulles's rhetoric.<sup>42</sup> This ideologically driven U.S. foreign policy could never be compatible with British diplomacy.

British historian John Charmley has asserted that British and American foreign

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<sup>41</sup> On Iran see, H.W. Brands, "The Cairo-Tehran Connection in Anglo-American Rivalry in the Middle East, 1951-1953," *The International History Review* 11, no. 3 (Aug., 1989): 434-456; Mary Ann Heiss, "The United States, Great Britain, and the Creation of the Iranian Oil Consortium, 1953-1954," *The International History Review* 16, no. 3 (Aug. 1994): 511-535.

<sup>42</sup> See Frederick W. Marks, III, "The Real Hawk at Dienbienphu: Dulles or Eisenhower?" *The Pacific Historical Review* 59, no. 3 (Aug. 1990): 297-322.

policy interests conflicted very much in the 1950s. He maintained that Churchill's subservience to the United States actually harmed British interests.<sup>43</sup> Churchill sought accommodation with the United States, but this became increasingly difficult with growing ideological differences between the two countries. Churchill had hoped for "détente" with the new Soviet leadership after Stalin died while Eisenhower saw the new Soviet leadership, guided by the same communist ideology, as differing little from Stalin's leadership. Churchill also defended the concept of colonialism, insisting it had helped civilize and democratize Third World countries, even while Eisenhower promoted national independence movements, provided of course, that they were anti-communist.

Churchill comprehended Great Britain's growing economic weakness in its relation to the United States. This recognition of weakness severely handicapped British diplomatic initiatives. British historian Alan P. Dobson contends that the special economic relationship between America and the United Kingdom began deteriorating by 1952,<sup>44</sup> while Robin Edmonds claimed that mutual hostility towards the Soviet Union guaranteed the continuance of the special relationship.<sup>45</sup> This relationship radically changed in 1952 with the election of Eisenhower, who purposely demoted the "special relationship." Historian Robert M. Hathaway has evaluated the overall evolution and progress of diplomacy between America and Great Britain since the end of the Second

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<sup>43</sup> John Charmley, *Churchill's Grand Alliance: The Anglo-American Special Relationship, 1940-57* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1995).

<sup>44</sup> Alan P. Dobson, *The Politics of the Anglo-American Economic Relationship, 1940-1987* (Brighton, Sussex: Wheatsheaf Books, 1988).

<sup>45</sup> Robin Edmonds, *Setting the Mould: The United States and Britain, 1945-1950* (New York: Norton, 1986).



World War and fully disclosed the tremendous volatility of the relationship.<sup>46</sup>

For Churchill, military considerations also played a most important role in this transatlantic alliance. Helen Leigh-Phippard looked closely at the importance of military aid in defining the relationship between the United States and Great Britain. She thought that the special relationship between the two countries really collapsed with the end of the Korean War.<sup>47</sup> Similarly, British historian R. B. Manderson-Jones has examined the importance of the political, economic, and military differences between the Americans and the British on the future of Western Europe.<sup>48</sup> The differences in Europe still proved far less important than the significant differences between the two countries in the Middle East and the Far East. In the 1980s, Fraser J. Harbutt scrutinized the importance of Churchill's Iron Curtain speech as a cause for the Cold War and explained how Churchill perceived the Soviet threat,<sup>49</sup> while Timothy J. Botti concluded that the nuclear arms relationship between the Americans and British evolved slowly and painfully eventually leading to a full partnership.<sup>50</sup> In spite of these detailed analyses it remains quite clear

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<sup>46</sup> Robert M. Hathaway, *Great Britain and the United States: Special Relations since World War II* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1990).

<sup>47</sup> Helen Leigh-Phippard, *Congress and US Military Aid to Britain: Interdependence and Dependence, 1949-56* (New York: St. Martin Press in association with the Mountbatten Centre for International Studies, University of Southampton, 1995).

<sup>48</sup> R.B. Manderson-Jones, *The Special Relationship: Anglo-American Relations and Western European Unity 1947-56* (London: London School of Economics and Political Science, 1972).

<sup>49</sup> Fraser J. Harbutt, *The Iron Curtain: Churchill, America, and the Origins of the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

<sup>50</sup> Timothy J. Botti, *The Long Wait: The Forging of the Anglo-American Nuclear Alliance, 1945-1958* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987).

that the British in the 1950s really moved from the status of an equal partner to a junior partner in the Anglo-American relationship.

British historians have long discussed the perennial question of how long Churchill should have remained in office. Many historians insinuate that his longevity was due in part to the fact that Churchill did not think Anthony Eden was sufficiently prepared to be prime minister, thus prolonging his own need to stay in power. “I don't believe Anthony can do it,” was Churchill’s analysis.<sup>51</sup> The problem lay in the fact that Winston Churchill’s center-right political beliefs appreciably differed from Eden’s center-left views and this, some suggest, may have considerably lengthened Churchill’s second premiership.<sup>52</sup> Lord Moran, Churchill’s physician, testified that, “The P.M. always claims that Anthony and he agree on most things in the field of foreign affairs, though it is not often very noticeable; they don't seem, for instance, to have much in common about Suez, or China, or in their approach to the Americans.”<sup>53</sup> Churchill and Eden often fought over Anglo-American relations.

Churchill and Eden even debated the Guatemala situation. Eden considered the Americans hypocritical on Greece and Turkey when they overthrew Guatemala. Churchill, however, did not actually care about Eden’s views on Guatemala. He worried more about Britain’s deteriorating relationship with the United States than over such

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<sup>51</sup> John Colville, *The Fringes of Power: 10 Downing Street Diaries* (New York: Norton, 1985), 708.

<sup>52</sup> See Paul Addison, “The Political Beliefs of Winston Churchill,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, fifth series, 30 (1980): 23-47; Stuart Ball, “Churchill and the Conservative Party,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, sixth series, 11 (2001): 307-330.

<sup>53</sup> Charles McMoran Wilson, *Winston Churchill: The Struggle for Survival* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966), 594.

minor matters as Guatemala.<sup>54</sup>

Besides Churchill's differences with Eden, Churchill and Eisenhower fundamentally clashed on the nature of the communist threat in Asia. Churchill vigorously rejected Eisenhower's domino theory and the value that he attached to Southeast Asia. He also refused to help him bail out French colonialism in Indochina. One British scholar has written that "Eisenhower seemed more concerned by the threat posed by China than by Russia's confrontation with the West in Europe. He was alarmed by Britain's 'soft' attitude and admitted that the difference between the governments 'puzzles us sorely and constantly.'<sup>55</sup> Churchill obviously assumed that the center of the Cold War lay in Europe, not in Asia. This distinction proved critical.

Great Britain's political, economic, and military power around the globe slowly dissipated in the early 1950s. Historian Chi-Kwan Mark has contended that "Britain's Cold War strategy was predicated on its postwar military and economic weaknesses, so that diplomacy would be the main instrument to preserve its influence in great power status in the world."<sup>56</sup> Britain's policy toward China revolved around defending Hong Kong. The British incessantly urged restraint to the Americans about China. The United States, as well as Great Britain, used Hong Kong as an intelligence base, but did not consider it important to fighting the Cold War. Churchill sought at every opportunity to

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 603-604.

<sup>55</sup> John Dickie, *"Special No More": Anglo-American Relations: Rhetoric and Reality* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1994), 71.

<sup>56</sup> Chi-Kwan Mark, *Hong Kong and the Cold War: Anglo-American Relations 1949-1957* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), 22-23. See also Chi-Kwan Mark, "A Reward for Good Behaviour in the Cold War: Bargaining over the Defense of Hong Kong, 1949-1957," *The International History Review* 22, no. 4 (Dec. 2000): 837-861.

avoid any possibility of war with mainland China.<sup>57</sup> He felt that Asia should be downgraded as a theater of conflict in the Cold War, preferring diplomatic to military moves in the Far East, while supporting British national interests rather than engaging in guerilla wars for strictly anti-communist motives.

In his last months as prime minister, Churchill genuinely doubted the wisdom of Eisenhower's policy of defending the offshore islands of Quemoy and Matsu. He stressed that the Seventh Fleet provided an absolute defense for the island of Formosa. One U.S. historian has found that in the crisis over Quemoy and Matsu in early 1955, "Churchill was completely unable to influence Eisenhower on a policy which the British considered to be extremely dangerous."<sup>58</sup> The Anglo-American conflict over the offshore islands lasted until the spring of 1955 when the crisis gradually ended. Churchill unwaveringly disputed Eisenhower's premise that holding Formosa, let alone Quemoy and Matsu, would be the key to holding Southeast Asia.

The danger of a fraying transatlantic relationship has been evaluated by several historians. One of them, Jeffrey A. Engels, has claimed that "Britain's reluctance to accept American leadership hindered the anti-Communist fight, and perhaps more importantly, it made London the clear leader of the budding movement of resistance to

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<sup>57</sup> See Victor S. Kaufman, "'Chirep': The Anglo-American Dispute over Chinese Representation in the United Nations, 1950-71," *The English Historical Review* 115, no. 461 (Apr. 2000): 354-377; Kevin Ruane, "Refusing to Pay the Price: British Foreign Policy and the Pursuit of Victory in Vietnam, 1952-4," *The English Historical Review* 110, no. 435 (Feb. 1995): 70-92.

<sup>58</sup> Jeremy Pressman, *Warring Friends: Alliance Restraint in International Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 61.

American hegemony.”<sup>59</sup> Others have argued that Stalin's death provided a real opportunity to end the Cold War. Given Eisenhower's ideological proclivities, however, Stalin's death may actually have created greater division between the Western allies and a real split between the Americans and the British. Churchill's speeches for a new diplomacy or a new *détente* consistently fell on deaf ears in Washington.<sup>60</sup>

Churchill and Eisenhower battled energetically about how to handle Egypt. Churchill sought American assistance and, for the most part, only received Eisenhower's cold shoulder. Norwegian historian Tore T. Petersen has perceptively shown that, “While listening politely to Churchill, Eisenhower afterwards noted in his diary that the plea for Anglo-American unity is nothing but a ploy to gain support for the British predicament in the Middle East. He thought Churchill's ideas old fashioned and paternalistic.”<sup>61</sup> Churchill was always anxious that the Americans considered British concerns in Egypt insignificant. Petersen has also pointed out that

Churchill had several times previously alluded to the possibility that if the United States were unwilling to support Britain on Suez, Britain would be less forthcoming in other areas of the world where the United States was involved. During the Bermuda Conference in December 1953, Churchill

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<sup>59</sup> Jeffrey A. Engel, *Cold War at 30,000 Feet: The Anglo-American Fight for Aviation Supremacy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 182. See also John W. Young, “Churchill and East-West *Détente*,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, sixth series, 11 (2001): 373-392.

<sup>60</sup> Klaus Larres and Kenneth Osgood, eds., *The Cold War After Stalin's Death: A Missed Opportunity for Peace?* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2006).

<sup>61</sup> Tore T. Petersen, *The Middle East between the Great Powers: Anglo-American Conflict and Cooperation, 1952-7* (New York: St. Martin's Press Inc. 2000), 3. See also Tore T. Petersen, “Anglo-American Rivalry in the Middle East: The Struggle for the Buraimi Oasis,” *The International History Review* 14, no. 1 (Feb. 1992): 71-91.

hinted that he might re-evaluate British policy towards China because of American policy towards Egypt.<sup>62</sup>

Churchill made a number of veiled threats, particularly about U.S. military bases in England, which troubled both Eisenhower and Dulles.

Nevertheless, Churchill made a serious effort at trying to patch up problems in this transatlantic relationship by suggesting a summit meeting in Washington. He and Eden arrived in Washington D.C. in June 1954 and found some agreement with Eisenhower and Dulles on Suez, Iranian oil, Guatemala, and the European Defense Community. No perceptible public break with Washington occurred on Churchill's watch.<sup>63</sup>

A number of historians make the case that Churchill championed a new concept of diplomacy that later became known as detente, and that this British foreign policy became the model for Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger in the 1970s. Yet, Kissinger's balance of power diplomacy in the 1970s failed to stop a military buildup by the Soviet Union.<sup>64</sup> One scholar has even suggested that Churchill's diplomacy really represented a prelude to the 1980s and a leadership guide for Ronald Reagan, not Nixon. Churchill stressed the importance of diplomatic negotiations, even during a disagreement with a demanding adversary. A constructive engagement with your opponent is the real legacy

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<sup>62</sup> Petersen, *The Middle East between the Great Powers*, 15.

<sup>63</sup> Roy Jenkins, *Churchill: A Biography* (New York: Penguin Putnam Inc., 2002), 848-849.

<sup>64</sup> John W. Young, *Winston Churchill's Last Campaign: Britain and the Cold War 1951-5* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

of Churchill's personal diplomacy.<sup>65</sup> Churchill believed that Soviet national interest and a growing consumer demand for western goods would ultimately force the Soviet government toward détente with the West. He had suffered far too long from being called a warmonger; now Churchill sought to end his grand and glorious public career as a peacemaker. Unfortunately for Churchill, Eisenhower, Dulles, and even his own Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden resisted his idea of a Big Three Summit meeting.<sup>66</sup>

The well-known and provocative British historian A.J.P. Taylor, in his introduction to a biography of Anthony Eden, acknowledged that “Eden had many great qualities and some diplomatic successes. But he will be remembered as the Prime Minister who steered the ship of state onto the rocks.”<sup>67</sup> Eden modeled himself not after Winston Churchill, but after Stanley Baldwin, the British prime minister he most admired. A left of center Conservative, Eden believed in manipulating the votes of the Labour Party while hoping to hold the support of Conservatives. His political principles and personality made him a far different political leader than Winston Churchill.

Eden's terrible health problems further complicated his political and personal relationships with both Churchill and Dulles. A recent biographer has detailed the many surgeries of Anthony Eden and pointed out that in one instance doctors proclaimed there was “a 50:50 chance that Eden would die during the operation, a 20% chance that he

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<sup>65</sup> Klaus Larres, *Churchill's Cold War: The Politics of Personal Diplomacy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002). See also David Carlton, “Churchill and the Two ‘Evil Empires,’” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, sixth series, 11 (2001): 331-351.

<sup>66</sup> See Martin Gilbert, *Churchill: A Life* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1991).

<sup>67</sup> A.J.P. Taylor, “Introduction,” in Sidney Aster, *Anthony Eden* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1976).

might regain some of his earlier health, but only a 10% chance that there would be a full recovery.”<sup>68</sup> Due to the severity of his health problems and after three serious operations in 1953, Eden became dependent on amphetamines, which affected his moods and decision making capabilities. Eden’s health completely collapsed during the Suez Crisis.

Eden and Dulles quarreled so violently at the Geneva Conference that Eden fulminated to Dulles, “The trouble with you, Foster, is that you want World War III.”<sup>69</sup> Eden even criticized President Eisenhower for removing the Seventh Fleet from protecting Red China during the Korean War, reversing an existing order that the Seventh Fleet defend mainland China. Although Churchill apologized and tried to undo the damage, Anglo-American relations started out rather poorly in 1953.<sup>70</sup>

Eden’s reputation as a diplomat later skyrocketed with the successful peace agreement at the Geneva Conference in 1954, which may have been his greatest success.<sup>71</sup> Unhappily for Eden, this success meant that he had to deal with a very disgruntled John Foster Dulles, who refused to sign the agreement even though he accepted its usefulness. Eden also actively supported the evacuation of the nationalist Chinese from Quemoy and Matsu in 1955, further annoying Eisenhower and Dulles.

Another British biographer of Eden has accentuated the fact that Dulles significantly shifted strategies in June 1954 on French and British imperialism in the

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<sup>68</sup> D.R. Thorpe, *Eden: The Life and Times of Anthony Eden: First Earl of Avon 1897-1977* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2003), 398.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 393.

<sup>70</sup> See Martin Francis, “Tears, Tantrums, and Bared Teeth: The Emotional Economy of Three Conservative Prime Ministers, 1951-1963,” *Journal of British Studies* 41 (July 2002): 354-387.

<sup>71</sup> See Kevin Ruane, “Anthony Eden, British Diplomacy and the Origins of the Geneva Conference of 1954,” *The Historical Journal* 37, no. 1 (Mar. 1994): 153-172.



Middle East. This move, Victor Rothwell has suggested, was political payback for lack of British support in Indochina. The United States had an interest in Egypt and Saudi Arabia, but not in small British-protected states such as Buraimi. Rothwell concluded: “Whatever their reasons, the Eisenhower White House and State Department did greatly resent Britain's support for its tiny Southeast Arabian protégés against Saudi Arabia, and never concealed their displeasure from Eden.”<sup>72</sup> The Americans and the British continually antagonized each other with their differing political, economic, and oil interests in the Middle East.

The Middle East had long been a British sphere of influence. Great Britain, more than any other Western country, protected Arab nations from Soviet subversion through the Baghdad Pact signed in 1955. Eden’s justification for the British invasion of Egypt in 1956 rested on his conviction that Nasser was a Soviet agent. In his biography of Eden, David Dutton summarized Eden’s entire career in reference to Egypt: “the ghost of Suez was still stalking Eden as he was getting ready for the end and wondering about the verdict of history. In his mind his whole proud career had been scarred by a decision which misfired for a lack of American co-operation.”<sup>73</sup> This surprising analysis came from an experienced politician, who had been told, both by Eisenhower and Dulles, that the United States would not support a British military invasion of Suez. Over time, Eisenhower and Dulles became more and more critical of British diplomacy, particularly as Prime Minister Eden executed it. Dutton explained, “The Secretary was convinced

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<sup>72</sup> Victor Rothwell, *Anthony Eden: A Political Biography 1931-1957* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1992), 162.

<sup>73</sup> David Dutton, *Anthony Eden: A Life and Reputation* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997), 2.

that the British throughout the world were a rapidly declining power. He was convinced they no longer had any basic will to meet big international responsibilities, that they were trying to put as good a face on it as possible, but that you could not count on the British to carry on in any responsible way, or, indeed, form an effective bulwark with us against anything.”<sup>74</sup> American policymakers constantly articulated their concerns about the reliability of the British in dealing with the apparent dangers of communism in the Middle East.

David Carlton, another British biographer of Eden, has also investigated the major foreign policy differences between Eden and Churchill. He contended that many of these policy disagreements remained outside the public eye. One of the more profound differences between the two men confirmed that, “Churchill was more willing to face the realities of the reduced British role in the world and hence when the Americans showed sufficient sign of having made a firm choice on a policy question, he was usually more prepared than Eden to subordinate British views to theirs.”<sup>75</sup> Eden, much more than Churchill, refused to recognize the changing nature of the Anglo-American relationship and Britain’s declining power on the world scene.

Carlton argued that “Eden’s inability to accept the changed nature of the Anglo-American relationship was not fundamentally attributable to Dulles. On the contrary, the continuity and variety of his difficulties with Washington clearly cut across individuals

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 334.

<sup>75</sup> David Carlton, *Anthony Eden: A Biography* (London: Penguin Books, LTD, 1981), 300.

and Administrations.”<sup>76</sup> Eden had been trained as a diplomat his whole life, but in the critical years of the 1950s he had moved back and forth between statesman and ally to supreme mediator between the United States and the Soviet Union. This mediation made him a great friend of Molotov, but a questionable ally to Dean Acheson and John Foster Dulles. Anthony Nutting, an Eden subordinate at the Foreign Office, provided an unusual analysis of Eden: “He was a negotiator, a mediator par excellence. He was not a strategist, who set a course for five, ten or twenty years ahead and stuck to it with dogged determination. He was essentially a tactician who plans his advance in limited moves, stopping and starting, veering and tacking according to the strength and direction of the prevailing pressures.”<sup>77</sup> Nutting described Eden as a politician more than a statesman.

Eden’s natural aptitudes made him a formidable foreign secretary. His training for the top job, nonetheless, remained deficient. Nutting argued that, “Eden was not tough; he had not been hardened by criticism. For too long he had been the ‘Golden Boy’ of the Conservative Party, the man who resigned over Neville Chamberlain’s appeasement policy and was proved right within less than two years, the ‘Crown Prince’ who basked in the sunshine of Churchill’s admiration.”<sup>78</sup> Eden had been protected from his political opponents by Churchill for almost twenty years. This sheltering did not serve him well when, finally, he did become Prime Minister in 1955.

Historians have clearly established the Suez Crisis of 1956 to be, by far, the most

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 302.

<sup>77</sup> Anthony Nutting, *No End of a Lesson: The Story of Suez* (London: Constable & Company Ltd., 1967), 25.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 26.

important event in the life of Sir Anthony Eden. In the Middle East, he faced a crisis that tragically combined a fatal mixture of American idealism, British pragmatism, Soviet Marxism, and Islamic fundamentalism all of which would help to destroy his political career. One scholar of the Suez Crisis has correctly confirmed, “At the heart of the problem of Anglo-American relations was that the USA saw things in terms of containment and the Cold War; the British had other interests to nurture oil, and strategic and commercial communications through the Suez Canal.”<sup>79</sup> The ideologically-driven diplomacy of the United States directly conflicted with British political and economic interests.

Moreover, the Americans fiercely campaigned against British and French colonialism in northern Africa. Eisenhower and Dulles defended a growing nationalism and anti-colonialism in the Middle East and Africa as a bulwark against any possible inroads by the Soviets. The internal strife of the Middle East led to the unraveling of the transatlantic alliance.<sup>80</sup> The Soviets had gradually gained influence in Egypt and Syria. The growing American and British rift over colonialism ultimately allowed further Soviet subversion in the Middle East.

On the crisis in Suez, Dobson wrote, “When the shooting started several things determined Eisenhower's response. He was angry that he had not been consulted and that the invasion took place on the eve of the US presidential election. He feared this type of

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<sup>79</sup> Alan P. Dobson, *Anglo-American Relations in the Twentieth Century: Of Friendship, Conflict, and the Rise and Decline of Superpowers* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 111-112.

<sup>80</sup> See Ayesha Jalal “Towards the Baghdad Pact: South Asia and Middle East Defence in the Cold War, 1947-1955,” *The International History Review* 11, no. 3 (Aug. 1989): 409-433; David R. Devereux, “Britain, the Commonwealth and the Defence of the Middle East 1948-56,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, *Studies on War*, 24, no. 2, (Apr. 1989): 327-345.

gunboat diplomacy would tarnish the US reputation in the Third World unless he came out against it.”<sup>81</sup> Eisenhower not only did not like the timing of the British invasion of Suez, he also personally felt double-crossed by Eden. Eden, though, did not anticipate the ruthless hostility of the U.S. government to British military action in the Middle East.<sup>82</sup> The United States forced a sterling crisis on Great Britain that required the abrupt cancellation of the invasion in Egypt. Eisenhower had used Britain's economic and monetary weakness to crush British and French military adventurism in Suez.<sup>83</sup> Eden felt betrayed. His Chancellor of the Exchequer, Harold MacMillan, begged for help from the United States to stop the sterling crisis and avert a British economic catastrophe. He argued, “In the meantime it would be tragic and as I have said, a major victory for the communists-if we were to allow what has happened to result in an economic disaster for the free world. We can prevent it, but only if we act together and act speedily. That is why I most earnestly ask your help.”<sup>84</sup> The Americans had it in their power to destroy the British economy and they wanted to make sure the British knew it.

After all of the Anglo-American intrigue at Suez, the Soviets actively conspired to

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<sup>81</sup>Dobson, 118.

<sup>82</sup> See Howard J. Dooley, “Great Britain’s ‘Last Battle’ in the Middle East: Notes on Cabinet Planning during the Suez Crisis of 1956,” *The International History Review* 11, no. 3 (Aug. 1989): 486-517.

<sup>83</sup> See Diane B. Kunz, *The Economic Diplomacy of the Suez Crisis* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, 1991).

<sup>84</sup> Christopher Grayling and Christopher Langdon, *Just Another Star?: Anglo-American Relations since 1945* (London: Harrap, 1988), 11.

make further inroads in the Middle East.<sup>85</sup> In a State Department telegram dated November 14, 1956, from Moscow to the Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles had been informed of a Soviet central committee session on November 2, 1956. This telegram specifically stated, “The Middle East will be the focus of Soviet efforts in near future. Shepilov and Zhukov were exponents of view that Middle East represents a vital link which can be severed to cut the West off from the East. Distraction of Western position in Middle East will open Africa to Soviet influence, and will permit denial to the West of strategic bases, vital communications lines, raw materials, and markets.”<sup>86</sup> Eisenhower and Dulles rightly feared the growing influence of the Soviet Union in the Middle East.

This historiographic survey demonstrates that the “special relationship” between the United States and Great Britain rapidly deteriorated during Eisenhower’s first administration. Differing visions of the communist threat in Korea, Indochina, and Quemoy and Matsu led to a fracturing of the transatlantic alliance. Cognizant of the problems of British and French colonialism in the Far East, the Americans decided on a policy of anti-communism and anti-colonialism in North Africa and the Middle East. Eisenhower and Dulles deliberately put policies of anti-communism and anti-colonialism

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<sup>85</sup> Robert J. McMahon, “The Illusion of Vulnerability: American Reassessments of the Soviet Threat, 1955-1956,” *The International History of Review* 18, no. 3 (Aug. 1996), 591-619.

<sup>86</sup> Telegram from U.S. Embassy Moscow to Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, November 18, 1956, Dulles, Foster, Nov. 56 (1), Box 8, Dulles-Herter Series, Ann Whitman File, Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953-61, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

ahead of helping Western allies and promoting British economic interests in their fight against communism. Ironically, this split in the transatlantic alliance undoubtedly benefitted the Soviet Union.

Eisenhower's radical "brinkmanship" policy had been extended well beyond political enemies such as the communists to the British who, by a drastic miscalculation, had become stuck in the middle of an ideological war between the United States and the Soviet Union in the Middle East. Eisenhower's radical anti-communism went so far as not only to dispose of friends but, if necessary, to destroy them. British fears of a "Fortress America" or a new isolationism based on an extreme U.S. unilateralism had been confirmed.

Many, if not most, American historians cling to the myth of a Dwight D. Eisenhower who sought a middle path between Old Guard Republicans and liberal Democrats. A close review of public speeches and the internal messages of Eisenhower, Dulles, Churchill, and Eden reveal instead a president to the right of the Old Guard Republicans. Ending the Korean War has often been cited as an example of Eisenhower's moderation. Historians such as Stephen Ambrose deny that Eisenhower threatened China with nuclear weapons or that this threat was relevant to the final outcome. They ignore the reality of Eisenhower threatening Syngman Rhee with a military coup. The British, with the important exception of Churchill, seemed genuinely horrified by the real possibility of an expanded war with China and a military coup in South Korea all happening at the same time. Eisenhower's diplomacy goes well beyond anything that General Douglas MacArthur, Herbert Hoover, and Senator Robert Taft ever

advocated. Eisenhower initiated a new radical American diplomacy called “brinkmanship,” a policy that met consistent and stiff opposition from the British in the Far East and Middle East throughout the 1950s.



## CHAPTER 3

### CONSERVATIVE IDEOLOGY AND BRINKSMANSHIP

The transatlantic relationship between Eisenhower and Churchill steadily disintegrated between 1953 and 1955; a trend clearly discerned from the public speeches of each in addition to the personal correspondence between the men. Their serious political differences had much to do with their opposing views of how to deal with the Soviet Union. While espousing high idealism in statements about foreign policy, Eisenhower deeply distrusted the Soviet regime and saw no purpose to negotiations. Churchill publicly took the opposite position and, despite his mistrust, favored dialogue with the Soviets in the hope of reaching agreements of mutual interest. In addition, the Eisenhower-Churchill relationship broke down over serious disagreements about Indochina, Quemoy and Matsu, China, regional alliances, the use of atomic weapons, the doctrine of peaceful co-existence, and American unilateralism. Over time, these differences did not dissipate but magnified, and they became more complicated by ideological arguments over communism and colonialism.

In his inaugural address in January 1953, Eisenhower set an extremely Manichaeian tone for his foreign policy: “We sense with all our faculties that the forces of

good and evil are massed and armed and opposed as rarely before in history.”<sup>1</sup> In a battle between good and evil there could be no compromise.

Eisenhower spoke of communism’s malignant spirit and suggested there was a transcendent meaning to the fight against communism. In outlining the principles that would guide his presidency, he affirmed his absolute repugnance to resorting to war as a tool for achieving diplomatic objectives. Yet, Eisenhower also abhorred appeasement and spoke eloquently about his intent to defend the nation’s honor and security. He denounced any type of U.S. imperialism, espoused the concept of regional alliances, and defended the efforts of the United Nations to solve the problems of the world.<sup>2</sup> Many of these high ideals would be tested in the first years of the Eisenhower administration.

Shortly after the Inauguration in a national broadcast on January 27, 1953, John Foster Dulles also reassured Americans that Eisenhower’s foreign policy would be guided by “enlightened self-interest.” Dulles expressed his full concurrence with Eisenhower about the nature of the Cold War and warned, “We have to pay close attention to what is going on in the rest of the world. And the reason for that is that we have enemies who are plotting our destruction. These enemies are the Russian communists and their allies in other countries.”<sup>3</sup> Dulles completely repudiated negotiations with Soviet leaders. Yet, Dulles also reiterated Eisenhower’s denunciation of war and specifically argued against any type of preventative war with the Soviet

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<sup>1</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, “World Freedom and Peace: The Responsibilities of Leadership,” *Vital Speeches* 19, no. 8 (1 February 1953): 252.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 252-254.

<sup>3</sup> John Foster Dulles, “Enlightened Self-Interest: Encirclement a Deadly Threat to United States,” *Vital Speeches* 19, no. 9, (15 February 1953): 265.

Union. Eisenhower and Dulles, it appeared, planned to fight the Soviets ideologically.

While the new Eisenhower administration seemed appropriately preoccupied with the problems of Korea and the Far East, Churchill's government dealt with the intricate problems of the Middle East, specifically Iran and Egypt. The United States, unlike Great Britain, had no major interest in Iranian oil, but Eisenhower and Dulles did fear the possibility that Iran could fall out of the Western orbit. The balance of power in the Middle East would be affected catastrophically by Iranian oil falling under the control of the Soviet Union. British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden, objecting to the American point of view, maintained that Iran should not be categorized as in the hands of East or West; rather, he believed that Iran fell into the large category of unaligned nations.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, Eisenhower and Dulles saw Iran strictly in terms of Cold War politics while Churchill and Eden viewed it mainly in terms of British oil and prestige.

In addition, the Americans experienced frustration with Churchill's political positions in Egypt. In negotiating for a British military base deal at Suez, Churchill had made no real concessions to the Egyptian government. Eisenhower and Dulles frequently pressed the British to be more flexible in their negotiations with the Egyptians and, in deference to his British ally, Eisenhower had discontinued providing arms to the new Egyptian government. Yet, Churchill and the British Foreign Office increasingly complained about a lack of American cooperation in keeping a British base at Suez.

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<sup>4</sup> Meeting with President of the United States, March 6, 1953, Anthony Eden, Roger Makins, Dwight D. Eisenhower, John Foster Dulles, Bedell Smith, Winthrop Aldrich, FO 800/ 839, United States of America, March-April 1953, Private Papers of Sir Anthony Eden, Avon Papers, University of Birmingham Special Collections, Birmingham, England. "Mr. Eden thought it unlikely that Mussaddiq would link himself up with the West. But he was just as reluctant to join the East. Persia wished to stay in the middle. This had been Persia's policy for two thousand years and he did not think it was likely to change now."

These complaints grated on the nerves of Secretary of State Dulles.<sup>5</sup>

After Stalin's death in March 1953, Churchill became increasingly optimistic about the possibility of détente with the new Soviet leadership: "...great hope has arisen in the world that there is a change of heart in the vast, mighty mass of Russia and this may carry them far and fast and perhaps into a revolution. It has been well said that the most dangerous moment for evil governments is when they begin to reform."<sup>6</sup> Much more than Eisenhower, Dulles, or even Eden, Churchill thought that Stalin's death had created the possibility for real change in the Soviet Union, and so began a vigorous public campaign advocating détente with the Soviet Union.

In a memorable speech to the American Society of Newspaper Editors on April 16, 1953, Eisenhower, in keeping with Churchill's new spirit of détente, made a remarkably conciliatory speech, aimed at the Soviet Union that called for peaceful acts rather than rhetoric as the measuring stick of relations between the two countries. Eisenhower insisted that the Cold War had drained both sides financially and had left the people of the world frightened of nuclear war. In a now famous passage, he declared, "Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and not

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<sup>5</sup> Memorandum for the President, John Foster Dulles to Dwight D. Eisenhower, June 15, 1953, Dulles, John F., June 1953 (1), Box 1, Dulles-Herter Series, Ann Whitman File, Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953-61, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, Kansas. "Churchill's message of support spoke of far reaching concessions on his part, which we fail to identify; implies that we should have joined in the Cairo discussions whether the Egyptians liked it or not; mentions the United States bases in England 'not even established by 'treaty' in manner which may contain a veiled threat; talks of United States providing Egypt with arms at this juncture even though your last message explicitly pointed out that we were denying such arms; complains about lack of support in Cairo, in the face of my public declaration there of support."

<sup>6</sup> Message from Winston Churchill to Dwight D. Eisenhower, April 11, 1953, FO 800/839, United States of America, March-April 1953, Avon Papers.

clothed.”<sup>7</sup> Eisenhower called for further reductions in the military budget by pointing out, “The cost of one modern heavy bomber is this: A modern brick school in more than 30 cities. It is: Some 50 miles of concrete highway. We pay for a single fighter plane with a half million bushels of wheat. We pay for a single destroyer with new homes that could have housed more than 8000 people.”<sup>8</sup> The military-industrial complex diminished America’s infrastructure.

Eisenhower reached out to the Soviets using solid economic and consumer arguments in making his case for international peace. The speech pointed out, in concrete terms, how both countries could benefit from a reduction in military spending. Eisenhower’s speech could have been a real beginning to détente between East and West.

The Soviets, however, reacted unenthusiastically in their review of Eisenhower’s speech in *Pravda*, implying that the new Soviet leadership would not change either its foreign policy or its communist ideology.<sup>9</sup> The Soviets did not need to cater to consumer needs or the demands of their citizens. Churchill, undeterred, looked forward to a visit to Moscow in the near future, well aware that Eisenhower and Dulles fully disapproved of such a meeting. Churchill’s private secretary Colville wrote, “Lord Salisbury after he

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<sup>7</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, “Peace in the World: Acts, not Rhetoric, Needed,” *Vital Speeches* 19, no. 14 (1 May 1953): 419.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Message from William Strang to Winston Churchill, April 25, 1953, FO 800/839, United States of America, March-April 1953, Avon Papers. “The tone of the article is, by Soviet standards, polite. But the general atmosphere is almost entirely negative and mistrustful. The article does not reject out of hand the President’s approach, but it is completely reserved about it. It comments unfavorably on the pre-conditions which the President puts forward for acceptance of his proposals, and is both sarcastic and suspicious about the glosses which have been placed on his words by Mr. Dulles and others. The general effect is that the Soviet government will require further and more concrete proof that United States policy has become genuinely ‘peace loving’ before they can fully cooperate with the United States.”

visited Washington and reported that he found Eisenhower violently Russophobic, greatly more so than Dulles, and that he believes the President to be personally responsible for the policy of useless pinpricks and harassing tactics the U.S. is following against Russia in Europe and the Far East.”<sup>10</sup> Salisbury made a remarkable observation about Eisenhower.

Salisbury correctly perceived that Eisenhower, not Dulles, instigated the militantly anti-communist American foreign policy of the 1950s. After lunching with Churchill on July 24, Colville wrote, “Still wrapped up with the possibility of bringing something off with the Russians and with the idea of meeting Malenkov face to face. He (Churchill) is very disappointed in Eisenhower, whom he thinks both weak and stupid.”<sup>11</sup> Churchill’s unhappiness resulted from Eisenhower’s severe anti-communist ideology.

The transatlantic alliance slowly began fracturing under the intense pressure of the Cold War. The British and the Americans continued to disagree about Iran and Egypt. Eisenhower’s aggressive anti-communist stance in Iran made him appear indifferent to British national and economic interests. Egypt proved even more contentious. The United States actively pursued the friendship of the new Egyptian government. The British, particularly Churchill, quickly became alienated from the Americans when the United States offered to provide economic or military assistance to the Egyptians.<sup>12</sup> The Americans wanted to create a dependable anti-communist ally in

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<sup>10</sup> Gilbert, *Churchill: A Life*, 915.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. NB: Last sentence in quotation is corrected for grammar.

<sup>12</sup> Message from Winston Churchill to Dwight D. Eisenhower, June 19, 1953, FO 800/840, United States of America, May- December 1953, Avon Papers. “If at the present time the United States indicated

the Middle East, while the British seemed more concerned with protecting the vestiges of British colonialism by keeping a British military base at Suez.

Eisenhower's foreign policy initially presumed a far greater role for regional military alliances. In relying on military alliances, the United States would be able to cut back on the cost of its military industrial complex. In a national radio broadcast on April 29, 1953, Dulles urged the Europeans to improve the quality of their fighting force rather than enlarge it; he scolded them, "we must remember that in a world of toughness it is a lot better to be compact and hard than it is to be big and soft."<sup>13</sup> Dulles stated, "We sought economic health which would be consistent with military strength. We did not want our military strength to be a carrier of economic disease. Now the European members had been straining toward theoretical forced goals to such an extent that now they are beginning to get out of breath."<sup>14</sup> The Americans also actively encouraged the Europeans to slowly develop their own defenses through NATO.<sup>15</sup> In depending on regional alliances, Eisenhower and Dulles linked America's national security to a reduction in U.S. military expenditures. In a press conference on April 30, 1953, Eisenhower proposed to cut \$8.5 billion from the military budget in 1954.<sup>16</sup>

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divergence from us in spite of the measure of agreement we had reached after making so many concessions, we should not think we had been treated fairly by our great Ally, with whom we are working in so many parts of the globe for the causes which we both espouse."

<sup>13</sup> John Foster Dulles, "Creating a Strong and Peaceful Europe: European Army only 'Good Solution'," *Vital Speeches* 19, no. 15 (15 May 1953): 456.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Defense of Our Country and Its Cost: Budget and Tax Recommendations," *Vital Speeches* 19, no 16 (1 June 1953): 482-484. "This morning I told the legislative

Meanwhile, Churchill continued to press for a meeting with the top leaders in the Kremlin. In a letter to Eisenhower, he reflected on the need for action, openly worrying about Eisenhower's negative attitude: "I find it difficult to believe that we shall gain anything by an attitude of pure negation and your message to me certainly does not show much hope."<sup>17</sup> Churchill expressed hope for détente with the Soviet Union even as Dulles spoke cautiously and counseled against a Soviet trap: "The longing of our people for peace is so intense that there is a danger of accepting the illusion for reality. This danger is the greater because Soviet communists have constantly taught and practiced the art of deception, of making concessions merely in order to lure others into a false sense of security, which makes them easier victims of ultimate aggression."<sup>18</sup> Churchill and Dulles could not have a more different point of view.

Where Churchill saw opportunity, Dulles saw danger. Churchill and Dulles would never reach an agreement on negotiations with the Soviets. Eisenhower and Dulles refused to trust the Soviets, while Churchill held out hope of possible mutual interests between East and West in spite of ideological hostility.

Churchill presented his own assessment of global politics in a speech to the British House of Commons on May 11, 1953. In Korea, he said he looked forward to an

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leaders that already we can see our way clear to ask Congress to appropriate at least eight and one half billion dollars less new money for fiscal year 1954 than had been asked for by the previous Administration."

<sup>17</sup> Message from Winston Churchill to Dwight D. Eisenhower, May 7, 1953, The President-Churchill, Jan. 20, 1953-May 28, 1953 (1), Box 18, International Series, Ann Whitman File, Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953-61.

<sup>18</sup> Statement by John Foster Dulles at Waldorf Astoria, May 7, 1953, Eisenhower, Dwight D. 1953, Box 69, Duplicate Correspondence, John Foster Dulles Papers, Seely G. Mudd Library, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey.



armistice that would end hostilities. Churchill stated, “I should be very content with even a truce or ceasefire for the moment.”<sup>19</sup> In Egypt, he discussed removing many of the 80,000 British troops in the area of the Suez Canal.<sup>20</sup> British control of the canal established a difficult situation for the latest Egyptian government. Churchill expressed hope that new talks on the Suez Canal would soon begin. He made clear to the Soviets that under no circumstances would the British sacrifice West Germany in any peace negotiation. Churchill depicted the French position in Indochina as steadily worsening. He spoke with open contempt of France’s inability to send sufficient troop levels to Indochina and held the French responsible for the instability that existed there.<sup>21</sup> He also reminded the House of Commons of the changed attitude in the Kremlin since the death of Stalin and proposed a conference of leading powers. In his proposed closed-door conference, the leaders of the world might be able to find areas of mutual agreement. He feared that otherwise the West might become divided and become increasingly unwilling to bear the high cost of defense.<sup>22</sup> Churchill had implicitly and publicly criticized Eisenhower’s “New Look” defense proposal.

Intriguingly, British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden came to oppose Churchill’s sanguine assessment of relations with the Soviets following Stalin’s death: “I did not

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<sup>19</sup> Winston Churchill, “Survey of the World Scene: Change of Attitude and Mood in the Kremlin,” *Vital Speeches* 19, no. 17 (15 June 1953): 522.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 523. “Naturally, we do not wish to keep indefinitely 80,000 men at a cost of, it might be, over 50 million pounds a year discharging the duty which has largely fallen upon us, and on us alone...”

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 525. Churchill blamed France’s lack of a National Service for the insufficient French troops in Indochina.

<sup>22</sup> Winston Churchill, “Survey of the World Scene: Change of Attitude and Mood in the Kremlin,” *Vital Speeches* 19, no. 17 (15 June 1953): 522-526.

share the optimism of those who saw in this event an easement of the world's problems. The permanent challenge of communism transcends personalities, however powerful."<sup>23</sup> Eden envisioned no change in Soviet foreign policy. He did agree with Churchill, though, that the Soviet Union sought a lessening of tensions with the West and would try to avoid unnecessary Stalinist provocations.<sup>24</sup> Most important, Churchill and Eden began to worry about the dangers they foresaw to Anglo-American relations with the rise of Republican isolationism in the United States. Churchill wrote Eisenhower on May 29, 1953, "I am so glad to read just now your remarks about Taft's speech. I look back with dark memories to all that followed inch by inch upon the United States' withdrawal from the League of Nations over 30 years ago. Thank God you are at the helm."<sup>25</sup> Although Eisenhower had, on this occasion, disagreed with Taft on the importance of the UN in the negotiations of the Korean armistice, Eisenhower's foreign policy had already begun to drift steadily to the right of Taft.

The past spokesman for American isolationism, Senator Robert A. Taft (R-Ohio) maintained that U.S. foreign policy should be firmly dedicated to preventing communist aggression. Nevertheless, in a speech delivered before the National Conference of Christians and Jews in Cincinnati, Ohio on May 26, 1953, he insisted that American soldiers had no role to play in Asia: "I have never felt that we should send American

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<sup>23</sup> Anthony Eden, *Full Circle: The Memoirs of Anthony Eden* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1960), 55.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>25</sup> Peter Boyle, ed., *The Churchill-Eisenhower Correspondence, 1953-55* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 64. Eisenhower, in a press conference, rejected Taft's position of discarding the United Nations in the negotiations on Korea.

soldiers to the continent of Asia, which, of course, includes China proper and Indochina, simply because we are so out-numbered in fighting a land war on the continent of Asia it would bring about complete exhaustion even if we were able to win.”<sup>26</sup> Taft wanted a limited role for the United States in the Far East.

Taft echoed the skepticism held by Churchill on Indochina. Churchill said in April, 1954 that “It is no good putting in troops to control the situation in the jungle.”<sup>27</sup> Taft seemed upset that England and France might prove to be merely fair-weather friends.<sup>28</sup> He stated, “It seems clear that Mr. Churchill and the French administration would be willing to assign that zone of influence gladly and abandon the Poles, the Czechs, the Hungarians, and the Rumanians to the tender mercies of Soviet Russia in return for some cutting of armaments, freer trade and promises to behave in the future.”<sup>29</sup> Taft’s skepticism included allies, particularly the British.

Taft’s foreign policy promoted a cautious unilateralism. If the Soviets could not be trusted, neither could the allies, even the British. While Taft vociferously expressed distrust of Churchill personally and the British generally, the underlying premise of Taft’s proposed military budget cuts and Eisenhower’s New Look defense posture still depended on regional military alliances with the British. The Republicans seemed to be advancing a schizophrenic foreign policy.

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<sup>26</sup> Robert A. Taft, “United States Foreign Policy: Forget United Nations in Korea and Far East,” *Vital Speeches* 19, no.17 (15 June 1953): 530.

<sup>27</sup> Martin Gilbert, *Never Despair: Winston S. Churchill, 1945-1965* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1988), 974.

<sup>28</sup> Robert A. Taft, “United States Foreign Policy: Forget United Nations in Korea and Far East,” *Vital Speeches* 19, no.17 (15 June 1953): 530.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 531.

For his part, Dulles expressed considerable concern that the Europeans might perceive the United States as isolationist. In fact, many Europeans had expressed just such a view about a Republican administration hell-bent on reducing foreign aid programs and military expenditures. Republican cost-cutting confirmed the worst fears Europeans had about the Americans.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, just before the Bermuda Conference of 1953, Dulles had expressed his apprehension that the United States and Great Britain might not share a common approach to world problems. He genuinely feared that any break in the Anglo-American relationship would promote isolationism in the United States. American isolationism might lead to Churchill's role as mediator between the United States and the Soviet Union; rather than having a united Western alliance, Churchill's role as a mediator might actually widen Anglo-American disunity and incur even more disagreements.<sup>31</sup>

Eisenhower and Churchill finally met in Bermuda in December 1953 to thrash out the world situation and resolve the outstanding issues between their two countries. The conference originally had been planned for summer, but had been postponed due to

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<sup>30</sup> Memorandum to the President, July 23, 1953, John Foster Dulles to Dwight D. Eisenhower, Dulles, John F., July 1953, Box 1, Dulles-Herter Series, Ann Whitman File, Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953-61. "For twenty years, foreigners have been taught to fear a Republican Administration as 'isolationist.' They know that you and I are not 'isolationists' but they do not think we can counter the trend of the Party. Our policies do involve considerably reduced U.S. expenditures abroad, and the Congress, primarily the Republicans, are cutting back that program. This seems, to foreigners, to confirm their fears that U.S. policy is moving toward 'isolationism.'"

<sup>31</sup> Memorandum to the President, June 5, 1953, John Foster Dulles to Dwight D. Eisenhower, Dulles, John F., June 1953, Box 1, Dulles-Herter Series, Ann Whitman File, Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953-61. "Obviously, consequences other than a truly united approach to world problems would be grave. In the United States, they would give an impetus to isolationism. Among our NATO allies, United States leadership would suffer and the incipient tendency on the part of Churchill toward a position of 'mediation' between the United States and the USSR could find extensive support. Such results would tend to foster disunity instead of achieving our basic objective of cementing the Western alliance."

Churchill's stroke.<sup>32</sup> The first order of business at the Bermuda Conference concerned the possibility of North Korean violations of the Korean armistice. In the event of any breach of the armistice by the North Koreans, Eisenhower promised nuclear retaliation on North Korean military targets. Churchill quickly agreed to the American proposal and mentioned that he could tell the Parliament that he had been consulted in advance of such an attack.<sup>33</sup> Eisenhower then demanded British non-recognition of communist China. Although Churchill sympathized with Eisenhower's request, he responded that unfortunately recognition "had now become established fact which would be difficult to alter."<sup>34</sup> The British Labor government had already recognized the communist government of mainland China on January 6, 1950. The United States could not expect a reversal of this decision.<sup>35</sup>

In a plenary session the next day, Churchill urged the Americans and the French at this three-party conference to become more flexible in their dealings with the new Soviet regime. He argued against finding deception in every Soviet tactical move. To make his own point, Eisenhower responded in a highly undiplomatic manner with a crude depiction of the Soviet Union as a prostitute. Eisenhower argued,

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<sup>32</sup> Churchill had suffered a major stroke in June, 1953.

<sup>33</sup> Memorandum of Conversation between President Eisenhower and Prime Minister Churchill on December 4, 1953, Bermuda, State Department Report-Top Secret (1), Box 1, International Meeting Series, Ann Whitman File, Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953-61. "1. Korea The President said that if there was a deliberate breach of the armistice by the communists we would expect to strike back with atomic weapons at military targets. We would not expect to bomb cities but would attack areas that were directly supporting the aggression. The Prime Minister said that he quite accepted this and that the President's statement put him in a position to say to the Parliament that he had been consulted in advance and had agreed."

<sup>34</sup> Gilbert, *Never Despair, 1945-1965*, 918.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 917-918.

If we understood that under this dress was the same old girl, if we understood that despite bath, perfume or lace, it was the same old girl on that basis then we might explore all that Sir Winston had said if we might apply the positive methods of which M. Bidault had spoken. Perhaps we could pull the old girl off the main street and put her on a back alley. He did not want to approach this problem on the basis that there had been any change in the Soviet policy of destroying the Capitalist free world by all means, by force, by deceit or by lies. This was their long term purpose. From their writings it was clear there had been no change since Lenin.<sup>36</sup>

John Colville wrote, “To end on a note of dignity, when Eden asked when the next meeting should be, the President acidly replied, ‘I don’t know. Mine is with a whisky and soda’—and got up to leave the room.”<sup>37</sup> If Churchill thought he could persuade Eisenhower or Dulles to change their views of the Soviet Union, he was learning the hard way that this was not possible.

Dining that evening with Churchill and Eden, Eisenhower once again emphasized an American willingness to respond to North Korean provocations with atomic weapons. Churchill had overnight reneged, presumably under pressure from Eden, on his prior agreement to use nuclear weapons in North Korea.<sup>38</sup> The evening discussion on nuclear

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 923. See also Heads of Government Meeting, Mid-Ocean Club, December 4, 1953, Bermuda-Hagerty Notes (1), Box 1, International Meetings Series, Ann Whitman File, Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953-61.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Memorandum of Conversation between President Eisenhower, Prime Minister Churchill, Admiral Strauss, and Lord Cherwell on December 5, 1953, Bermuda, State Department Report-Top Secret (1), Box 1, International Meeting Series, Ann Whitman File, Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953-61. “There followed a lengthy discussion of the effect of a resumption of hostilities in Korea. Sir Winston referred to his public utterances in this respect but twice during the ensuing discussions mentioned that Mr. Eden was more fully informed and that he did not wish anything he said in this area to be considered a commitment until Mr. Eden was brought into the talks.”

weapons with Eisenhower and Dulles deeply troubled both Churchill and Eden. They genuinely feared the possibility of nuclear war. The Americans and the British fundamentally clashed on the nature of atomic weapons and warfare. The British believed that the use of atomic weapons should be actively discouraged. The Americans, specifically Eisenhower, viewed the atomic bomb as nothing more than a new and improved conventional weapon.<sup>39</sup> Churchill mistakenly held Dulles accountable, not Eisenhower, as the real culprit behind the scenes who destroyed the Bermuda Conference.<sup>40</sup>

Dulles continued to vigorously dissent from Churchill's concept of a major summit meeting between the Big Three Powers. Churchill erroneously concluded that Dulles controlled Eisenhower and the subsequent meetings in Bermuda. Lord Moran, Churchill's physician, quoted Churchill as saying about Dulles, "Ten years ago I could have dealt with him. Even as it is I have not been defeated by this bastard. I have been humiliated by my own decay."<sup>41</sup> Churchill's health and energy had been deteriorating since his stroke the previous summer, yet he showed no enthusiasm to hand over the

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<sup>39</sup>Michael Gordon Jackson "Beyond brinkmanship: Eisenhower, Nuclear War Fighting, and Korea, 1953-1968," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 35, no. 1 (March 2005): 52-75, <[onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1741-5705.2004.00235.>](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1741-5705.2004.00235.>) (11 December 2010). "Eisenhower pressed the point that the introduction of tactical nuclear weapons was a positive development. British Foreign Minister Anthony Eden, according to his secretary Evelyn Schuckburgh, describes one of his discussions with the president about their use in Korea: Ike said the American public no longer distinguished between atomic and other weapons...nor is there logically any distinction, he (Eisenhower) says. Why should they confine themselves to high explosives requiring thousands of aircraft in attacking China's bases when they can do it more cheaply and easily with atoms? The development of smaller atomic weapons and the use of atomic artillery make the distinction impossible to sustain..."

<sup>40</sup> Gilbert, *Never Despair: Winston S. Churchill, 1945-1965*, 936.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

premiership to Anthony Eden.

Shortly after the Bermuda Conference, Eisenhower addressed the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 8, 1953, on the importance of the development of atomic power for peaceful purposes. He advocated peaceful uses of nuclear energy and urged a transformation of the world's thinking about atomic power. Eisenhower proposed to the United Nations that the true purpose of atomic energy meant helping the developing countries of the Third World.<sup>42</sup> He represented and embodied American idealism to the Third World at the United Nations.

Even as Eisenhower delivered his positive message to the United Nations, at a NATO meeting in Paris in that same month, Secretary of State Dulles threatened that the United States might be forced into an "agonizing reappraisal" of its position in Europe.<sup>43</sup> He had meant to press for European unity to combat the Soviet threat and to fend off the Soviet Union's subversion of the Western alliance. Dulles had wanted the Europeans to support the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Defense Community to provide for a realistic defense framework for the Atlantic community. His attempt at promoting transatlantic unity through threat and intimidation seriously backfired.<sup>44</sup>

This "agonizing reappraisal" caused Churchill to retaliate on December 22, 1953, with an extremely caustic letter to Eisenhower about Egypt. Churchill ranted that

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<sup>42</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, "An Atomic Stockpile for Peace: Dedicated to Serve the Needs Rather than the Fears of Mankind," *Vital Speeches* 20, no. 6 (1 January 1954): 163-165.

<sup>43</sup> John Foster Dulles, "Unity Must Be Achieved Soon: It May Never be Possible for Integration to Occur in Freedom," *Vital Speeches* 20, no. 6 (1 January 1954): 166. "If, however, the European Defense Community should not become effective; if France and Germany remain apart, so that they would again be potential enemies, then indeed there would be grave doubt whether Continental Europe could be made a place of safety. That would compel an agonizing reappraisal of basic United States policy."

<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*, 165-166.



although the Egyptian base issue might appear inconsequential to the Americans, it was very important to the British. He warned that American policy on Egypt could “cause a deep and serious setback to the relations between America and Great Britain.”<sup>45</sup> He added, for good measure, that it might be increasingly difficult for the British to help the Americans in the Far East.<sup>46</sup> Churchill had raised a dangerous linkage: American help in the Middle East in exchange for British help in the Far East.

Another troubling issue for the Anglo-American relationship involved Britain’s diplomatic recognition of the communist Chinese government. Vice President Richard M. Nixon strenuously opposed any nation’s recognition of communist China. *Newsweek* reported in January 1954 that Nixon insisted, “All attempts to bring an aggressive communist China into the family of nations must be stopped with all means at America’s disposal.”<sup>47</sup> Nixon concluded, “If Indochina goes, through Red victory or French “deal” ... it will be followed by Malaya, Thailand, and most of Southeast Asia. And if they go ... then Japan will capitulate to the communists, since the bulk of her trading is with that region.”<sup>48</sup> The Vice President insisted that communist China must be considered an outlaw nation, while the British further strengthened commercial relations with the

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<sup>45</sup> Message from Winston Churchill to Dwight D. Eisenhower, December 22, 1953, FO 800/840, United States of America, May-December 1953, Avon Papers.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. “Whether you take sides against us in Egypt or not will not affect the support which we have thought it right to give you over China. It will, however, make it more difficult for Anthony and me to help you in the Far East if we have to do it in the face, not only of Socialist opinion, but of general feeling of indignation throughout the country.” Churchill, again, criticized the United States for not supporting the United Kingdom in Egypt.

<sup>47</sup> “Nixon’s Secret Report Warns: Don’t Recognize Red Chinese,” *Newsweek*, 4 January 1954, 17.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 17.

communist Chinese. Economic trade relations between China and Great Britain exacerbated existing problems in the Anglo-American relationship.

In his State of the Union address in 1954, President Eisenhower underscored that “There has been in fact a great strategic change in the world during the past year. That precious intangible, the initiative, is becoming ours. Our policy, not limited to mere reaction against crises provoked by others, it is free to develop along the lines of our choice not only abroad, but also at home.”<sup>49</sup> Eisenhower’s foreign policy called for action: “We shall use this initiative to promote three broad purposes: First, to protect the freedom of our people; second, to maintain a strong growing economy; third, to concern ourselves with the human problems of individual citizens.”<sup>50</sup> Eisenhower contrasted his pro-active foreign policy with his predecessor’s reactive foreign policy.

Senator Robert A. Taft’s conservative philosophy in foreign policy had been completely adopted. Eisenhower forcefully expressed his belief in a global communist conspiracy to undermine the freedom of people all over the world. Although publicly he maintained the value of collective security to reduce this communist threat, Eisenhower’s belief in collective security had diminished. Transatlantic cooperation, in Korea and Iran in 1953, would quickly disappear in places like Indochina and Quemoy and Matsu in 1954.

As president, Eisenhower made a point of championing fiscal responsibility as a way of strengthening the country. At a time when the federal government spent 70% of

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<sup>49</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, “The State of the Union: Building a Stronger America,” *Vital Speeches* 20, no. 8 (1 February 1954): 226.

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

its budget on military spending, he stated, “Some think it is good politics to promise more and more government spending, and at the same time, more and more tax cuts for all. We know from bitter experience, what such a policy would finally lead to. It would make our dollars buy less. It would raise the price of rent, of clothing, and of groceries. It would pass on still larger debts to our children.”<sup>51</sup> A powerful American economy could provide for essential defense and this could only be done through fiscal responsibility. Eisenhower courageously resisted Republican calls for more tax cuts and instead favored extensive spending cuts in military expenditures in order to balance the federal budget. Fiscal responsibility and a sound economy would lead to a stronger nation.

Dulles, in a broadcast to the nation on February 24, 1954, emphasized the importance of moral principles as the ultimate weapon in American diplomacy. He argued against the cynical conduct of foreign affairs, a not-so-subtle jab at British balance of power diplomacy. Dulles believed in moral principles, as had Woodrow Wilson, and promoted American values that reflected Eisenhower’s idealism.<sup>52</sup> He stated, “Our ultimate reliance is not dollars, is not guided missiles, is not weapons of mass destruction. The ultimate weapon is moral principle.”<sup>53</sup> He warned, “There are some in Europe who

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<sup>51</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, “The New Tax Program: Economic Conditions Do Not Warrant Additional Tax Reductions,” *Vital Speeches* 20, no. 12, (1 April 1954): 365.

<sup>52</sup> John Foster Dulles, “The Ultimate Weapon is Moral Principle: Conference Gave Post-Stalin Knowledge of Soviet Intentions,” *Vital Speeches* 20, no. 11 (15 March 1954): 325.

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

would have us forsake our friends in Asia in the hope of gain for Europe.”<sup>54</sup> Dulles repudiated the conduct of diplomacy as merely a cynical exercise in a balance of power game.

The British, in the words of British Ambassador to the United States Sir Roger Makins, took offense to this American idealism. In response to an inquiry about a possible Churchill speech in the United States, Makins wrote to Churchill’s private secretary, John Colville, saying: “I suggest that Prime Minister might say something about the historical approach to international problems (Americans tend to an *a priori* approach). This might lead to some reflections on the unwisdom of taking up inflexible or dogmatic positions in international affairs; on the meaning and purpose of negotiation; and on the need for patience, restraint, and tolerance.”<sup>55</sup> He clearly thought Eisenhower’s idealism had led to an inflexibility that had no real place in diplomatic relations.

Furthermore, Eisenhower’s and Dulles’s absolute refusal to negotiate with the Soviets increasingly irritated the British Foreign Office. Makins thought Churchill should set the Americans straight on how foreign affairs should be conducted. Later in the same memorandum, he contended, “The main trouble with the American people at the moment is fear, fear of themselves and their new responsibilities, fear above all of what is vaguely and loosely called communism. To these fears is added lack of

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup>Message from Roger Makins to John Colville, Private Secretary of Winston Churchill, March 13, 1954, FO 800/841, United States of America, January –May 1954, Avon Papers.

confidence in their government.”<sup>56</sup> To Makins, America’s fear of communism appeared irrational.

Dulles’s views of communism completely contradicted Makin’s assessment of the world. In his own statement to the House Foreign Affairs Committee on April 4, 1954, Dulles stated,

None should doubt that the Soviet rulers still seek world domination. The recent Four Power conference at Berlin served strikingly to demonstrate that the communist leaders cannot reconcile themselves to human freedom and feel that, because freedom is contagious they must try to stamp it out. This basic incompatibility of communism with freedom drives them always to seek to expand their area of control. This is not merely due to a lust for power but a genuine fear of freedom.<sup>57</sup>

In contrast to the British, Dulles thought that the Soviets acted out of both fear and ideology. Eisenhower and Dulles put a much higher priority than did Churchill and Eden in containing Soviet expansionism in the Far East.

Senator John F. Kennedy (D-Mass) shared and expressed the deep British skepticism about the deteriorating military situation in Indochina. In a speech to the U.S. Senate on April 6, 1954, he cautioned his fellow senators, “But to pour money, material, and men into the jungles of Indochina without at least a remote prospect of victory would be dangerously futile and self-destructive.”<sup>58</sup> Kennedy’s concerns mirrored those of the

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<sup>56</sup> Message from Roger Makins to John Colville, Private Secretary to Winston Churchill, March 13, 1954, FO 800/841, United States of America, January –May 1954, Avon Papers.

<sup>57</sup> Statement from John Foster Dulles, Secretary of State, before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, April 5, 1954, Re: “Deterrent Strategy”, Box 80, Duplicate Correspondence, John Foster Dulles Papers.

<sup>58</sup> John F. Kennedy, “The War in Indochina: The Wholehearted Support of the Peoples of the Associated States Is Necessary for Victory,” *Vital Speeches* 20, no. 14 (1 May 1954): 418.

late Senator Robert Taft, who had died in July 1953. Kennedy continued with his gloomy assessment: “I am frankly of the belief that no amount of American military assistance in Indochina can conquer an enemy which is everywhere and at the same time nowhere, an enemy of the people which has the sympathy and covert support of the people.”<sup>59</sup> There could be no way to measure political success in Southeast Asia.

Kennedy was clearly angry with the American officials who misled the American people about France granting independence to the Associated States. Kennedy explained, “In November of 1951, Assistant Secretary of State Dean Rusk again assured us that ‘The peoples of the Associated States are free to assume the extensive responsibility for their own affairs that has been accorded them by treaties with France’.”<sup>60</sup> Kennedy accused Rusk and other U.S. officials of having lied about the French granting freedoms in Indochina. Only through the independent nations of Indochina namely Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam completely devoid of French colonialism could the people of Indochina achieve their freedom.

In April 1954, Dulles travelled to London to discuss with both Churchill and Eden the multifaceted problems of Indochina. Dulles optimistically reported to Eisenhower that the British had moved away from their radical position of no action before the Geneva Conference. But he noted, “The British are extremely fearful of becoming involved with ground forces in Indochina, and they do not share the view of our military that the loss of northern Vietnam would automatically carry with it the loss of the entire

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 419.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 418.

area.”<sup>61</sup> The British and the Americans clearly diverged ideologically about Eisenhower’s domino theory. In a letter to Dulles in 1954, Eisenhower expressed extreme displeasure with British intransigence on Indochina, “I do suggest that you make sure the British government fully appreciates the gravity of the situation and the great danger of French collapse in the region. The British must not be able to merely shut their eyes and later plead blindness as an alibi for failing to propose a positive program.”<sup>62</sup> Eisenhower then sent Admiral Arthur W. Radford, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, to London to challenge the British military chiefs’ views on the futility of fighting a war in Indochina.

Dulles and Eden also departed company on the meaning of collective security in Southeast Asia. The British seemed prepared to accept a collective security agreement in Southeast Asia, excluding Indochina. Dulles believed that Eden had already agreed to a form of collective security for all of Southeast Asia, including Indochina. Eden then recommended that after the Geneva Conference the southern portion of Vietnam might be included in the defense of Southeast Asia.<sup>63</sup> Dulles instinctively distrusted Eden and felt

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<sup>61</sup>Telegram from John Foster Dulles to Walter B. Smith and Dwight D. Eisenhower, April 13, 1954, Dulles- April 1954 (2), Box 2, Dulles-Herter Series, Ann Whitman File, Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953-61.

<sup>62</sup> Letter from Dwight D. Eisenhower to John Foster Dulles, April 23, 1954, Dulles-April 1954 (2), Box 2, Dulles-Herter Series, Ann Whitman File, Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953-61.

<sup>63</sup> Telegram from John Foster Dulles to Walter B. Smith, April 26, 1954, Dulles-April 1954 (1), Box 2, Dulles-Herter Series, Ann Whitman File, Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953-61. “I asked Mr. Eden where we stood on our joint communiqué of April 13. He said that they were not prepared to examine the possibility of a collective defense which might commit them to fight in Indochina. It was definite that they were not prepared to fight in Indochina, and they were not willing to have any conversations which assumed that as a premise. The area which they are prepared to help defend would have to exclude Indochina. I said that it seems to me that the communiqués of April 13 clearly implied at least a collective examination of the possibility of a collective defense which would include Indochina. Mr. Eden said that subsequent study had already brought them to the conclusion that this was unacceptable if it involved their fighting, but if there was a peaceful settlement at Geneva which partitioned Indochina, then they might be prepared to include the non-communist portion in the defense area.”

double-crossed by what he viewed as Eden's shifting positions. The Americans had proposed joint military action in Indochina while the British remained exceedingly cautious about any kind of military commitment in the Far East.

The question of whether the Americans would save Dien Bien Phu came up in the early spring of 1954, well before the Geneva Conference. As a result of congressional action, the Eisenhower administration needed British concurrence to support a military rescue of French forces at Dien Bien Phu. Churchill and the British cabinet swiftly rejected Eisenhower's request for a joint military intervention until negotiations at the Geneva Conference had been exhausted, thus ensuring a tragic ending for the French military garrison. Churchill had given Eden his marching orders, preferring a cease-fire settlement and an end to the French-Indochina war through negotiation.<sup>64</sup> The British absolutely refused to be trapped, even by the Americans, in an unwinnable war in French Indochina.

As convoluted as the problems of Indochina appeared to be, Eisenhower exhibited greater trepidation about the possibility of a ceaseless series of wars in Southeast Asia and thought seriously about the idea of striking at China as the instigator of the turmoil.<sup>65</sup> The British had been noticeably alarmed with the numerous hawkish statements coming

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<sup>64</sup> Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Mandate for Change*, 351-352.

<sup>65</sup> Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Vol. 2 The President, 1952-1969*, 205. "Bobby Cutler reported to the President that the NSC also believed that 'there was little use for discussing any defense of Southeast Asia; that U.S. power should be directed against the source of the peril, which was, at least in the first instance, China, and that in this connection atomic weapons should be used.'"



from Admiral Arthur W. Radford, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.<sup>66</sup> Eden described Churchill's reaction to an American proposal for the rescue of the French at Dien Bien Phu: "Sir Winston summed up the position by saying that what we were being asked to do was to assist in misleading Congress into approving a military operation, which would in itself be ineffective, and might well bring the world to the verge of a major war."<sup>67</sup> The British wanted to avoid a major war in the Far East even as, at the other extreme Eisenhower and Dulles strategized with the National Security Council about the possibility of completely eliminating all potential Chinese threats. Eden vigorously opposed military intervention in Indochina and feared the Americans might be using an attack at Dien Bien Phu as a pretext for an attack against mainland China.<sup>68</sup> The British totally rejected the American proposal.<sup>69</sup> Eden quickly learned that the Americans were incensed with British rejection of any armed intervention.<sup>70</sup>

Churchill remained steadfastly opposed to British military intervention in French

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<sup>66</sup> Eden, *Full Circle*, 115. "I said that I assumed they had not forgotten the Russo-Chinese alliance. It was possible that if we went into Indo-China we should find ourselves fighting Vietnam as well as Vietminh, and in addition heading for a world war. Admiral Radford replied that he had never thought that the Chinese would intervene in Indo-China, nor had they the necessary resources available. If they attempted air action, we could eliminate this by bombing the Chinese airfields, which were very vulnerable."

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 117.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 119. "Once President Eisenhower had been assured that the United Kingdom would participate in this declaration, he would be prepared to seek Congressional approval for intervention. United States naval aircraft would go into action at Dien Bien Phu on April 28." "If the United Kingdom acceded to this latest American proposal, we should be supporting direct United States intervention in the Indo-China war and, probably, later American action against the Chinese mainland."

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

<sup>70</sup> Letter from Anthony Eden to Winston Churchill, April 28, 1954, FO 800/841, United States of America, January-May 1954, Avon Papers. "It is probably inevitable that the Americans should feel a little sore just now. They will get over it."

Indochina. He bluntly told Admiral Radford, “The British people would not be easily influenced by what happened in the distant jungles of Southeast Asia; but they did know that there was a powerful U.S. base in East Anglia and that war with China, who could invoke the Sino-Russian Pact, might mean an assault by hydrogen bombs on these islands.”<sup>71</sup> He later told Lord Moran, “I don’t see why we should fight for France in Indochina when we have given away India.”<sup>72</sup> Churchill clearly viewed Indochina, like India, as a colonial matter rather than a central crisis in the Cold War.

Churchill’s great dream of a global Anglo-American partnership was becoming more and more like a horrible nightmare. Eisenhower wrote despondently to Churchill on April 28, 1954, “Likewise, I am deeply concerned by the seemingly wide differences in the conclusions developed in our respective governments, especially as these conclusions relate to such events as the war in Indochina and the impending conference in Geneva.”<sup>73</sup> He continued, “Foster will bring back to me valuable impressions and conclusions that I should study before you and I meet to explore why we seem to reach drastically differing answers to problems involving the same set of facts.”<sup>74</sup> Ideologically speaking, Eisenhower and Churchill moved further and further apart.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Gilbert, *Never Despair: Winston S. Churchill, 1945-1965*, 973.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 974.

<sup>73</sup> Message From Dwight D. Eisenhower to Winston Churchill, April 28, 1954, FO 800/841, United States of America, January-May 1954, Avon Papers.

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

<sup>75</sup> John Foster Dulles, Memorandum of Conversation with Anthony Eden, April 30, 1954, Dulles-April 1954 (1), Box 2, Dulles-Herter Series, Ann Whitman File, Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953-61. “I said it was particularly galling to the United States to have to accept this attack on it as being an ‘imperialist’ power. I said the United States was eager to beat the communists at their own game and to

Churchill soon realized that transatlantic relations with the United States had become seriously strained over Indochina.<sup>76</sup> The British needed to rebuild their relationship with both Eisenhower and Dulles. While Dulles no longer favored direct U.S. armed intervention in Indochina, he did support the idea that the French must be forced to recognize the independence movements within Indochina.<sup>77</sup> Dulles advocated a grand strategy of collective security for all of Southeast Asia, while Eisenhower, for his part, just wanted a greater show of Western unity in the Far East. Neither Dulles nor Eden looked forward to the summit meeting in Washington, though the two leaders Eisenhower and Churchill remained surprisingly enthusiastic. Churchill easily recognized that the Dulles-Eden relationship had gone downhill. He mildly reprimanded Eden for not showing Dulles sufficient support while negotiating at Geneva.<sup>78</sup>

Dulles became increasingly aggravated with the British in trying to work out a collective security agreement for the Far East with Anthony Eden. The Secretary of State wanted to defeat the communists by their own methods. He supported independence

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sponsor nationalism in the independent colonial areas, which was in accordance with our historic tradition, but that we were restrained from doing so by a desire to cooperate with Britain and France in Asia, in north Africa and in the Near and Middle East. This, however, did not seem to be paying any dividends because when the chips were down there was no cohesion between us. Here at Geneva we were presenting a pathetic spectacle of drifting without any agreed policy or purpose.”

<sup>76</sup> Letter from Winston Churchill to Anthony Eden, May 5, 1954, FO 800/841, United States of America, January-May 1954, Avon Papers. “It will be unlucky if he (Walter Bedell Smith) is knocked out at this juncture for he seemed to have an important part to play in restoring Anglo-American relations which I fear are at least strained.”

<sup>77</sup> A position Dulles shared with Senator John F. Kennedy.

<sup>78</sup> Message from Winston Churchill to Anthony Eden, May 18, 1954, FO 800/ 841, United States of America, January-May 1954, Avon Papers. “The time has come when Anglo-American relations require strengthening. I am all for developing friendship with Russia, perhaps at the expense of China but we must never let there be any doubt about which side we are on. We can afford to play strong in its proper way because of the wide gap which separates us from a new world war.”

movements in the colonial areas of Asia, but felt markedly restrained by British and French colonialism. Makins predicted troubling times ahead, especially if there could be no agreement at the Geneva Conference.<sup>79</sup> Eden thought that the Americans really had not planned on a successful outcome at the Geneva Conference, but instead desired direct military intervention in Southeast Asia.<sup>80</sup>

The British, fearing a long drawn-out guerrilla war in French Indochina, preferred instead on a strategy of negotiations with the communists at Geneva. While in theory, Eisenhower may have had no problem with this, he could never quite trust any agreement made with communists. He believed that an agreement at Geneva with communists would be preconditioned on commitments that they would take very lightly, while giving them the time to take advantage of any future military situation.<sup>81</sup>

Eden concluded that none of the Americans seemed to understand the British position, with the possible exception of Under-Secretary of State Walter Bedell Smith.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>79</sup>Letter from Roger Makins to Anthony Eden, May 29, 1954, FO 800/841, United States of America, January-May 1954, Avon Papers. "I think, however, that we are approaching another dangerous corner. From here it seems to me likely, if not perhaps the most likely development that the French may come forward with a plan involving increased military effort in Indochina, provided the Americans will intervene directly. Perhaps the request would in the first instance be for air and naval support only. If the situation at Geneva seemed unpromising at the time the request was made, I think, as I reported in my telegram no. 1005 of May 21 the administration would be tempted to put the issue to Congress. Therefore, I am disposed to agree, from the American point of view, with what Gladwyn Jebb says from the French angle, that the situation is quite likely to get out of hand if some agreement in Geneva is not reached within ten days or a fortnight."

<sup>80</sup>Message from Anthony Eden to Winston Churchill, June 1, 1954, FO 800/842, United States of America, June 1954, Avon Papers. "I am becoming increasingly troubled at the international position which may develop about the time of our visit to the United States. The French seem convinced that about June 15 will be their danger period for Hanoi. There is also only too much evidence here that the main American concern is not now, if it ever has been, for the success of the conference, but with preparations for intervention."

<sup>81</sup>Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Mandate for Change, 1953-1956*, 349.

Eden wrote, “I had been compelled to adopt the role of intermediary between the Western powers and the communists. My activities in this respect were open to every kind of misrepresentation. I was concerned about their effect on Anglo-American relations.”<sup>83</sup>

Eden’s relationship with Dulles had rapidly deteriorated. Moreover, Eisenhower wanted to abruptly terminate the Geneva Conference because he feared the communists had used the negotiations to simply advance their own military position.<sup>84</sup>

In Washington, British Ambassador Roger Makins became quite anxious about John Foster Dulles’s sour mood and the growing differences between London and Washington. Makins wrote Eden, “Dulles, in marked contrast to the president’s utterances, said the differences between us were much deeper and more serious than was generally realized; indeed, there were more differences than points of agreement between the two countries.”<sup>85</sup> The Anglo-American relationship had been unraveling. Makins thought Dulles saw the two countries moving in different directions and that the Washington summit risked the real possibility that these differences would be highlighted by the press and show a real division in the transatlantic alliance.

Makins wrote Eden to warn him that Dulles thought that colonialism would prove to be the major stumbling block in the “special relationship.”

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<sup>82</sup> Eden, *Full Circle*, 127.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 144. “Bedell Smith showed me a telegram from President Eisenhower advising him to do everything in his power to bring to the Conference to an end as rapidly as possible, on the grounds that the communists were only spinning things out to suit their own military purposes. This implied that to keep hostilities going would help the French and their allies. I was sure that the reverse was the truth.”

<sup>85</sup> Message from Roger Makins to Anthony Eden, June 18, 1954, FO 800/842, United States of America, June 1954, Avon Papers.

On colonialism, Dulles's line was that the United States had weakened her leadership and her mission in the world by supporting or appearing to support, British and French policies in the Middle East and North Africa, thus risking the charge of being an imperialist power. Egypt and Saudi Arabia provided the examples. Some way must be found of re-establishing the American moral position on the issue of colonialism and taking the initiative rather than remaining on the defensive. Dulles seems to have been particularly affected by Chou En-lai's attacks at Geneva.<sup>86</sup>

Makins then expressed an incredibly foreboding and Cassandra-like warning to Eden that Dulles planned to reclaim America's traditional anti-colonialism, regardless of British colonialism in the Far East and the Middle East, in furthering non-communist nationalist movements.

In a follow-up letter to Eden, Makins cautioned, "I have thought for some time past that we were more likely in the long run to have a fall-out over the Middle East than the Far East."<sup>87</sup> In a truly perceptive analysis of Eisenhower's foreign policy, Makins concluded, "America will not go isolationist, we shall hear more of the traditional attitudes; self-determination in colonial areas, hemispheric solidarity, especially in South America, peripheral defense in this context reliance on selected friends (including ourselves) rather than on united action. We may find ourselves having to deal with a powerful, nationalistic and frustrated America."<sup>88</sup> American foreign policy would be more unilateral and not isolationist.

Makins described perfectly the new radical Republican foreign policy that

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Letter from Roger Makins to Anthony Eden, June 21, 1954, FO 800/842, United States of America, June 1954, Avon Papers.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

emanated from Washington. Self-determination in colonial areas could only be viewed as an attack on British and French colonialism. Hemispheric defense meant that the British should stay out of the Western Hemisphere, as in the case of Guatemala. A peripheral defense implied less reliance on regional military alliances and more on unilateral military action by the United States. Makins had ingeniously deciphered Eisenhower's extraordinarily nuanced foreign policy.

On June 29, 1954, Dulles had breakfast with former President Herbert Hoover, who frequently expressed his doubts about the reliability of Western allies. Dulles noted, "Mr. Hoover spoke in general terms about our foreign policy, emphasizing that, in his opinion, military alliances were of no dependability and that the only strength on which we could rely was our own. He felt with the development of atomic weapons, it was inevitable that England and Western European countries would be neutral."<sup>89</sup> Like Douglas MacArthur and the rest of the "Old Right," Hoover did not trust regional military alliances and collective security arrangements. The British and the French could not be depended on for military action in Asia.

On June 27, 1954, Churchill pressed the Americans again on the possibility of his meeting with the Soviets as a preliminary to a Three Power meeting. Dulles repeated to the Prime Minister that such a meeting had potential dangers, particularly if nothing positive resulted. Churchill confronted a powerful adversary in Dulles. After the conference, Churchill ruminated on the incredible strength of the United States, stating,

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<sup>89</sup> Memorandum of Breakfast Conversation with Former President Hoover, John Foster Dulles and Herbert Hoover, June 29, 1954, Dulles, John 1954 (1), Box 3, Dulles-Herter Series, Ann Whitman File, Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953-61.

“We do not yet realize her immeasurable power. She could conquer Russia without any help. In a month the Kremlin would be unable to move troops. The Americans would become enraged and violent. I know them very well. They might decide to go it alone. That was what Dulles meant when he talked about an agonizing reappraisal of policy.”<sup>90</sup> Churchill clearly recognized how America’s foreign policy, under Eisenhower, had shifted dramatically toward excessive unilateralism.

At the same time, Churchill remained confident enough to send, in July 1954, an exploratory message to Soviet Foreign Minister V. Molotov about the possibility of a Three Power meeting. He then wrote Eisenhower about his proposal and received a bristling reply filled with sarcasm, “You did not let any grass grow under your feet, when you left here I had thought, obviously erroneously, that you were undecided about this matter, and that when you had cleared your mind I would receive some notice...”<sup>91</sup> Eisenhower, obviously upset, still hoped that something good might come of Churchill’s letter.

In a speech to the Lions International Convention in New York on July 9, 1954, the minority leader of the House of Representatives, Joseph W. Martin, Jr. (R-Mass), asserted that freedom and communism could not co-exist. He attacked the entire notion of “peaceful coexistence.” In a free society, “a man’s word is his bond.”<sup>92</sup> He continued, “Yet today there are forces loose in the world whose sole aim is the substitution of

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<sup>90</sup> Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill: Never Despair 1945-1965*, 1016.

<sup>91</sup> Boyle, ed., *The Churchill-Eisenhower Correspondence, 1953-1955*, 153.

<sup>92</sup> Joseph W. Martin, Jr., “Liberty, Intelligence, Our Nation’s Safety: ‘Coexistence’ with Communism Impossible,” *Vital Speeches* 20, no. 20 (1 August 1954): 613.



misrepresentation for truth, suspicion for trust and heresy for faith. These forces can be identified very simply. They constitute the world communist conspiracy.”<sup>93</sup> Martin argued, “The truth of the matter is that communism has no morals. It is amoral; it is anti-moral. And unless we understand this we cannot begin to grasp the true nature of communism.”<sup>94</sup> Negotiations and compromises with the communists amounted to a surrender to evil, a view most prominently promoted by Eisenhower and rejected by Churchill. The Republicans, much more than the British, saw communism, like slavery, as needing to be abolished.

This new concept of “peaceful coexistence,” an innovative phrase used by Anthony Eden, now had a new champion in Winston Churchill. Churchill made the significant point of telling the House of Commons how President Eisenhower had expressed his own faith in peaceful coexistence between communist and non-communist nations. He also decided, as had Eisenhower, that this did not mean, in any sense, any type of appeasement or any acceptance of communist subversion.<sup>95</sup> Churchill wanted to cooperate with Eisenhower in the Cold War, yet Churchill, surely with Dulles in mind, incisively pointed out the considerable ideological difference between peaceful coexistence and the policy of forced rollback: “What a vast ideological gulf there is between the idea of peaceful coexistence vigilantly safeguarded and forcibly extirpating

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 614.

<sup>95</sup> Winston Churchill, “British Foreign Policy: Statement on Washington Talks,” *Vital Speeches* 20, no. 20 (1 August 1954): 613. “President Eisenhower had said that the hope of the world lies in peaceful coexistence of the communist and non-communist powers, adding also the warning (with which I entirely agree) that the doctrine must not lead to appeasement that compels any nation to submit to foreign domination.”

the communist fallacy and heresy.”<sup>96</sup> He skillfully pointed out the intellectual and moral inconsistency of supporting peaceful coexistence while at the same time secretly planning military operations and guerilla actions against communists. Churchill’s public attack on Dulles’s “roll back” policies continued to illustrate deep ideological divisions between the British and the Americans during the Cold War.

The Geneva Conference of 1954 sought to temporarily divide Vietnam into two parts, with the communists consolidating power in the north and a U.S.-supported government trying to form in the south. Dulles had asserted that freedom required popular support in its effort to defeat communism. French colonialism had ended and now Dulles hoped that the newly independent countries of Cambodia, Laos, and South Vietnam might provide the best defense against communist Chinese insurgents.<sup>97</sup>

Many Americans began advocating for a stronger U.S. presence in the Far East to defend the freedom of these newly independent countries. Robert T. Oliver, journalist and Asian specialist, stated, “At the time I was in Geneva, attending the conference on Korea and Indochina, and it was very apparent to us there that the communists were not in the least disturbed by what they confidently interpreted as a bluff. They pushed ahead both with their political demands and with their military attacks in Indochina as though our bold talk were nothing but the buzzing of so many mosquitoes.”<sup>98</sup> Oliver

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> State Department Memorandum on John Foster Dulles News Conference on Geneva Negotiations, July 23, 1954, Eden, Anthony 1954, Box 80, Duplicate Correspondence, John Foster Dulles Papers.

<sup>98</sup> Robert T. Oliver, “American Foreign Policy in a World Adrift: We Must Assert Leadership Not Partnership,” *Vital Speeches* 21, no. 1 (15 October 1954): 778.

demonstrated the great weakness of brinksmanship. The communists perceived the tactic as mere bluff and the Americans as paper tigers. The British, it seems, feared that Eisenhower meant exactly what he said and that the conflict in Indochina would be internationalized and vastly expanded.

General Matthew Ridgway, Chief of Staff of the United States Army, directly challenged Dulles's diplomacy of brinksmanship and voiced sober concerns about the overall costs of war: "The effects of full scale war in this era affect all aspects of national life, not only while the war is in progress but for years, even decades, after. Since war has commanded so much of our effort in wealth, it certainly deserves a great deal of our most careful attention and thought."<sup>99</sup> Ridgway, in a wholly insubordinate speech to President Eisenhower, came out robustly against any policy of brinksmanship arguing: "The excessive and deliberate use of military capability as a diplomatic device is both immoral and dangerous. History provides examples in which 'saber rattling' precipitated rather than prevented war."<sup>100</sup> Ridgway warned, "A policy which depends on for effect upon military capability becomes nothing but bluff-and obvious bluff-when the military capability for backing it up is patently inadequate."<sup>101</sup> Ridgway vigorously objected to fighting another land war in Asia. He doubted that the navy and the air force could win a war on their own. Ridgway's dovish views contrasted radically with Admiral Radford. Ultimately, he argued, U.S. ground troops would be needed and would be swallowed up

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<sup>99</sup> Matthew B. Ridgway, "The Statesman and the Soldier: Foreign Policy has a Military Aspect as well as Peaceful Aspect," *Vital Speeches* 20, no. 22 (1 September 1954): 674.

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

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 675.

by the enemy in a hopeless quagmire.

In a speech to the Conservative Party Conference in Blackpool, England on October 7, 1954, Eden defended the importance of the Geneva peace accords and the fundamental principles of British foreign policy. He argued for a strengthening of the Anglo-American partnership and pronounced the Geneva peace agreements as just and equitable.<sup>102</sup> Eden did recognize, however, that the peace accords in the Far East required constant vigilance. He forcefully defended the concepts of collective security and a balance of power approach to diplomacy, “In history we have often found ourselves in a conflict to prevent Europe falling under the domination of one power. This time I believe that by acting in advance with our friends we can avert that danger.”<sup>103</sup> Eden clearly understood collective security efforts in the Far East, such as SEATO, meant Britain had undertaken serious promises and obligations, but the British in reality had no intention of ever defending the countries of Indochina militarily.

At the same Conservative Party Conference in the fall of 1954, Churchill publicly charged that America might ultimately return to isolationism: “For America to withdraw into isolation would condemn all Europe to communist subjugation and our famous and

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<sup>102</sup> Anthony Eden, “Principles of British Foreign Policy: To Preserve Our Way of Life and to Live in Peace,” *Vital Speeches* 21, no. 3 (15 November 1954): 836. “But of course it is true that in all this we are doing, nothing is more important than to continue the growing understanding between ourselves, the Commonwealth and the United States of America. The basis of the whole of our policy will always be that, and I am confident that this week’s Conference in London has further strengthened this, I am glad to pay my tribute once again to Mr. Foster Dulles for the staunch support he has brought us at every stage. We could never have succeeded without it.”

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

beloved island to death and ruin.”<sup>104</sup> Churchill violently attacked the Labour Party and, specifically, former British cabinet member Aneurin Bevan. He added,

And yet six months ago a politician who has held office in the British cabinet, and who one day aspires to become the leader of the Labour Party, did not hesitate to tell the Americans to go it alone. One could not imagine any more fatal disaster than this evil counselor should be taken at his word on the other side of the Atlantic. There is already in the U.S. no little talk of a return to isolation, and the policy is described as Fortress America.<sup>105</sup>

He once more sounded the alarm, alerting the British public to the threat of isolationism and unilateralism in U.S. foreign policy. Yet, Churchill’s own Eurocentric foreign policy dismissed the importance of Asia.

In his State of the Union Address in 1955, Eisenhower challenged the notion that the battle between the free world and the communist world could be or should be restricted, as the British proposed, to Europe or by a mere balance of power approach. Eisenhower offered a comprehensive approach to the Cold War by tendering a judgment of its very nature. He informed Congress and the American people: “It is not a struggle merely of economic theories, or of forms of government, or of military power. The issue is the true nature of man. Either man is the creature whom the Psalmists described as ‘a little lower than the angels’, crowned with glory and honor, holding dominion over the works of his Creator, or man is soulless, animated machine to be enslaved, used and

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<sup>104</sup> Winston Churchill, “Peace Through Strength: The London Agreement,” *Vital Speeches* 21, no. 3 (15 November 1954): 837.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*

consumed by the state for its own glorification.”<sup>106</sup> Eisenhower believed the Cold War a struggle for the soul of mankind, while the pragmatic British practiced power politics.

According to Eisenhower, nothing less than human freedom for all mankind was at stake. The battleground for this war included not only Europe, but Asia, Africa, and South America. Eisenhower intended to make clear to communist leaders that the president and secretary of state would do everything in their power to keep America free. Less than a week later, in a not so oblique and unflattering reference to the British, Dulles stated, “The struggle for peace cannot be won by pacifism or by neutralism or by weakness. These methods we have tried and they have failed. Aggression is deterred only by an evident will and capacity to fight for rights more precious than is a debasing peace.”<sup>107</sup> Dulles sent a direct message to the British reminding them of the dangers of appeasement, particularly in the Far East. The British, it is clear, accused the Americans of pursuing a unilateral “Fortress America” strategy.

Douglas MacArthur, retired General of the Army, in a speech to the American Legion in Los Angeles on January 26, 1955, thoughtfully weighed in by describing the problems of the collapse of collective security in Asia: “The situation demonstrates the inherent weakness of the theory of collective security, the chain is no stronger than its weakest link, and what is even more vital, its full power can only be utilized when all links are brought simultaneously into action. The diverse interests of allies always tend

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<sup>106</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, “The State of the Union: Three Main Purposes of our Federal Government,” *Vital Speeches* 21, no. 7 (15 January 1955): 962.

<sup>107</sup> John Foster Dulles, “The Peace We Seek: The Desperate Struggle Against the War System,” *Vital Speeches* 21, no.8 (1 February 1955): 1001.

towards separation rather than unity.”<sup>108</sup> MacArthur implicitly meant that the British were the weak link in the chain of defense against communism in Asia. In essence, he contended that unreliable Western allies proved more problematic than no allies.<sup>109</sup>

In a speech to the Foreign Policy Association in New York City on February 16, 1955, Dulles asserted that in Asia the non-communists did not truly believe in the American commitment to the region. He pointed out that the United States had already accepted the Korean and Indochina armistices, which the communist Chinese falsely claimed as communist successes. Americans had recently helped in the removal of national Chinese troops in the Tachens. The communists had gained additional territory and had claimed the psychological edge in the struggle for the minds and hearts of the people in the East.<sup>110</sup> Eisenhower and Dulles proposed that the West regain the psychological advantage in the Cold War. Freedom, not communism, should be seen as the wave of the future.

British Ambassador Roger Makins, in a speech before the Executives Club in Chicago on February 18, 1955, defended the British case for traditional balance of power diplomacy in containing the Soviets: “If there was one phrase which made a better stick

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<sup>108</sup> Douglas MacArthur, “The Abolition of War: Triumph of Scientific Annihilation,” *Vital Speeches* 21, no. 9 (15 February 1955): 1043.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid. “As Napoleon Bonaparte once said, ‘Give me allies as an enemy so that I can defeat them one by one.’”

<sup>110</sup> John Foster Dulles, “Human Equality versus Class Rule: The Struggle for Power by Communist Party,” *Vital Speeches* 21, no. 10 (1 March 1955): 1063. “A great danger in Asia is the fear of many non-communist people that the United States has no intention of standing firmly behind them. Already that fear has mounted to the danger point. We accepted in Korea an armistice which the Chinese communists boisterously misrepresented as ‘victory’ for them. We acquiesced in an Indochina armistice which reflected the defeat of French Union forces at Dien Bien Phu. We aided the Tachen evacuation. The reasons were compelling, nevertheless the result added a few square miles more to the communist domain.”

to beat the European dog with than secret diplomacy, it was power politics or the balance of power. This was commonly regarded as a sort of Machiavellian device invented either by the perfidious British or the Germans, a kind of diplomatic sleight of hand; worldly wise, devious, immoral, unscrupulous, selfish, and certainly quite un-American.”<sup>111</sup> He could have added that George Washington, two centuries earlier, argued vehemently against this classical European diplomacy as leading to nothing more than endless wars and financial ruin.

Makins maintained, conversely, that no nation could control the balance of power around the globe by itself and that it would take the collective effort of free countries of the world to defeat communism.<sup>112</sup> He observed that many Americans had a negative view of Great Britain because they perceived a deterioration of British power and opposed Britain’s clinging to outmoded forms of colonialism. Makins emphasized that the British Empire had changed into the British Commonwealth and that London now exercised as much power through partnerships and allies as it once had through empire.<sup>113</sup> This assertion contradicted British efforts to maintain colonialism in Iran, Egypt, and other parts of the world.

Makin also declared that, unlike the United States, Britain had no formal

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<sup>111</sup> Roger Makins, “The Balance of Power: Anglo-American Unity Vitally Necessary to World Peace,” *Vital Speeches* 21, no 12 (1 April 1955): 1131.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid. “What I was going to say before I started to digress was that I only really wanted to suggest to you one general conclusion, and that is that wars only break out when the balance of power in the world, or some part of the world, breaks down.”

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 1133. “Gentlemen, I am sure you do not underrate the formidable complex of military, economic, and moral force which the commonwealth can exert in world affairs today. The prime ministers of the nine Commonwealth countries concluded a meeting in London on February 8. All reaffirmed that their countries would remain united as free and equal members of the commonwealth, freely cooperating in the pursuit of peace, liberty, and progress.”



relationship with Formosa and had utterly no responsibility with regard to any defense of Formosa, except possibly through the UN.<sup>114</sup> He then described the differences between the United States and Great Britain on the issue of Quemoy and Matsu: “Of course, the position of the offshore Chinese islands is rather different, because those have always been regarded as part of the mainland of China, just as I suppose Staten Island has always been regarded as part of the American continent. We, of course, having recognized the communist in Peking, regard those islands as being a part of the Chinese mainland.”<sup>115</sup> Roger Makins, British Ambassador to the United States, deliberately and publicly challenged Eisenhower’s policy on China by supporting the Chinese communist government’s claim to Quemoy and Matsu.

Moreover, Churchill feared the growing threat of the use of nuclear weapons in the Cold War. In a speech to the House of Commons on March 1, 1955, he compared the Cold War to the Reformation and the religious and intellectual animosity that led to the Thirty Years War in the seventeenth century. Science had created weapons of mass destruction that changed the very nature of war. Out of this fear, Churchill proposed universal disarmament, including conventional and nuclear weapons, and a reliable program for inspection. Until such a universal disarmament plan could be implemented, the British supported the Americans and their possession of nuclear weapons as a deterrent to war. The British would build their own nuclear arsenal in order to bolster the

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 1133-1134.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 1134.

power of the free world and to increase influence within the Western alliance.<sup>116</sup> Of course, Churchill understood that the theory of deterrence did not really work in the case of psychopaths in the mode of Hitler. Some other method would be needed in that event.<sup>117</sup> He presumed, of course, that the communists could be considered rational actors in international affairs in his determined belief in deterrence.

The question of nuclear deterrence and whether the communist Chinese could be considered rational actors on the international stage came up in the spring 1955 within the context of the crisis over Quemoy and Matsu in the Formosa Straits. The United States had already concluded a Mutual Defense Treaty with Formosa in December 1954. Congress further authorized the president to deploy the U.S. military to Formosa under certain circumstances, such as a direct attack by China upon Formosa or the Pescadores Islands. The law, though, remained purposely vague as to whether the president could defend the offshore islands of Quemoy or Matsu. This became a critical issue between the U.S. government and the British when the communist Chinese in 1955 began shelling the nationalist islands, presumably as a prelude to an overall attack on Formosa.<sup>118</sup>

Eisenhower and Dulles sought to defend Quemoy and Matsu, while Eden asserted that Quemoy and Matsu belonged to the communist Chinese. In a speech to

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<sup>116</sup> Winston Churchill, "Defense Through Deterrents: Free World Should Retain Superiority in Nuclear Weapons," *Vital Speeches* 21, no. 11 (15 March 1955): 1091. "Meanwhile, the United States has many times the nuclear power of Soviet Russia, I avoid any attempt to give exact figures, and they have, of course, far more effective means of delivery. Our moral and military support of the United States and our possession of nuclear weapons of the highest quality and on an appreciable scale, together with their means of delivery, will greatly reinforce the deterrent power of the free world, and will strengthen our influence within the free world. That, at any rate, is the policy which we have decided to pursue."

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 1090-1094.

<sup>118</sup> John Foster Dulles, "Report From Asia: We Will Meet Force With Greater Force," *Vital Speeches* 21, no. 12 (1 April 1955): 1124.

House of Commons on March 8, 1955, Eden proposed that the nationalists leave Quemoy and Matsu and that the communists, in return, promise not to attack Formosa and the Pescadores Islands. The British government maintained that Quemoy and Matsu legally belonged to the communist Chinese. Eisenhower in his memoirs wrote, “This arrangement, he (Eden) argued, could be followed by discussion of the political issues, which would produce a peaceful settlement. Such a suggestion, more wishful than realistic, in the light of our past experiences, I simply could not accept.”<sup>119</sup> In a national television and radio address on March 8, 1954, Dulles stated,

We hope that the present military activities of the Chinese communists are not in fact the first stage of an attack against Formosa and the Pescadores. We hope that a cease-fire may be attainable. We know that friendly nations, on their own responsibility, are seeking to find substance for these hopes. Also, the United Nations is studying the matter in a search for peace. So far these efforts have not been rewarded by any success. The Chinese communists seem to be determined to try to conquer Formosa.<sup>120</sup>

Eisenhower saw no advantages to be gained in negotiating a deal with the communist Chinese. The president’s refusal to negotiate directly with Peking created even a larger gulf of differences between the British and the Americans as evidenced by Eisenhower’s nuclear threats and the vitriolic nature of the correspondence between Churchill and Eisenhower.

The president informed the American people in a press conference on March 16, 1955, that he would use tactical atomic weapons in a war in Asia, albeit limiting atomic

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<sup>119</sup> Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Mandate for Change, 1953-1956*, 475.

<sup>120</sup> John Foster Dulles, “Report From Asia: We Will Meet Force With Greater Force,” *Vital Speeches* 21, no. 12 (1 April 1955): 1124.

bombing to military targets. Senate Majority Leader Lyndon B. Johnson (D-TX) described the possibility as an “irresponsible adventure,” while Republican Senate Minority Leader William F. Knowland (R-CA) represented those who feared greater appeasement of communists.<sup>121</sup> Eisenhower wrote a letter to Churchill during the Formosa Straits crisis, “still seeking a common understanding between us on our problems in the Far East. In it I compared the aggressiveness of the Red Chinese in the Formosa Strait with that of Japanese in Manchuria and the Nazis in Europe in the 1930s. Concessions were no answer.”<sup>122</sup> Eisenhower bitterly accused Churchill and Eden of pursuing a policy of appeasement in the Far East. One can only imagine Churchill’s outrage at being compared to Neville Chamberlain!

Former Democratic presidential nominee Adlai Stevenson, in a radio broadcast on April 11, 1955, condemned Eisenhower’s foreign policy, along the same lines as had the British. Stevenson insisted that Eisenhower’s policies meant, “Either another damaging and humiliating retreat, or else the hazard of war, modern war, unleashed not by necessity, not by strategic judgment, not by the honor of allies or for the defense of frontiers, but by a policy based more on political difficulties here at home than the realities of our situation in Asia.”<sup>123</sup> Stevenson really accused Eisenhower of having an absurd foreign policy.

Stevenson charged that Eisenhower was risking nuclear war for domestic political

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<sup>121</sup> Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Mandate for Change, 1953-1956*, 479.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> Adlai Stevenson, “China Policy: Condemns Force in Formosa Strait,” *Vital Speeches* 21, no.14 (1 May 1955): 1189.

purposes and further alleged that Eisenhower's policies estranged U.S. allies over two islands over which the nationalists had questionable claims.<sup>124</sup> The United States stood by itself in a possible war with China that could lead to a global war. Stevenson declared, "These are the questions that must be answered, this time I hope with more concern for realities in Asia and for unity with our allies than for fantasies in Formosa and for placating implacable extremists in America."<sup>125</sup> Just as the British had done, Stevenson indicted Eisenhower's foreign policy as dangerous and even radical.

Eisenhower fired back at Stevenson two weeks later in a speech to the Associated Press in New York on April 25, 1955, denouncing, in general terms, "unstable men." While he condemned a "trigger happy" mentality, he still warned against despair and inaction.<sup>126</sup> American foreign policy should be based on justice and cooperation, he said. The danger came from not being realistic and from not making necessary sacrifices for the common good. Eisenhower maintained that free trade with other countries provided the pathway to peace and prosperity. Spiritual truths and material wealth need not be in

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid. "Now there is undeniable merit to these and other arguments, but I must say in all candor that they seem to me overborne by the counter arguments, and I have the greatest misgivings about risking a third world war in defense of these little islands in which we would have neither the same legal justification nor the same support as in the defense of Formosa. They are different from Formosa. They have always belonged to China. But Formosa belonged to Japan and was ceded by the Japanese peace treaty. We have as much right to be there as anybody, except the real Formosans."

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, "The Search for Peace: International Trade A Step on the Road to Universal Peace," *Vital Speeches* 21, no. 15 (15 May 1955): 1219. "A crisis may be fatal when, by it, unstable men are stampeded into headlong panic. Then, bereft of common sense and wise judgment, they too hastily resort to armed forces in the hope of crushing a threatening foe, although thereby they impoverish the world and may forfeit the hope for enduring peace. But a crisis may likewise be deadly when inert men, unsure of themselves and their cause, are smothered in despair. Then, grasping at any straw of appeasement, they sell a thousand tomorrows for the pottage of a brief escape from reality."

opposition.<sup>127</sup> Eisenhower's diplomacy rested on the principles of supporting action over inaction and anticipating the likely consequences. His gamble paid off when the Formosa Straits Crisis gradually faded away in the summer of 1955.

Nikolai A. Bulganin, Soviet Premier in 1955, in an address at the Geneva Conference on July 18, 1955, declared that the Soviet Union also wanted peace and wholly endorsed the concept of "peaceful coexistence." He asserted that the Soviet Union respected all countries, regardless of the type of government they might have, and he promised that the Soviet Union would not interfere with the internal affairs of other peoples.<sup>128</sup> Bulganin proposed establishing maximum troop levels for all the nations of the world and he began a Soviet peace offensive at Geneva.<sup>129</sup>

John Foster Dulles interpreted Bulganin's address as a Soviet attempt to divide and ultimately disarm the West. In response, in an address to the United Nations General Assembly on September 22, 1955, he reasoned that international communism had too long a track record of disrupting the peace and argued that it would continue to destroy freedom through subversion in the Third World. The Soviets simply could not be trusted;

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid. "In things spiritual, the common effort must be inspired by fairness and justice, by national pride and self-respect. It must be based on the inalienable rights of the individual who, made in the image of the creator, is endowed with a dignity and destiny immeasurable by the materialistic yardstick of communism."

<sup>128</sup> Nikolai A. Bulganin, "Relaxation of International Tension: Collective Security System for Europe," *Vital Speeches* 21, no. 20 (1 August 1955): 1385. "The foreign policy of the Soviet Union is clear. We have always been in favor of peace among the peoples and of peaceful coexistence between all nations irrespective of their internal systems, irrespective of whether the state concerned is a monarchy or a republic, whether it is capitalist or socialist, because the social and economic system existing in any country is the internal affair of its people."

<sup>129</sup> Ibid. "It would be a fact of great importance if this conference were to come out in favor of an international agreement embodying our common consent to establish the level of the armed forces of the United States, the U.S.S. R. and China at 1,000,000 to 1,500,000 men for each and of Britain and France at 650,000 men and to limit the levels of the armed forces for all other states to 150, 000 to 200,000 men."

hence it was hard for the United States to develop good relations with them. Dulles stated, “President Eisenhower also raised the problem of international communism. He said that for 38 years this problem has disturbed relations between other nations and the Soviet Union. It is, indeed, difficult to develop really cordial relations between governments, when one is seeking by subversion to destroy the other.”<sup>130</sup> Dulles proved to be even tougher on communist China. He charged that the Chinese had been the aggressors in Korea and that they had taken over Tibet. The Chinese even hoped their fellow communists would conquer Indochina. Mao Zedong had launched an unprovoked attack against the nationalist Chinese.<sup>131</sup> Eisenhower and Dulles challenged the communists to harmonize their peaceful words with peaceful actions.

When Churchill grudgingly retired in April 1955, Eden became Prime Minister and his foreign secretary, Harold Macmillan, in a speech to the Foreign Press Association in London on September 22, 1955, blasted Dulles’s concept of brinkmanship and “massive retaliation.” He adamantly insisted that no one could win a nuclear war. Macmillan argued, “We are approaching a point where no power, however great, can hope to win a war. In nuclear war, once this saturation point is reached, there can be no

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<sup>130</sup> John Foster Dulles, “The Power of the United Nations: An Era of Peaceful Change,” *Vital Speeches* 22, no. 1 (15 October 1955): 3.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 4. “The record of this Communist regime has been an evil one. It fought the United Nations in Korea, for which it stands here branded as an aggressor. It took over Tibet by armed force. It became allied with the communist Viet Minh in their effort to take over Indochina by armed force. Then following the Indochina armistice, it turned its military attention to the Taiwan area. It intended to take this area by force, and began active military assaults on its approaches which assaults, it claimed, were a first step in its new program of military conquest.”

victor. There can only be mutual and universal destruction.”<sup>132</sup> Macmillan maintained that any reasonable man would decline to use atomic weapons, since it would inevitably lead to mutual destruction. He also warned that the threat of massive retaliation rang hollow and might instead, actually instigate aggression.<sup>133</sup> Modern war allowed for no real winners and should be avoided at all cost, preferably through diplomacy. The grim science that made the annihilation of mankind possible might well have a positive outcome; Macmillan predicted that no war would be fought.<sup>134</sup>

Dulles vigorously defended brinkmanship in a speech before the Illinois Manufacturers’ Association in Chicago on December 8, 1955: “The essential thing is that a potential aggressor should know in advance that he can and will be made to suffer for his aggression more than he can possibly gain by it. This calls for a system in which local defensive strength is reinforced by more mobile deterrent power. The method of doing so will vary according to the character of the various areas.”<sup>135</sup> Dulles zealously defended the concept of deterrence based on the power and influence of America’s nuclear and conventional forces.

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<sup>132</sup> Harold Macmillan, “Diplomacy’s Long Haul: The New Phase in East-West Relations,” *Vital Speeches* 22, no. 1 (15 October 1955): 12.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.* “First, there can be no victor in nuclear war. Secondly, since the sanction is so terrible, we must realize that men, however resolute, will shrink from using it –even against unprovoked aggression, unless they are convinced that to be conquered is worse than to be annihilated. Thirdly, it follows that ruthless and daring men, counting on this hesitation and exploiting it, may risk minor and even substantial acts of aggression because they believe that the sanction will never be employed.”

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 12-13.

<sup>135</sup> John Foster Dulles, “The Struggle for Justice: The Spirit in Which Our Nation was Conceived,” *Vital Speeches* 22, no. 6 (1 January 1956): 163.



Clearly, the most momentous differences between Eisenhower and Churchill had to do with how they viewed communism. Eisenhower and Dulles held a bleak outlook on the possibility of any negotiations with any communist power. The British, most notably Churchill and Eden, held a much more optimistic outlook on negotiations with the Soviets and the Chinese. American pessimism about communists extended to U.S. allies as well. While both Eisenhower and Dulles expressed the necessity of various regional military alliances, neither one had any great confidence in their British ally. This American pessimism led to an extreme unilateralism in American foreign policy. This unilateralism, characterized by the diplomatic use of “brinkmanship,” heightened the tensions and dangers of the Cold War. Dulles bragged about threatening to use nuclear weapons on China during the Korean War, the Indochina War, and the crisis of Quemoy and Matsu. This kind of diplomacy horrified the British, who believed in patience, pragmatism, and a balance of power. Rolling back communism and peaceful coexistence proved to be diametrically opposed ideas. Eisenhower and Churchill sparred over British colonialism. American idealism could not be reconciled with British pragmatism. Eisenhower’s and Churchill’s ideological differences doomed the Anglo-American relationship.

## CHAPTER 4

### ATOMIC BRINKSMANSHIP: KOREA, INDOCHINA, AND FORMOSA

The transatlantic historical thread that linked the Korean War, the Indochina War, and the crisis over Quemoy and Matsu was the American threat, over British objections, of using nuclear weapons against the communist Chinese. Did Eisenhower seriously contemplate the actual use of atomic bombs against China? Many conclude that Eisenhower bluffed his way through these three major international crises in the Far East with never a serious thought of using nuclear weapons. A close look at American and British evidence, in contrast, clearly reveals that Eisenhower not only contemplated but planned their use if he deemed the action militarily or even politically necessary.

Eisenhower's very real threats to use nuclear weapons can be found in numerous memoranda to Dulles, the NSC, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and especially his correspondence with Churchill. "Operation Everready," the military plan to overthrow Korean President Syngman Rhee in June and July of 1953, shows Eisenhower as a skilled poker player, who always made sure that he had "five aces" in every hand. More accurately, he constantly raised the stakes so high that other players such as Anthony Eden, Syngman Rhee, Chou En-lai, and Mao Zedong would defer to United States policy positions. Eisenhower's threats ultimately proved effective because the Soviets, the communist Chinese, and the British took them seriously.

## 4.1 Korea

Great Britain and the United States substantially agreed on how to contain communism in Europe. Nonetheless in Korea, Eisenhower concluded that the British tended to minimize the communist threat. While the British government publicly supported the U.S. position in Korea, privately it worried that the United States would expand the war to mainland China and, as a result, the Soviets would then invoke the Sino-Soviet Pact leading to world war. When President Truman last mentioned to the national press in 1950 the possibility of employing atomic bombs in Korea, Prime Minister Clement Attlee rushed to Washington to argue against their use and the inevitable wider war. The British wanted the war contained and limited to the Korean peninsula, while both Truman and General Douglas MacArthur actually discussed using atomic weapons and widening the war.<sup>1</sup>

After more than two years of military stalemate in Korea, President-elect Eisenhower famously stated: "I shall go to Korea."<sup>2</sup> Before he left for Asia, he had a conversation with British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden. Eden warned Eisenhower against using Nationalist Chinese troops for an invasion of mainland China. The Foreign Secretary noted that Eisenhower had opposed the expansion of the war in Korea. He also believed that Eisenhower favored a proposal opposing the forcible repatriation of prisoners:

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<sup>1</sup> Fred M. Leventhal and Roland Quinault, eds., *Anglo-American Attitudes: From Revolution to Partnership* (Burlington VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 1988), 279-280.

<sup>2</sup> H.W. Brands, Jr., "The Dwight D. Eisenhower Administration, Syngman Rhee, and the 'Other' Geneva," *The Pacific Historical Review* 56, no. 1 (Feb. 1987): 59.

The General said nothing to indicate that he had in mind the use of Chiang Kai-shek's troops. I had the impression that he was at present firmly averse from any step which might lead to an extension of the conflict... We discussed the prisoners-of-war issue and the Indian proposal. He seemed definitely more favorable in his approach to this initiative than Mr. Acheson had been. He said the essential was that the men should not be forced to go back and that they should not be kept in prison indefinitely.<sup>3</sup>

Eden seemed relieved that Eisenhower agreed with British policies.

After Eisenhower's trip to Korea in December 1952, he met with retired General Douglas MacArthur, who offered his own plan to end the Korean War.<sup>4</sup> MacArthur recommended that the United States threaten the use of atomic bombs against North Korea. The mere threat of such a bombing, MacArthur insisted, would force the communists to end the war. Eisenhower wrote, "The Joint Chiefs of Staff were pessimistic about the feasibility of using tactical atomic weapons on front-line positions, in view of the extensive underground fortifications which the Chinese communists had been able to construct; but such weapons would obviously be effective for strategic targets in North Korea, Manchuria, and on the Chinese coast."<sup>5</sup> Eisenhower, more than the Joint Chiefs, was open to the possibility of using nuclear weapons.

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<sup>3</sup>Conversation between Anthony Eden and General Eisenhower on Nov. 20, 1953, FO 800/782, Far East, July-December 1952, Avon Papers.

<sup>4</sup> See Memorandum on Ending the Korean War, Douglas MacArthur to Dwight D. Eisenhower, December 14, 1952, Douglas MacArthur file, Box 25, Administration Series, Ann Whitman File, Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953-61. See also Korea file, Box 8, John Foster Dulles, Subject Series, Ann Whitman File, Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953-61.

<sup>5</sup> Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Mandate for Change, 1953-1956*, 179-180. "Finally, to keep the attack from becoming overly costly, it was clear that we would have to use atomic weapons. This necessity was suggested to me by General MacArthur while I, as President-elect, was still living in New York."

At Eisenhower's request, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles made secret nuclear threats against North Korea and China. Historian Edward Friedman confirmed this reality in an important article:

Secretary of State Dulles's claim, as repeated by Eisenhower, that the decisive factor that finally broke the protracted and frustrating stalemate in negotiations at Panmunjom was this: he deliberately conveyed word to the communists, including the North Koreans, Chinese, and Russians, through secret channels that, if progress toward a settlement was not made, any past limits were off as to both targets and weapons, and that, if we saw fit, we would use the atomic bomb.<sup>6</sup>

Further, Eisenhower moved nuclear warheads to Okinawa, as several preeminent historians have revealed.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Edward Friedman, "Nuclear Blackmail and the End of the Korean War," *Modern China* 1, no. 1 (Jan. 1975), 79.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 79-80. For more about atomic threats made by Eisenhower see Michael Gordon Jackson, "Beyond Brinkmanship: Eisenhower, Nuclear War Fighting, and Korea, 1953-1968," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 35, no. 1 (March 2005), 54. Jackson argues against a benign view of Eisenhower's nuclear talk, while many revisionists argue the opposite: "This predisposition to interpret Eisenhower's views about nuclear weapons benignly can be found in several important works about the Korean conflict. Roger Dingman, in an often-cited study flatly declares that 'coercive atomic diplomacy' was not part of the Eisenhower administration's war termination strategy for Korea. To Dingman, 'NSC deliberations proved more discursive than decisive' and were nothing more than 'rambling conversations' about the war (Dingman 1988/1989, 79, 81-82, 84)." "Edward Keefer notes that the president realized that his 'quick fix atomic strategy' would not work on the battlefield and hoped that his bluffs would result in not having to make a decision to expand the war with nuclear weapons (Keefer 1986, 268,288-89)." "Michael Schaller makes the case that much of Eisenhower's nuclear operational plans were 'either loose talk or contingency planning' (Schaller, 1986-1987, 162-66)." "Others have also given Eisenhower a strong benefit of the doubt. Barton J. Bernstein concludes that Eisenhower's vigorously positive language about the use of nuclear weapons should be interpreted not as an intention to use them, but more as an example of 'frustration' and mulling aloud on his part (Bernstein 1998)." "Ernest R. May notes, 'Even when Eisenhower urged his inner circle to consider using nuclear weapons in Korea, he can be viewed as intending only to force the consideration of the possibility. Inwardly, he may have been resolved not to use nuclear weapons because he viewed them as different in kind from other weapons.' (May 1999, 7)." "In a recent popular biography of the president, journalist Tom Wicker declares that Eisenhower 'kept his options open... He never issued a public or probably did not make a private threat' to use nuclear weapons in Korea (Wicker, 2002, 27)." "More fundamentally, according to John Lewis Gaddis, the political, military, and moral/ethical constraints against the use of nuclear weapons would have precluded any serious consideration of their use by Eisenhower. 'What is clear is that the President was more eager to

In May 1953, Dulles warned Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru of the possibility that American military forces in Korea might resort to the use of nuclear weapons. A leader of the neutralist movement, Nehru seemed an ideal mediator between Washington and Peking. Dulles deliberately gave this message to Nehru hoping that he would leak this to the communist Chinese.<sup>8</sup> Whether this message ever got to the Chinese, a subject of serious debate among historians, is irrelevant. The Chinese and the Soviets both knew that the president wanted to end the Korean War and that he had been discussing nuclear attacks with his National Security Council:

In the months after the Korean armistice was signed, a pattern of tough talk by Eisenhower regarding the use of nuclear weapons emerged. Even more so than during earlier debates within the NSC about expanding the war with nuclear weapons, the president continued to press the case for the use of tactical nuclear weapons against the North Koreans and Chinese if they launched a major attack against South Korea. In fact, Eisenhower at times appeared to be much more forceful about the issue than Secretary of State Dulles, who is often portrayed as being the primary architect of the administration's massive retaliation strategy.<sup>9</sup>

The communists had tracked the movement of U.S. nuclear missiles into the Far East.

Eisenhower later concluded, "They didn't want a full-scale war or an atomic attack. That kept them under some control."<sup>10</sup> The Soviets knew of the American threat of nuclear weapons and forced Mao Zedong and Chou-En-lai to accept a reasonable

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talk about the possibility of using nuclear weapons there (Korea) than he was actually to do so.' (Gaddis, 1987, 128-29)."

<sup>8</sup> Edward Friedman, "Nuclear Blackmail and the End of the Korean War," *Modern China* 1, no. 1 (Jan. 1975), 79-80.

<sup>9</sup> Jackson, "Beyond Brinkmanship," 56.

<sup>10</sup> Adams, 48-49

armistice. McGeorge Bundy, a former National Security Advisor, concluded: “Dwight Eisenhower contributed even more than Harry Truman to the folklore of atomic diplomacy. He believed that it was the threat of atomic war that brought an armistice in Korea in 1953. In his memoirs Eisenhower cited a number of warnings and signals to make his case, and his Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, told allied statesmen in private a lurid tale of nuclear deployments made known to the Chinese.”<sup>11</sup> Both of the men believed in brinkmanship.

Eisenhower’s threat of a nuclear attack directly contradicted the transatlantic consensus on policy in the Far East.<sup>12</sup> Eisenhower had blamed Truman for the stalemate in Korea and, as Eisenhower’s chief of staff Sherman Adams wrote: “In all of the six

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<sup>11</sup>McGeorge Bundy, “Atomic Diplomacy Reconsidered,” *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 38, no. 1 (Oct. 1984): 29-30.

<sup>12</sup>For evidence of U.S. nuclear threats see *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954. Volume XV, Part 2, Korea*, Washington, D.C. Dept. of State, 1984, 1961. For U.S. possible use of atomic weapons see 769, 770, “He [Eisenhower] then expressed the view that we should consider the use of tactical atomic weapons on the Kaesong area, which provided a good target for this type of weapon.” 815, “He (Eisenhower) wanted specifically to know whether this could be done without bombing the enemy’s Manchurian airfields. He indicated that the use of atomic weapons in such a campaign should depend on military judgment as to the advantage of their use on military targets.” 817-818, 826, 827, “Mr. Malott argued, that he nevertheless believed that we ought to use a couple of atomic weapons in Korea. The President replied that perhaps we should, but we could not blind ourselves to the effects of such a move on our allies, which would be very serious since they feel that they will be the battleground in an atomic war between the United States and the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, the President and Secretary Dulles were in complete agreement that somehow or other the taboo which surrounds the use of atomic weapons would have to be destroyed.” 845-846, 892, 977, “The President inquired whether these airfields might not prove a target which would test the effectiveness of an atomic bomb. At any rate, said the President, he had reached the point of being convinced that we have got to consider the atomic bomb as simply another weapon in our arsenal.” 1014, “The President nevertheless thought it might be cheaper, dollar-wise, to use atomic weapons in Korea than to continue to use conventional weapons against the dugouts which honeycombed the hills along which the enemy forces were presently deployed. This, the President felt, was particularly true if one took into account the logistics costs of getting conventional ammunition from this country to the front lines.” 1065, “After further discussion of various military aspects of the problem, the President summed up the views presented by the Joint Chiefs as indicating their belief that if we went over to more positive action against the enemy in Korea, it would be necessary to expand the war outside of Korea and that it would be necessary to use the atomic bomb.” 1554, 1571, “At the conclusion of Mr. Cutler’s lengthy exposition, the President interposed to observe that when the Council had earlier discussed action which the United States would take if the communists broke the armistice and resumed hostilities, it was agreed that we would use atomic bombs to meet the situation.”

years I was with Eisenhower in the White House he made it a point to have nothing whatever to do with Truman, except for one casual nod of recognition when he encountered his predecessor at the funeral of Chief Justice Fred Vinson in 1953.”<sup>13</sup> Eisenhower and Dulles believed that Dean Acheson, Truman’s Secretary of State, had made a catastrophic mistake in telling the North Koreans and the Chinese that South Korea remained outside the defense perimeter of the United States. This was as an open invitation for the communists to invade South Korea.

The Korean stalemate, according to Adams, showed the weakness of Kennan’s theory of containment. Sherman Adams argued: “If you are ready to stand up against a potential aggressor with an impressive deterrent of massive retaliatory power, the Dulles theory contended, the aggression was not likely to occur. This accurately summarized the basic theory of the Dulles strategy as it opposed the containment defense policy of the Truman-Acheson regime.”<sup>14</sup> The Truman administration had played by the rules of the communist game and had essentially settled for an endless stalemate. Eisenhower and Dulles decided to change the rules and shake up the game.

In his first State of the Union Address, Eisenhower rescinded Truman’s orders that had the Seventh Fleet literally defending communist China from an invasion from Formosa. Eisenhower’s thoughts were made clear as he wrote, “The practical value of the announcement was simply this, like my visit to Korea, it put the Chinese communists on notice that the days of stalemate were numbered; that the Korean War would either

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<sup>13</sup> Adams, 47.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 117.



end or extend beyond Korea. It thus helped; I am convinced, to bring that war to a finish.”<sup>15</sup> Eisenhower’s policies in Korea would end the stalemate.

Churchill was distraught by Eisenhower’s policies. He worried that the Eisenhower administration suffered from lack of experience in foreign affairs. In a message dated January 8, 1953, Churchill wrote Eden and R.A. Butler, the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Eisenhower wanted a one-on-one meeting with Stalin in Stockholm. Churchill thought that Eisenhower seemed to be in far too much of a hurry trying to solve all of the world’s problems. He had urged Eisenhower to slow down and take the time necessary to evaluate the world situation. He had grave concerns about the new administration and its new policies. Churchill wrote, “I tell you all this to show you the rough weather that may well be ahead in dealing with the Republican Party who has been out of office; and I feel very sure we should not expect early favorable results. Much patience will be needed.”<sup>16</sup> Churchill’s views of Republican Party leaders with whom he had recently met gravitated towards condescension. Once he was even heard to suggest that “he would have no more to do with Dulles whose ‘great slab of a face’ he disliked and distrusted.”<sup>17</sup> Churchill tended to blame Dulles for the problems in the “special relationship.”

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<sup>15</sup> Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Mandate for Change, 1953-1956*, 123.

<sup>16</sup> Message from Winston Churchill to Anthony Eden and R.A. Butler on January 8, 1953, FO 800/783, Far East, January-April 1953, Avon Papers.

<sup>17</sup> Gilbert, *Never Despair: Winston S. Churchill, 1945-1965*, 792. “Governor Thomas Dewey and John Foster Dulles had irritated him in an after dinner conversation. Jock Colville wrote, “W was really worked up and, as he went to bed said some very harsh things about the Republican Party in general and Dulles in particular, which Christopher and I thought both unjust and dangerous.”

Eden, like Churchill, thought that the inexperienced Americans posed certain hazards and even dangers in relation to the Korean War. In a meeting on February 13, 1953 with French President Georges Bidault, Eden warned of the problem of a continuing stalemate in Korea: “The difficulty was that a stalemate of this kind was particularly uncongenial to the American temperament.”<sup>18</sup> The British Minister of Defense thought that the Americans could militarily outmaneuver the communists in Korea, but that such a military action would lead to 30,000 to 40,000 American casualties. Eden believed that this would not be acceptable to the American people or to the Eisenhower administration, which had promised the American people a reduction in casualties.<sup>19</sup> He correctly sensed that Eisenhower and Dulles wanted to end the continuous stalemate in Korea.

Although Eisenhower clearly understood the British position on Korea, this did not stop him from threatening to use atomic weapons there or from criticizing the British for giving diplomatic recognition to the communist Chinese government. The British genuinely feared that a wider war would inevitably lead to world war. Instead, Eisenhower intensified their anxieties by his proposed actions in Korea.<sup>20</sup>

Dulles, a more accomplished diplomat than Eisenhower, tried to ameliorate British concerns and promote this new American position, while at the same time preserving the transatlantic alliance. As a leading historian has observed, “He was not a

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<sup>18</sup> Meeting with French Ministers, Anthony Eden and M. Bidault on February 13, 1953, FO 800/783, Far East, January-April 1953, Avon Papers.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Jeffrey A. Engel, *Cold War at 30,000 Feet: The Anglo-American Fight for Aviation Supremacy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 167. See also Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Mandate for Change, 1953-1956*, 180.

pragmatist; he was a man who pressed both allies and adversaries alike with a strong sense of moral commitment, particularly his resistance to communism.”<sup>21</sup> Dulles would not only push the communists to the brink; he pushed the British, particularly Eden, to exasperation. Eden often suspected that Dulles tended to cut corners.

In his discussion with Eden on March 9, 1953, Dulles calmly revealed that the United States desired total disengagement in Korea.<sup>22</sup> South Koreans would soon substitute for Americans in the fighting and Dulles reassured Eden that the United States had no plans to expand the war or to use Formosa in any military invasion of mainland China. The basic goal of American policy remained withdrawal of American troops from Korea. In the event of a major escalation of the war by the Americans, Eden wanted to know whether the British actually would be consulted or merely informed later of such an action. Dulles told Eden that he assumed the British would be consulted rather than merely be informed. Eden later wrote, “I asked whether Mr. Dulles could assure me that the United States Government would consult the British Government, and not merely inform, before deciding on an operation of this kind. Mr. Dulles said that he would

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<sup>21</sup> Michael D. Swaine and Zhang Tuosheng ,eds., with Danielle F. S. Cohen, *Managing Sino-American Crises: Case Studies and Analysis* (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006), 260-261.

<sup>22</sup> Conversation between Anthony Eden and John Foster Dulles on March 9, 1953 FO 800/ 783, Far East, January-April 1953, Avon Papers. To understand Dulles’s view of the war, see John Foster Dulles Statement on Korean War, undated 1952, Dwight D. Eisenhower File 1952, Box 60, Duplicate Correspondence, John Foster Dulles Papers. “The Korean War should be liquidated. It goes on because it is more than a military war. It is a propaganda war and the communists are daily winning great propaganda victories throughout Asia by portraying us as barbarians who are fiendishly destroying non-military objectives and murdering women and children in North Korea.”

assume so.”<sup>23</sup> Eden made clear the British government’s opposition to a naval blockade of China. He argued that a naval blockade would be ineffective and lead to too many dangers.<sup>24</sup> Eden feared China might invoke the Sino-Soviet Pact and massively expand the war.<sup>25</sup>

Meanwhile, despite British objections, Eisenhower still reserved the right to use atomic bombs in Korea. Historian Timothy J. Botti has noted, “At the end of March... he told the NSC that he would be willing to employ atomic weapons in Korea if a ‘substantial victory over the communist forces’ could be achieved and the military stalemate broken.... But Eisenhower’s commitment to resort to nuclear weapons if necessary was clear.”<sup>26</sup> Eden clearly opposed Eisenhower’s threatening the North Koreans and the Chinese with nuclear war.

Another significant problem that Eden complained about to the Americans concerned lack of consultation on important military operations. In a message from Prime Minister Churchill to British Ambassador Roger Makins concerning the possibility of an American military attack on Chinese targets along the Yalu River, Churchill revealed that

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<sup>23</sup> Conversation between Anthony Eden and John Foster Dulles on March 9, 1953, FO 800/ 783, Far East, January-April 1953, Avon Papers.

<sup>24</sup> Eden to Foreign Office on Naval Blockade of China on March 9, 1953, FO 800/ 783, Far East, January-April 1953, Avon Papers. “I said I wished to repeat the objection of the British Government on the question of a naval blockade of China. Their principal objection was that it would be ineffective. China could receive by the Trans-Siberian Railway many times the amount of goods she was at present receiving by sea. Moreover to impose a blockade by force would be politically most dangerous since it would involve stopping communist ships and blockading Soviet-controlled ports.”

<sup>25</sup> For an interesting discussion of the problems of a naval blockade see John Norman’s “MacArthur’s Blockade Proposals against Red China,” *The Pacific Historical Review* 26, no. 2 (May 1957): 161-174; John Edward Wiltz, “The MacArthur Hearings of 1951: The Secret Testimony,” *Military Affairs* 39, no. 4 (Dec. 1975): 167-173.

<sup>26</sup> Timothy J. Botti, *The Long Wait: The Forging of the Anglo-American Nuclear Alliance, 1945-1958* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), 112.

British Air Vice Marshal D. H. F. Barnett had leaked information that the United States planned to attack targets along the Yalu River:

I have just learned that United Nations Command plan major bombing attack on one or possibly two targets near Yalu River almost immediately. 2. I fear that these operations at this moment will be thought to be an attempt to spoil agreement at Panmunjom. Are they really necessary whilst things hang in the balance of negotiations? If there is no overriding military necessity I can see only harm resulting from this plan. 3. Please see Bedell Smith urgently and tell him my views. You could ask whether these operations could not be deferred. 4. For your information. This report had come to us from Air Vice Marshall Barnett in Tokyo. We have not heard of the plan directly from Washington. We do not want to compromise Barnett's relations with General Mark Clark but at the same time I have strong views on the unwisdom of this operation, of which we might well have been informed from Washington. I leave it to you how best to convey these views to General Bedell Smith.<sup>27</sup>

This created a difficult dilemma for the British since confronting Washington would reveal the source, British Air Vice Marshall Barnett. Ambassador Makins advised Churchill that he should give a general warning to the president about the dangers of military operations that might adversely affect armistice negotiations:

I am sure you will appreciate that it is not possible to make representations to Bedell Smith about a top secret operational matter of which we have no knowledge except through Air Marshal Barnett, without divulging the source. There is no other source from which we could have got this information, and if we use it, General Mark Clark is certain to be informed from Washington. 2. I should like, therefore, to be sure that the importance of the representations outweighs any prejudice which may result to Barnett's position in Tokyo. 3. The only alternative way of handling the matter that I can suggest is for you to send a message in general terms to the President saying that in view of the progress made in the armistice negotiations, you hope that nothing will be done in the military sphere which could prejudice them.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Message from Winston Churchill to Roger Makins on possible bombings near Yalu River on May 8, 1953, FO 800/ 784, Far East, May to December 1953, Avon Papers.

<sup>28</sup> Message from Roger Makins to Winston Churchill on possible bombings near Yalu River on May 8, 1953, FO 800/ 784, Far East, May to December 1953, Avon Papers.

He subsequently received an order from Churchill to “take no action” in the matter.<sup>29</sup>

In May 1953, Churchill inherited the Foreign Office from the physically incapacitated Eden. He proved to be far more flexible in dealing with the Americans than Eden. After Churchill’s death in 1965, those who had been close to him revealed that not only had his relationship with Eden grown increasingly difficult, but also that Churchill had serious doubts about Eden’s suitability as his political successor. The controversial diaries of Lord Moran, Churchill’s personal physician, prove particularly revealing: “It is a great relief to have charge of F.O. instead of having to argue with Anthony, Moran has Churchill saying in 1953 when Eden was ill, ‘I can get something done’.”<sup>30</sup> Churchill, in truth, did help end the Korean War by dealing directly with the Americans from the Foreign Office.

Churchill and Eden disagreed on the fundamental importance of the Anglo-American relationship and on many of the significant problems between the United States and Great Britain.<sup>31</sup> The differences between Churchill and Eden often exacerbated tensions in the transatlantic relationship. Time after time, Churchill proved to be much more flexible than Eden, allowing the Americans to pursue their policy of brinkmanship. Richard V. Damms wrote: “In mid-May, Eisenhower approved contingency plans to expand the war with a new ground offensive up the waist of the peninsula accompanied by tactical nuclear air strikes against Chinese air bases in Manchuria, but he remained

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<sup>29</sup> Message from Winston Churchill to Roger Makins on possible bombings near Yalu River on May 9, 1953, FO 800/ 784, Far East, May to December 1953, Avon Papers. “You need take no action.”

<sup>30</sup> Dutton, *Anthony Eden*, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997), 13.

<sup>31</sup> Carlton, *Anthony Eden*, 295.

deeply concerned about adverse allied reaction to such a scheme and the possibility of Soviet nuclear retaliation against Japanese cities.”<sup>32</sup> Churchill, the old nineteenth-century military adventurer, proved to be much more amenable to American scheming than a healthy Anthony Eden.

Churchill and Eisenhower did agree that South Korean President Syngman Rhee seemed to be an even bigger obstacle to peace than the communist Chinese because of his absolute refusal to negotiate an armistice.<sup>33</sup> On June 18, 1953, Rhee tried to sabotage the armistice negotiations by releasing 25,000 North Korean POWs. Eisenhower wrote about his frustrations to Churchill on June 19, 1953: “The Korean business is indeed difficult. There can be no question as to the soundness of your observation about the trouble we shall have if the war goes on and Syngman Rhee remains in his present office. It is remarkable how little concern men seem to have for logic, statistics, and even, indeed, survival; we live by emotion, prejudice and pride.”<sup>34</sup> Eisenhower’s frustration

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<sup>32</sup> Richard V. Damms, *The Eisenhower Presidency, 1953-1961* (London: Pearson Education Limited, 2002), 33.

<sup>33</sup> See Brands, “The Dwight D. Eisenhower Administration, Syngman Rhee, and the ‘Other Geneva,’” 61-62. “Rhee’s reaction, in the opinion of American officials, was entirely in character. In the months before the armistice of 1953, Rhee had been extremely obstructive, fomenting opposition to the purposes of the UN forces in Korea and repeatedly hinting at unilateral action against the communists. Rhee’s rhetoric and subversive activity had jeopardized the safety of American troops to such a degree that the Eisenhower administration seriously considered authorizing UN commander Mark Clark to conduct a military coup, arrest Rhee, and declare martial law throughout South Korea. Though this option had the support of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, it was opposed by Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, who considered the political risks of such a move to outweigh any military advantages. The United States, after all, had spent billions of dollars and tens of thousands of lives protecting Rhee’s government; at this late date, the Eisenhower administration could hardly declare that he was not worth saving, or worse, that it would assist in his removal. Rejecting the coup plan, Dulles suggested soliciting Rhee’s acquiescence in an armistice with the promise of a security pact. At a meeting on May 30, 1953, Eisenhower approved the recommendation.” Brands mistakenly suggests that the plan calling for a coup had been permanently deactivated on May 30, 1953. British Foreign Office documents clearly shows Operation Everready planning in late June and early July, 1953.

with Rhee had peaked.

Eisenhower and Churchill worked secretly, arranging for the execution of a military coup called “Operation Everready,” against Rhee, who had been overtly sabotaging the armistice talks. Churchill knew and approved of the American contingency plan to remove Rhee from power in South Korea.<sup>35</sup> Both Eisenhower and Churchill communicated their desire to have him removed.

On June 21, 1953, British Ambassador Roger Makins sent a long handwritten top secret letter to Prime Minister Churchill:

1. I saw the President this morning and gave him your message.
2. On Rhee he sympathizes with your desire but said emphatically that any change must come or appear to come from within. He felt strongly that the Western powers that had intervened in Korea to uphold freedom and democracy must not be seen to be setting up a puppet government. He had given much thought to this. He had some hope that there were elements in South Korea who understood that their country was wholly dependent on the United States for its reconstruction and future support and that they would exert influence. I asked him whether something would not be done through the South Korean army. He seemed to think the army might in fact make a move.
3. As to the additional British brigade, the President observed that this would have a gainsaying effect in the United States.

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<sup>34</sup> Boyle, ed., *The Churchill-Eisenhower Correspondence, 1953-1955*, 77.

<sup>35</sup> See Brands, “The Dwight D. Eisenhower Administration, Syngman Rhee, and the ‘Other Geneva,’” 62. See Footnote 3. “The contingency plan was labeled ‘Everready’ and was described in a paper submitted by U.S. Eighth Army Commander Maxwell Taylor to the Joint Chiefs of Staff on May 4, 1953.” See U.S. Dept. of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954, Vol. XV: Korea* (2 pts., Washington, D.C., 1984), 965-968. Also, memorandum of State-JCS meeting, May 29, *ibid.*, 1114-1119; memorandum for record, June 1, 1953, *ibid.*, 1126-1129. In addition, see Barton J. Bernstein, “The Origins of America’s Commitments in Korea,” *Foreign Service Journal* 55 (1978), 10-13, 34; and John Kotch, “The Origins of the American Security Commitment to Korea,” in Bruce Cumings, ed., *Child of Conflict: The Korean-American Relationship, 1943-1953* (Seattle, 1983), 239-259. Operation Everready originally had been planned under President Truman. See Edward C. Keefer, “The Truman Administration and the South Korean Political Crisis of 1952: Democracy’s Failure?” *The Pacific Historical Review* 60, no. 2 (May 1991), 145-168.



4. Finally he said he would not answer your message today but would reflect further upon it. He entirely agrees that the matter should be kept in closest secrecy. Any hint that such a thing was under discussion could have most serious effect.
5. The President was in excellent form and very friendly.
6. I understand, very confidentially, that the President and some of his advisors have, in fact, already discussed at length ways and means of dealing with Rhee and that there are also unconfirmed indications that a military coup in Korea is being prepared.
7. The President did not raise the time factor involved in the move of British Brigade, but this may come up later. I suppose there is no possibility of bringing troops from Hong Kong garrison rather than from Egypt.<sup>36</sup>

Eisenhower consulted with and informed the British about Operation Everready. He also made contingency plans for a nuclear war that would vastly expand the Korean War to mainland China. Eisenhower pursued plans that had gone far beyond anything the Old Guard Republicans contemplated in pursuing an end to the Korean War.

Churchill gave Eisenhower a green light on Operation Everready and any military action that he might take against President Rhee. He sent the following message to Eisenhower on June 24, 1953: "I am holding three battalions and an artillery regiment at short notice in Hong Kong 'to reinforce Gen. Mark Clark's Army in any action that may be required of them by United Nations.' Let me know whether you would like this made public. I did not quite understand what 'gainsaying' meant, but presume you meant it would stave off adverse criticism in the United States."<sup>37</sup> Churchill backed the American

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<sup>36</sup> Message from Roger Makins to Winston Churchill on Syngmon Rhee on June 21, 1953, FO 800/ 784, Far East, May to December 1953, Avon Papers.

<sup>37</sup> Message from Winston Churchill to Dwight D. Eisenhower on June 24, 1953, FO 800/ 784, Far East, May to December 1953, Avon Papers.

plan to overthrow Rhee. He ordered the British military to go on standby alert, ready to assist the Americans. This began a pattern of the Eisenhower administration, with Churchill's approval or acquiescence, of threatening various leaders of foreign countries with military coups.<sup>38</sup>

Dulles responded to Churchill with a message from the president two days later: "The President asked me to thank you for your private and personal message received today. He particularly welcomes the spirit prompting point 3. We are inclined to feel that it would be better not to make this public just now."<sup>39</sup> Dulles appeared to be happy about the spirit of transatlantic cooperation between the British and the Americans and in a follow-up message; the president thanked the prime minister.<sup>40</sup>

Lord Salisbury, newly appointed acting Foreign Secretary, reflecting the views of the British Foreign Office, wrote a rather stern cautionary note to Churchill about the incredible dangers of a military coup in South Korea occurring at the same time that the Korean War might be expanded into China. On July 3, 1953, he wrote:

I do not at all like the idea of the United States or us embarking on wars both with Rhee and the Chinese communists, and greatly hope that things will not come to that. It would be likely to cause bewilderment to those whose sons are fighting in Korea and also to earnest supporters of the United Nations. The alternative of the United Nations forces clearing out is not very attractive either, especially for the Americans, who have had

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<sup>38</sup> These leaders include Syngman Rhee of South Korea, Mohammed Mossadegh of Iran, and Jacobo Arbenz of Guatemala.

<sup>39</sup> Message from John Foster Dulles to Winston Churchill on June 26 1953, FO 800/ 784, Far East, May to December 1953, Avon Papers.

<sup>40</sup> Message from Dwight D. Eisenhower to Winston Churchill on June 26, 1953, FO 800/ 784, Far East, May to December 1953, Avon Papers. "I am still chasing the word 'gainsaying' back and forth across the waves of the Atlantic. Certainly I have never been guilty of using such a ten shilling monstrosity."

130,000 casualties in defending the country. However, thank heavens; we are not forced with this horrible choice today. The first thing to find out is how the negotiations between the Americans and Rhee are really going on; also what they have in mind to do if all attempts to get Rhee's cooperation fail; and, finally, what is the attitude of the United States government to a re-convening of the assembly, which is a possible step before them. I telegraphed to Makins yesterday asking him these questions. When we get his reply, which I will send you at once, it will be easier to assess the position.<sup>41</sup>

Lord Salisbury's extraordinary and remarkable letter to Churchill confirmed that Eisenhower and Dulles, with the cooperation of Churchill, were ready to embark on wars with both Mao Zedong and Syngmon Rhee at the same time in July 1953. Eisenhower and Dulles had gone far beyond anything the "Far Right" had advocated and Churchill had gone out on a limb for the Americans with no support coming from the British Foreign Office, including Lord Salisbury, who Churchill had just appointed as Acting Foreign Secretary. Under terrific pressure from Eisenhower, Rhee finally capitulated and agreed to cooperate on a Korean armistice on July 8, 1953.

Ironically, the key to peace in Korea had been getting Rhee's cooperation on an armistice. Historian Stephen Ambrose has written, "In Seoul, meanwhile, Walter Robertson and General Clark were conferring daily with Rhee, threatening him with an American pullout if he did not cooperate in the armistice, promising him virtually unlimited American aid if he did. Rhee resisted the pressure, helped by reports from the States that seemed to indicate a near revolt by Republican senators against their own

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<sup>41</sup> Message from Lord Salisbury, Acting Secretary of State, to Winston Churchill on July 3, 1953, FO 800/784, Far East, May to December 1953, Avon Papers.

administration.”<sup>42</sup> Eisenhower further pressured Rhee by the threat of a political or military coup.

Historians have failed to view Eisenhower’s threat of an American pullout or the promise of unlimited American aid to South Korea as a radical break from the past. Nor do they acknowledge the stark reality that behind the scenes Eisenhower had threatened Rhee with a military coup.<sup>43</sup> Eisenhower clearly exceeded the belligerency of the Old Guard Republicans, such as MacArthur, Taft, and Hoover in threatening and planning nuclear war with China and at the same time bullying Rhee by means of a possible military coup. Churchill, freed from Eden’s opposition, wholeheartedly endorsed the American proposals. Eisenhower and Dulles put maximum pressure on both North Koreans and South Koreans in order to achieve their goal of peace and stability in Korea. The success of this policy strengthened Eisenhower’s and Dulles’s belief in brinksmanship.

#### 4.2 Indochina

John Foster Dulles extended Eisenhower’s policy of brinksmanship to Indochina. In his memoirs, Anthony Eden noted, “On January 12, 1954, after proclaiming the doctrine of instant retaliation, Mr. Dulles gave warning that Chinese intervention would

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<sup>42</sup> Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Vol. 2 The President, 1952-1969*, 104.

<sup>43</sup> See U.S. Dept. of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954, Vol. XV: Korea* (2 pts., Washington, D.C., 1984), 967. “Secure custody of the dissident military and civil leaders. Proclaim military government in the name of the UN.” Presumably Syngmon Rhee would have been taken into custody by UN friendly South Koreans hostile to Rhee’s rule. This plan seems a precursor to the U.S. plan to remove President Ngo Dinh Diem in South Vietnam in 1963. South Vietnamese generals had soldiers execute Diem and his brother Ngo Dinh Nhu in the back of a truck outside a Catholic Church in Saigon.

have ‘grave consequences which might not be confined to Indochina.’<sup>44</sup> Dulles clearly informed the Chinese leadership that another Korea would not be tolerated. If the Chinese communists intervened in Indochina, the United States reserved the right to retaliate against China. Many historians have labeled Dulles as “The Real Hawk at Dienbienphu.”<sup>45</sup> Great Britain’s interests and concerns in the Far East proved to be

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<sup>44</sup> Eden, *Full Circle*, 96.

<sup>45</sup> See Frederick W. Marks III, “The Real Hawk at Dienbienphu: Dulles or Eisenhower?” *The Pacific Historical Review* 59, no. 3 (August 1990). Authors who wrongly describe Dulles as more of a hawk than Eisenhower are listed in footnote 1:

See Chalmers M. Roberts, *First Rough Draft* (New York, 1973), 107, 111; Townsend Hoopes, *The Devil and John Foster Dulles* (Boston, 1973), 307; Arthur Krock, *Memoirs: Sixty Years on the Firing Line* (New York, 1968), 281; R. Gordon Hoxie, “Eisenhower and Presidential Leadership,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, XIII (1983), 604; Donald Neff, *Warriors at Suez: Eisenhower takes America into the Middle East* (New York, 1981), 39; Burton I. Kaufman, *Trade and Aid: Eisenhower’s Economic Policy, 1953-1961* (Baltimore, 1982), 7; Warren I. Cohen, ed., *New Frontiers in American East Asian Relations* (New York, 1983) 158-159; Elmo Richardson, *The Presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower* (Lawrence, Kansas, 1979), 99, 102, (and chaps. 5 and 8); Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower the President* (New York, 1984), 185, 226, 229, 232, 442, 643; Stephen G. Rabe, *Eisenhower and Latin America: The Foreign Policy of Anticommunism* (Chapel Hill, 1988), 136; and Fred I. Greenstein, *The Hidden Hand Presidency: Eisenhower as Leader* (New York, 1982), 87. Greenstein portrays Ike as the key factor in successive crises. According to Greenstein, Ike was also excellent at concealing his role (hence the phrase “hidden hand”) The three examples most commonly used by authors to illustrate hawkishness on Dulles’s part are Korea, Quemoy, and Dienbienphu.

See also Marks’s footnote 2:

For examples of the current assumption that Ike was more of a restraining force than Dulles (in seeking British support for American involvement), see Gregory J. Pemberton, “Australia, the United States and the Indochina Crisis of 1954,” *Diplomatic History*, XIII (1989), 51; Arthur Larson, *Eisenhower: The President Nobody Knew* (New York, 1968), 75; Bernard B. Fall, *Hell in a Very Small Place: The Siege of Dien Bien Phu* (New York, 1967), 297, 300; Richardson, *Eisenhower*, 76; Hoopes, *Dulles*, 209-212; Roberts, *Rough Draft*, 115; Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, 177-179, 185; Richard M. Saunders, “Military Force in the Foreign Policy of the Eisenhower Presidency,” *Political Science Quarterly*, C (1985) 108, 111-112, 115; and David L. Anderson, “Eisenhower, Dienbienphu, and the Origins of United States Military Intervention in Vietnam,” *Mid-America* LXXI (1989), 101-117; Although Anderson recognizes Dulles as the originator of ‘united action’ (as a phrase) and notes that he was inclined to favor allied intervention over a unilateral U.S. strike (pp. 106-108), he nevertheless views Ike as preeminently cautious and in command (pp. 104, 115). Richard Immerman, who has painted Ike as occasionally on the hawkish side, also credits him with almost all of the restraining influence. See Richard Immerman, “Between the Unattainable and the Unacceptable: Eisenhower and Dienbienphu,” in Richard

significantly less than those of the United States. Churchill, who viewed Indochina merely as a problem of French colonialism, openly scoffed at Eisenhower's domino theory. Historian Alan P. Dobson has argued, "One might see a contrast between British

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Melanson and David Mayers, eds., *Reevaluating the Eisenhower Presidency in the 1950s* (Urbana, Ill., 1987), 120-121, 123, 129, 134, 136, 138-140, 143-144. Earlier, in an article that he coauthored with George C. Herring, Immerman was not sure that any top American officials were ever enthusiastic about intervention (i.e., the policy may have been a for of 'bluff' – a 'grand charade,' in other words). See George C. Herring and Richard H. Immerman, "Eisenhower, Dulles, and Dienbienphu: The Day We Didn't Go to War' Revisited," *Journal of American History*, LXXI (1984), 349-350, 363. Ike's position is described as 'elusive' (p. 349), and Dulles, while presented as 'quite cautious' (p.439), is nevertheless seen as pressing relentlessly for the British backing needed to satisfy Congress (pp. 358-359). The most recent, as well as the most extensive analysis of Dienbienphu and American diplomacy also follows the conventional line: Melanie Billings-Yun, *Decision Against War: Eisenhower and Dien Bien Phu* (New York, 1988). Billings-Yun portrays Eisenhower as cautious (pp. xii, 15, 36, 93, 95, 101, 110-111) and very much in command (pp. 20, 76). Dulles, on the other hand, is viewed as provocative, although generally 'obedient' (pp. 19, 61-64, 137). Only two cases of insubordination on the Secretary's part are recorded (pp. 145, 150). While the volume is commendable in many ways and brilliantly written, it suffers from a lack of British documentation and present a good deal in the way of countervailing evidence. For example, Dulles's conservative side is given extensive play (pp. 37, 39, 41-42, 54, 57-58, 82, 106, 142). There is also much to confirm Ike's interventionist instinct (pp. 43, 81-82, 108-109, 119, 142-143). Congress is viewed as decisively and independently dovish (pp.26-27); however, the key reference is to early February, before the crucial battle for Dienbienphu had even begun. Subsequently, congressional opinion changed considerably and would remain fluid, subject to executive pressure (pp. 95, 113, 118). William Conrad Gibbons, *The US Government and the Vietnam War: Executive and Legislative Roles and Relations, Part One: 1945-1960* (Princeton, N.J., 1986), is cited by Billings-Yun (p. 169) to indicate the strength of congressional opposition to American intervention even though Gibbons himself frequently argues the opposite (see, for example, Gibbons, *Vietnam*, 175, 204, 216, 244-245, 258-259). Blame is laid on Dulles for his 'united action' address; yet the author admits that this particular speech was just as much Eisenhower's idea as anyone else's (p. 64). Dulles is portrayed as jumping suddenly onto the bandwagon of immediate intervention (p. 137) and then, just as suddenly, jumping off again without any convincing explanation. Moreover, Eisenhower is identified as at once a respecter of Congress and one whose respect was more apparent than real (pp. 159-160). Lloyd C. Gardner, in *Approaching Vietnam: From World War II through Dienbienphu, 1941-1954* (New York, 1988), is ambivalent much of the time on the precise relationship between Eisenhower and Dulles. Although he sketches Dulles as a hawk (pp. 228, 250, 278-279), he is not always sure of Ike's caution (p. 228; also pp. 167, 199, 203) and winds up, even in the case of Dulles, admitting some uncertainty as to whether the Secretary really wanted to intervene to save Dienbienphu: 'Probably, Dulles was unsure himself' (p. 246). No persuasive explanation is given for Admiral Arthur W. Radford's striking about face on April 2. (p. 205), while Congress is portrayed as by turns dovish, hawkish, and mixed in sentiment (e.g., pp. 174, 216). John Prados, *The Sky Would Fall: Operation Vulture-The U.S. Bombing Mission in Indochina, 1954* (New York, 1983), once again, views Dulles as the stereotypical hawk and Ike as more on the dovish side (pp. 26-27, 109, 111, 171, 184, 201-202, 207). Still, Prados admits contradictory evidence (pp. 48-49, 87, 104, 161).

pragmatism and US moralistic idealism taking shape here. In any case, the substance of the differences noted above was at the heart of the difficulties they had in coordinating policies.”<sup>46</sup> The problems between Eisenhower and Churchill in Indochina stemmed from deep ideological differences about the nature of the communist threat.

On March 29, 1954, in response to the French call for help to save Dien Bien Phu, Dulles offered “United Action,” a Western alliance to intervene militarily in Vietnam. In his memoirs, Richard M. Nixon wrote:

In Washington the Joint Chiefs of Staff, under their Chairman, Admiral Arthur Radford, devised a plan, known as Operation Vulture, for using three small tactical atomic bombs to destroy Vietminh positions and relieve the garrison. Both Eisenhower and Dulles, however, felt that nothing less than overt Chinese communist aggression would be sufficient provocation for our going into Vietnam in any such a direct and unilateral way.<sup>47</sup>

Eisenhower and Dulles then seriously contemplated using nuclear weapons to achieve their goal in Southeast Asia.

The U.S. Congress conditioned American participation in any military action in Vietnam on British involvement. In April 1954, the British cabinet refused the American request to participate in United Action, preferring negotiations at Geneva that were scheduled to begin on April 26, 1954.<sup>48</sup> Churchill and Eden placed little value on French Indochina because it was a French colony and the lack of enthusiasm for “United Action”

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<sup>46</sup> Dobson, *Anglo-American Relations in the Twentieth Century*, 111-112.

<sup>47</sup> Richard M. Nixon, *RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1978), 150.

<sup>48</sup> Jeremy Pressman, *Warring Friends: Alliance Restraint in International Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 53.

curtailed any possibility for British military action in the region.

Eisenhower and Dulles believed in and advocated military action in Indochina because of their deeply-held conviction that the dominoes could begin falling in Southeast Asia.<sup>49</sup> For Americans, the balance of power in the world, like the sword of Damocles, hung by a thread. The British thought that war in French Indochina could not be won by the Western powers and that a negotiated settlement in Geneva would be the best possible outcome.<sup>50</sup> A major difference between the British and the Americans concerned the possibility of military victory in Indochina. The British remained extremely skeptical about fighting a jungle war in Indochina. By contrast, Dulles thought that a war could be won with the support of the indigenous people of the area.<sup>51</sup>

Dulles became more and more annoyed with the British, in particular with his British counterpart, Eden. Jeffrey A. Engel wrote: “Dulles privately told C. D. Jackson, one of Eisenhower’s advisers, in the spring of 1954. ‘At every turn we are blocked by the fact that our principal allies are not willing to take any risks.’ Dulles wanted allies who would risk their fortunes and even their peace to defeat global communism.”<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>50</sup> Petersen, *The Middle East Between the Great Powers*, 49. “Scholars have pointed out that Britain did not believe in the domino theory, and thought it was still possible for France to reach an acceptable negotiated settlement. Britain had, furthermore, little desire to be embroiled in what it regarded as a non-winnable war.”

<sup>51</sup> Greenstein and Immerman, “What Did Eisenhower Tell Kennedy about Indochina?” *The Journal of American History* 79, no. 2 (September 1992), 579. “At one point he (Eisenhower) went so far as to describe Indochina as ‘the tale of the snake’, saying (evidently for rhetorical purposes) that before he struck it he would assemble his wisest advisers and ask them if the United States should attack the snake’s head (presumably Moscow).”

<sup>52</sup> Engel, *Cold War at 30,000 Feet*, 172. See also Georges Bidault, trans. by Marianne Sinclair, *Resistance: The Political Autobiography of Georges Bidault* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, 1965), 196-197. “What he (Dulles) did do, however, was to ask me if we would like the US to give us two



Dulles wanted a firm British commitment to a new regional military alliance in the Far East called the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO).

Eden unequivocally expressed his intense displeasure at Dulles's single-mindedness about SEATO. In a message to Makins on April 17, 1954, Eden wrote, "This is another of these exasperating examples of the American government rushing ahead without proper consultation. We have not yet decided upon the membership of this organization. This matter was expressly reserved in London and I'm not prepared to decide it now."<sup>53</sup> Eden continued to be angry with Dulles and with his bullying tactics. In a later message to Makins, he complained, "Americans may think the time has passed when they need consider the feelings or difficulties of their allies. It is the conviction that this tendency becomes more pronounced in every week that is creating mounting difficulties for anyone in this country who wants to maintain close Anglo-American relations."<sup>54</sup> Eden worried about Great Britain's Commonwealth partners and their possible exclusion from a new proposed treaty. He wanted to make sure that Makins pressed home that point with the Americans, particularly with Dulles.<sup>55</sup>

Eden may have been even more distressed had he known that Eisenhower and

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atomic bombs. I think that he spoke to others about this project, for he always liked to ask different people's advice, however unseemly or embarrassing. But it was I who answered without having to do much thinking on the subject, 'If those bombs are dropped near Dien Bien Phu, our side will suffer as much as the enemy. If we drop them on the supply line from China, we will be risking a world war. In either case, far from being helped, the Dien Bien Phu garrison would be worse off than before.'

<sup>53</sup> Telegram from Anthony Eden to Roger Makins on April 17, 1954, FO 800/ 785, Far East, January to June 1954, Avon Papers.

<sup>54</sup> Message from Anthony Eden to Roger Makins on April 19, 1954, FO 800/ 785, Far East, January to June 1954, Avon Papers.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

Dulles had been preparing for nuclear air strikes against China. Historian Robert F. Burk has contended:

In May 1954 Eisenhower upped the military stakes further by authorizing the preparation of nuclear strikes against China itself if it intervened directly in the Indochina war. Shortly afterward, the Russians and Chinese secretly pressured Ho into accepting a temporary division of Vietnam along the 17<sup>th</sup> parallel. With the promise of national elections by 1956 to determine the future of the country, and with his side likely to win such elections, Ho reluctantly accepted the deal at Geneva.<sup>56</sup>

Brinkmanship put heavy demands on the Soviets and the Chinese, who then pressured Ho Chi Minh to accept the division of Vietnam along the 17<sup>th</sup> parallel.<sup>57</sup>

Eden feared that talk of direct American military intervention in Indochina would sabotage his negotiations with both the Chinese and the Soviets at the Geneva Conference. Eden wrote about his meeting with Molotov: “He [Molotov] added with a frosty smile that he had observed that Mr. Dulles had succeeded during his stay in Geneva in never once acknowledging Mr. Chou En-lai’s existence.”<sup>58</sup> Eden thought that the communists believed that Eisenhower and Dulles had planned a military campaign in Indochina regardless of the result of the Geneva negotiations. The Chinese really believed that the Americans might attack them. Eden completely disagreed with the American policy of brinkmanship, which threatened massive retaliation against the Chinese, and he thought it diplomatically counterproductive to make such threats. It would surely not lead to better negotiations with the Soviets and the Chinese. Eden

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<sup>56</sup> Burk, *Dwight D. Eisenhower*, 132.

<sup>57</sup> William J. Duiker, *Ho Chi Minh* (New York: Hyperion, 2000), 456-457.

<sup>58</sup> Eden, *Full Circle*, 132.

assumed Admiral Radford's policy of military action had finally prevailed over Under - Secretary of State Walter Bedell Smith's preferred course of negotiation at Geneva. He considered this talk of brinksmanship a disastrous turn of events. Indeed, Eden desperately needed to minimize the harm being caused by the Americans:

I myself fear that this new talk of intervention will have weakened what chances remain of agreement at this conference. The Chinese, and to a lesser extent, the Russians, have all along suspected that the Americans intend to intervene in Indochina whatever arrangements we try to arrive at here. The Chinese also believe that the Americans plan hostilities against them. These reports could help to convince them that they are right and I do not accept the United States argument that the threat of intervention will incline them to compromise.<sup>59</sup>

He completely rejected the American concept of brinksmanship.

In a meeting with Dulles, recorded by National Security Advisor Robert Cutler, Eisenhower stated: "If he was to go to the Congress for authority he would not ask any half way measures. If the situation warranted it, there should be declared a state of war with China; and possibly there should be a strike at Russia."<sup>60</sup> Cutler also noted that, "He would never have the United States going into Indochina alone."<sup>61</sup> He concluded, "If the U.S. took action against communist China, there should be no halfway measures or frittering around. The Navy and Air Force should go in with full power, using new weapons, and strike

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<sup>59</sup> Telegram from Anthony Eden to Roger Makins and Paris Office on May 16, 1954, FO 800/ 785, Far East, January to June 1954, Avon Papers.

<sup>60</sup> Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Vol. 2 The President, 1952-1969*, 205.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 205-206. Cutler notes, 6-2-1954, AWAS.

at air bases and ports in mainland China.”<sup>62</sup> Eisenhower then had a follow-up meeting with the Joint Chiefs of Staff on June 19, 1954, “He told the chiefs that an atomic assault against China would inevitably bring Russia into the war; therefore if the United States were to launch a preventive attack, it had to be against both Russia and China simultaneously.”<sup>63</sup> In 1954, Eisenhower actually contemplated a first-strike attack against both the Soviet Union and China as a prelude to a global war against communism.

Meanwhile, Under-Secretary of State Walter Bedell Smith and Anthony Eden worked harmoniously together at the Geneva Conference trying to resolve the Indochina situation peacefully.<sup>64</sup> Smith shared with Eden, possibly imprudently, the contents of two important telegrams he had just received, one from Saigon and the other from Eisenhower. The message from Saigon painted a depressing picture of the deteriorating French political and military position in Vietnam. The embassy’s message implied that the French essentially planned to leave Vietnam; thus the only hope for the Vietnamese might be direct military intervention by the United States.

The second message came directly from President Eisenhower, who argued that the communists had been using the Geneva Conference to their military advantage. He believed that the West now had to decide where to draw the line on communism in

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 206. HD, 6-19-1954.

<sup>64</sup> Message from Anthony Eden to Winston Churchill on May 31, 1954, FO 800/ 761, Conferences and Meetings, January to June 1954, Avon Papers. “We judge that for most Americans here, except Bedell-Smith, any agreement with the communists is regarded as morally wrong and politically dangerous.”

Asia.<sup>65</sup> Eden wrote to the British Foreign Office, “He was convinced that the communists would carry on until such a line had been drawn and the communists warned ‘Thus far and no further.’ In forging this chain the missing link was the United Kingdom since Her Majesty’s Government could not be brought to a decision while the Geneva Conference continued, it was imperative to bring the conference to a close without delay.”<sup>66</sup> Eisenhower clearly preferred drawing the line in Vietnam, with all of the dangerous military implications, to pursuing what he regarded as endless and fruitless negotiations with the communists at Geneva. A Special National Intelligence Estimate stated, “In this connection, U.S. use of nuclear weapons in Indochina would tend to hasten the ultimate Chinese communist decision whether or not to intervene. It would probably convince the Chinese communists of U.S. determination to obtain a decisive military victory in Indochina at whatever risk and by whatever means, and of the consequent danger of nuclear attack on communist China.”<sup>67</sup> The United Kingdom held out for a negotiated peace settlement.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Telegram from Anthony Eden to Foreign Office on June 12 1954, FO 800/ 785, Far East, January to June 1954, Avon Papers.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> See *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954. Volume XIII, Part 2, Indochina*, (Washington, D.C. Dept. of State, 1982), 1704. “Special National Intelligence Estimate,” June 15, 1954.

<sup>68</sup> See Kevin Ruane, “Anthony Eden, British Diplomacy and the Origins of the Geneva Conference of 1954,” *The Historical Journal*, 37, no. 1 (Mar. 1994), 153. “The ‘success’ of the conference was seen as a triumph for the efforts of British diplomacy, and for Foreign Secretary Eden in particular, a judgment which has altered little with the passage of time. The following article questions this view on the grounds that, ironically, British support for Geneva had little or nothing to do with the situation in Indochina. On the contrary, it arose in the wider context of policy towards the European Defense Community. It was the product of Eden’s unhappiness at Britain’s junior status in the so-called Anglo-American ‘special relationship.’ The British attitude to Geneva only became more positive in March-April 1954 when French fortunes reached their nadir and the alternative to a negotiated solution in Vietnam

Eisenhower and Dulles would have been even more alarmed about the British had they known what Churchill really thought about Vietnam. In a message to Eden dated June 13, 1954, Churchill stated, “I heartily agree with you that Great Britain will in no circumstances intervene in Vietnam, on the other hand we have given our support in principle to SEATO which you and I both think has many advantages over ANZUS from which we were excluded.”<sup>69</sup> Churchill had been upset with Great Britain’s earlier exclusion by the Americans from ANZUS, a military alliance that included Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. Now he feared that a newly created SEATO might embroil him in an unwanted war in Vietnam. Eden responded to Churchill on June 15, 1954, expressing his antipathy for the Americans’ refusal to negotiate at Geneva: “The Americans appear to be building up a situation in which they will discuss nothing, Korea or other, with the Chinese. This can only lead to war. It is already resulting in intense American unpopularity here.”<sup>70</sup> Eden noticed that the Americans, under orders from Eisenhower, had been closing down their negotiations in Geneva.

Furthermore, Churchill perceived Dulles as trying to undermine the British in the upcoming Washington summit planned for late June 1954. He told Eden that “Dulles evidently does not like our White House meeting. What he says counts for absolutely

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seemed to be American, or American-led, military intervention. Faced with this potentially catastrophic prospect, the previously ‘unwanted’ conference assumed a new relevance for Eden and British diplomacy.”

<sup>69</sup> Telegram from Winston Churchill to Anthony Eden on June 13, 1954, FO 800/ 785, Far East, January to June 1954, Avon Papers.

<sup>70</sup> Telegram from Anthony Eden to Winston Churchill on June 15, 1954, FO 800/ 785, Far East, January to June 1954, Avon Papers.

nothing here and the more he says it the more harmless does he become.”<sup>71</sup> Churchill had clearly planned the Washington summit with the intent of dealing directly with Eisenhower and avoiding Dulles. Churchill assumed, erroneously, that basic policy differences existed between Eisenhower and Dulles.

In another telegram to Eden on June 16, 1954, Churchill delivered a vitriolic diatribe against the French: “A wise Frenchman would clear out of Indochina on the best terms possible and concentrate on saving North Africa which is in jeopardy. The French Chamber will go on playing its games and enjoying them without the slightest regard to the allies by whom they were rescued and on whom they have to live. It would be wrong, in my opinion, for this misbehavior to be further indulged.”<sup>72</sup> Churchill greatly resented how the problems of Indochina caused vast problems for the Anglo-American relationship and chose to project this loathing on the French rather than the Americans. He also expressed his concern to Eden that the plan for SEATO might be an American contrivance to bring the British into an unwanted war in Vietnam. Churchill wrote, “As you invite my opinion I frankly give it. If disaster occurs, as the military think they may within the next month, you or we may be charged with having been sucked in by very obvious maneuvers.”<sup>73</sup> The British had no interest in fighting in Vietnam.

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<sup>71</sup> Telegram from Winston Churchill to Anthony Eden on June 16, 1954, FO 800/ 785, Far East, January to June 1954, Avon Papers.

<sup>72</sup> Telegram from Winston Churchill to Anthony Eden on June 16, 1954, FO 800/ 785, Far East, January to June 1954, Avon Papers.

<sup>73</sup> Telegram from Winston Churchill to Anthony Eden on June 16, 1954, FO 800/ 785, Far East, January to June 1954, Avon Papers. See also Roger Dingman, “John Foster Dulles and the Creation of the South-East Asia Treaty Organization in 1954,” *The International History Review* 11, no. 3 (Aug. 1989): 457-477.

The real issues in Vietnam concerned both French colonialism and the threat of communism. In preparation for the Washington summit, “Dulles said he was sure that meant that the British were going to make a plea for a differentiation between French colonialism and British colonialism. The president interrupted to say, ‘Sure the British always think their colonialism is different and better. Actually, what they want us to do is go along to help keep their empire’.”<sup>74</sup> Eisenhower held both French and British colonialism in equal contempt and believed colonialism complicated America’s battle against global communism.

Eisenhower recognized the significance of the Anglo-American relationship by comparing it to a bridge. In his comparison, Eisenhower noted that people used bridges every day without noticing them at all. The trouble comes when a bridge becomes unusable and then everyone quickly notices. The bridge must be maintained and usable and this provided the real purpose for the Washington summit. Any disruption in the Anglo-American relationship could only give aid and comfort to the enemies of freedom.<sup>75</sup>

The Americans and the British desperately needed to coordinate their approach to the communist Chinese. On June 29, 1954, Press Secretary James C. Hagerty asked the president “if he had discussed the subject of Red China and its admission to the UN with Churchill, and he said that he had. ‘I just had one conversation on the subject. I told him that it was politically immoral and impossible for the United States to favor the admission

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<sup>74</sup> Robert H. Ferrell, ed., *The Diary of James C. Hagerty: Eisenhower in Mid-Course, 1954-1955* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), 74.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.



of Red China to the United Nations, and surprisingly enough Churchill agreed'.<sup>76</sup>  
Churchill accepted the American position on excluding China from the United Nations, while Eden kept his thoughts to himself.

After the Washington summit, a follow-up Eisenhower letter to Churchill on July 8, 1954, reflected his deep distrust of negotiations with the Soviets and the Chinese:

My appreciation of the acute need for peace and understanding in the world certainly far transcends any personal pride in my judgments or convictions. No one could be happier than I to find that I have been wrong in my conclusion that the men in the Kremlin are not to be trusted, no matter how great the apparent solemnity and sincerity with which they might enter into an agreement or engagement... The bill of particulars against Red China includes, among many other things, its invasion of North Korea, where its armies still are stationed. Secondly, Red China, by its own admission, illegally holds a number of Americans as prisoners. This outrages our entire citizenry. Third, communist China has been the principal source of the military strength used in the illicit and unjust aggression in Indochina. Finally, Red China has been guilty of the most atrocious deportment in her dealings with the Western world. At Geneva it excoriated the United Nations and asked for the repudiation of decisions by that body. Red China has been worse than insulting in its communications to ourselves and others, while the public statements of its officials have been characterized by vilification and hatred.<sup>77</sup>

This letter greatly disturbed the British. Makins wrote to Eden, on July 9, 1954, "The President, however, in his last message to the Prime Minister was undoubtedly expressing his personal outlook, as Dulles told me that it was entirely his own work. I am afraid that the effects of this episode, the product of general frustration at the failure of American

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>77</sup> Telegram from Dwight D. Eisenhower to Winston Churchill, July 8, 1954, FO 800/786, Far East, July to December 1954, Avon Papers.

policy, or the lack of it, will linger on and drive American foreign policy still further into the impasse in which it now finds itself, e.g. the reluctance of Dulles and Bedell Smith to return to Geneva.”<sup>78</sup> Makins made clear that the message came directly from Eisenhower without the assistance of the State Department.

Eisenhower clearly rejected negotiations with the communists either at Geneva or anywhere else. Eisenhower and Dulles preferred a confrontational brinkmanship foreign policy:

The French Premier then sent an urgent request to Eisenhower that he send either Dulles or Smith back to Geneva to head the American delegation. The presence of either man would convince Chou that the Americans were willing to accept the decisions of the conference. Eden urged the same thing. Dulles firmly opposed going. He announced his decision at a Cabinet meeting on July 9, 1954. Eisenhower immediately interrupted him. ‘I was strong that way the other day,’ Eisenhower admitted, but he changed his mind. He wanted Smith sent back. He explained his thinking: ‘If we are not on record to oppose the settlement when it happens, it will plague us through the fall and give the Democrats a chance to say that we sat idly by and let Indochina be sold down the river to the communists without raising a finger or turning a hair.’<sup>79</sup>

Eisenhower’s severe cynicism reflected his excessive skepticism of negotiations with the communists and an intense pessimism about domestic politics.

British diplomats rejected American brinkmanship in favor of continued negotiations with the communists at Geneva. On July 20, 1954, Churchill sent a message to Eden: “The supreme Geneva objective is cease-fire in stopping the war in Indochina,

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<sup>78</sup> Telegram from Roger Makins to Anthony Eden on July 9, 1954, FO 800/ 786, Far East, July to December 1954, Avon Papers.

<sup>79</sup> Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Vol. 2 The President, 1952-1969*, 208.

and no procedural differences with the United States should be allowed to prevent this.”<sup>80</sup>

The British cabinet stood completely united behind Churchill and Eden in overriding any disputes with the United States in getting a cease-fire in Indochina.<sup>81</sup>

Eisenhower’s unsurprising reaction to the Geneva agreement included extreme disappointment over the loss of North Vietnam. Dulles, at least, recognized that it might be the best that could be achieved under difficult circumstances. He protected himself and Eisenhower from attacks by Old Guard Republicans by refusing to sign the Geneva Agreement and promising only “not to disturb them.”<sup>82</sup> Admiral Arthur W. Radford, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, declared “Her Majesty’s Government were being played upon by Nehru to back his neutralist proposal for what amounted to a sellout to the communists at Geneva; the British public was terrified at the thought of the hydrogen bomb; and there was a widespread feeling in Britain that, somehow or other, the Geneva Conference was going to settle all the problems of Asia.”<sup>83</sup> Radford believed that the British had simply appeased the communists at Geneva.

The British, nonetheless, believed “that the Americans tended toward impatience

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<sup>80</sup> Telegram from Winston Churchill to Anthony Eden on July 20, 1954, FO 800/786, Far East, July to December 1954, Avon Papers.

<sup>81</sup> Message from Winston Churchill to Anthony Eden on July 21, 1954, FO 800/762, Conferences and Meetings, July to December 1954, Avon Papers. “I send you my sincere congratulations and those of your colleagues on the success which has at length rewarded your patient persevering skill at Geneva.” and Message from Queen Elizabeth II to Anthony Eden on July 21, 1954, FO 800/762, Conferences and Meetings, July to December 1954, Avon Papers. “I am so delighted with your success and send you my warm personal congratulations.”

<sup>82</sup> Damms, *The Eisenhower Presidency*, 37.

<sup>83</sup> Stephen Jurika, Jr., *From Pearl Harbor to Vietnam: The Memoirs of Admiral Arthur W. Radford* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1980), 434.

and naïveté, which often led to misguided bluster. Dulles's anti-communist zealotry compounded this American tendency and blinded him to realistic appraisal of the world stage."<sup>84</sup> The Americans believed the British based foreign policy in Asia not on anti-communism but on British colonialism. British interests included Hong Kong, Malaya, and Singapore. Each country understood the other's weaknesses and prejudices. The Anglo-American relationship in the Far East continued to be strained.<sup>85</sup> The British believed that a war in Indochina would shift much-needed resources from central Europe. These huge differences between the United States and Great Britain further intensified with the crisis over Quemoy and Matsu in 1955.<sup>86</sup>

Many historians have argued that Eisenhower deliberately set up political and military impediments to his brinkmanship policy in Indochina. Stephen Ambrose wrote, "He set political and military obstacles that he knew could not be overcome. Of these, the most important were British cooperation, congressional approval, and the JCS facing the fact that an atomic strike had to be directed against Russia as well as China, and could hardly be limited to Vietnam."<sup>87</sup> This analysis lacks logical coherency because Eisenhower had sent both Secretary of State Dulles and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Admiral Radford, to London to make the case for "United Action." Eisenhower also favored sabotaging the negotiations that had been going on in Geneva. He preferred a

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<sup>84</sup> James R. Arnold, *The First Domino: Eisenhower, the Military, and America's Intervention in Vietnam* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1991), 179.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Jeremy Pressman, *Warring Friends: Alliance Restraint in International Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 44.

<sup>87</sup> Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Vol. 2 The President, 1952-1969*, 209.

military solution to what he perceived as a military problem in French Indochina. The lack of cooperation from the British infuriated Eisenhower and Dulles. Historians ignore basic facts and have misread Eisenhower's actions. The falling out between Eisenhower and Churchill on Quemoy and Matsu demonstrate even more clearly the extreme ideological differences between the Americans and the British.

#### 4.3 Formosa

In an interview on NBC's *Meet the Press*, Anthony Nutting, British Ambassador to the United Nations, made several indiscreet remarks about Great Britain supporting the United States over Quemoy and Matsu. On December 13, 1954, he wrote Anthony Eden an apology:

I am more than sorry if my reply on Meet the Press caused embarrassment. Under considerable pressure I thought the safest let out was to refer to the United Nations. I carefully avoided speculating on what the United Nations would do and, in particular, refused to be drawn on what action, if any, we would take. I see the point about the international status of Formosa. But nevertheless I do not feel I could pretend that if Chiang Kai-shek were attacked by communist China he would fail as a member of the United Nations to invoke United Nations assistance. Nothing I said went beyond or could be interpreted as exceeding the bounds of the charter of the United Nations.<sup>88</sup>

Eden responded coldly to Nutting on December 14, 1954:

Criticism of your interview is principally directed against implications that United Kingdom will necessarily be involved in hostilities if China attacks Formosa. It is by no means certain that an attack on Formosa 'would no doubt call for collective action of the United Nations'. Your references to the Korean parallel which is not a true one and that China as the 'potential

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<sup>88</sup> Telegram from Anthony Nutting to Anthony Eden on December 13, 1954, FO 800/ 786, Far East, July to December 1954, Avon Papers.

enemy' are particularly criticized. They seem cumulatively to create the impression that it was your intention to declare that the United Kingdom would answer the war on the side of the United States if the Chinese launched an attack. "Times" Washington correspondent in his full account of your interview today states that you have in fact created the impression in America, and imply that we have undertaken something new. Consequently there is much concern here. I shall of course do all I can to meet criticism in the House. Meanwhile I rely on you to say as little as possible on this thorny subject and to limit your public interviews to the utmost."<sup>89</sup>

Eden had outlined an extremely legalistic and virtually anti-American position on the crisis in the Formosa Straits. The United States had a defense pact with Formosa, but not Great Britain. The British might not even support UN action or sanctions against China for attacking the offshore islands.

The Formosa Straits crisis led to a serious split in the transatlantic alliance between the United States and Great Britain.<sup>90</sup> The bombardment of Quemoy and Matsu

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<sup>89</sup> Telegram from Anthony Eden to Anthony Nutting on December 14, 1954, FO 800/ 786, Far East, July to December 1954, Avon Papers.

<sup>90</sup> See Chang and Di, "The Absence of War in the U.S.-China Confrontation over Quemoy and Matsu in 1954-1955," 1500. See Footnote 1:

Most American accounts of the crisis have generally accepted Dwight D. Eisenhower's entire framework for understanding the crisis and his selection of issues for examination. See his presidential memoir *Mandate for Change: 1953-1956, The White House Years* (New York, 1963). Other extended discussions of the crisis in English can be found in the following works, Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower, Vol. II: The President* (New York, 1985); Robert Accinelli, "Eisenhower, Congress, and the 1954-55 Offshore Island Crisis," *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 20 (Spring 1990): 329-48; Richard K. Betts, *Nuclear Blackmail and Nuclear Balance* (Washington D.C., 1987); H.W. Brands Jr., "Testing Massive Retaliation: Creditability and Crisis Management in the Taiwan Strait," *International Security*, 12 (Spring 1988): 124-51; McGeorge Bundy, *Danger and Survival: Choices about the Bomb in the First Fifty Years* (New York, 1988); O. Edmund Clubb, "Formosa and the Offshore Islands in American Foreign Policy, 1950-1955" *Political Science Quarterly*, 74 (December, 1959): 517-31; Michael Dockdrill, "Britain and the First Chinese Off-Shore Islands Crisis, 1954-55," in Dockdrill and John W. Young, eds., *British Foreign Policy, 1945-56* (London, 1989), 173-96; Robert A. Divine, *Eisenhower and the Cold War* (New York, 1981); Alexander George and Richard Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (New York, 1974); Leonard H.D. Gordon, "United States Opposition

began in September 1954. On January 1, 1955, President Chiang Kai-shek thought that a war between China and Formosa would break out soon. Foreign Minister Chou En-lai threatened that a Chinese invasion of Formosa could occur shortly. Once again, Eisenhower threatened the communist Chinese with nuclear weapons. He seriously thought of bombing China with atomic weapons in the defense of Formosa.<sup>91</sup>

The Secretary noted that if in fact the action in the U.N. was successful, the U.S. decision with respect to the defense of Quemoy would never need to be implemented. He added that his reference to the use of atomic weapons in his conversations with Sir Anthony Eden related only to the most extreme hypothesis of the communists attacking Quemoy in so heavy a human wave as to make it impossible to stop them with ordinary firing power. He felt this was a remote possibility. (At this remark Sir Roger and Sir Robert exchanged a glance and Sir Robert made what was obviously a verbatim note,)<sup>92</sup>

On January 25, 1955, Eisenhower wrote to Churchill describing the critical differences between the Americans and the British on nuclear weapons. He believed that the British

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to Use of Force in the Taiwan Strait, 1954-1962," *Journal of American History*, 72 (December 1985): 637-60; Morton H. Halperin and Tang Tsou, "United States Policy toward the Offshore Islands," *Public Policy*, 15 (1966): 119-38; Paul K. Huth, *Extended Deterrence and the Prevention of War* (New Haven, Conn., 1988); J.H. Kalicki, *The Patterns of Sino-American Crisis: Political-Military Interactions in the 1950s* (London, 1975); Bennett C. Rushkoff, "Eisenhower, Dulles and the Quemoy-Matsu Crisis, 1954-1955," *Political Science Quarterly*, 96 (August 1981): 465-80; and Thomas E. Stolper, *China, Taiwan, and the Offshore Islands* (Armonk, N.Y., 1985). Also see the essays by Marc S. Gallicchio, Waldo Heinrichs, Rosemary Foot, Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, and others in Warren I. Cohen and Akira Iriye, eds., *The Great Powers in East Asia, 1953-1960* (New York, 1990); and the essays by Chen Xiaolu, Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, Wang Jisi, and Jia Qingguo in Harry Harding and Yuan Ming, eds., *Sino-American Relations, 1945-1955: A Joint Reassessment of a Critical Decade* (Wilmington, Del., 1989).. The authors have previously written on the offshore island crisis in Gordon H. Chang, *Friends and Enemies: The United States, China, and the Soviet Union, 1948-1972* (Stanford, Calif., 1990); and He Di, "The Evolution of the People's Republic of China's Policy toward the Offshore Islands," in Cohen and Iriye, *Great Powers*.

<sup>91</sup> Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Vol. 2 The President, 1952-1969*, 231.

<sup>92</sup> *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-1957. Volume II, China*, (Washington, D.C. Dept. of State, 1986), 88-89. In a Memorandum of Conversation, Department of State, Washington, January 20, 1955 with John Foster Dulles, Sir Roger Makins, Sir Robert Scott, Mr. Robertson, and Mr. Merchant

failed to take into serious consideration the power of surprise. Nuclear weapons provided an incredible ability to destroy targets with little or no warning. Eisenhower argued that this factor gave the allies a tremendous advantage over the Chinese.<sup>93</sup> He complained that the British had too negative an outlook on the usefulness of nuclear weapons and argued that with a dozen atomic bombs a nation could be completely paralyzed.<sup>94</sup>

Eisenhower and the British did not see the use of atomic bombs in the same way. The British saw it as merely a deterrent to war, while Eisenhower viewed it, in the context of the Formosa Straits crisis, as a new and improved conventional weapon of war. In his alarming letter to Churchill, Eisenhower stated,

I personally believe that many of our old conceptions of the time that would be available to governments for the making of the decisions in the event of attack are no longer tenable. I think it possible that the very life of the nation, perhaps even Western civilization, could, for example, come to depend on instantaneous reaction to news of an approaching air fleet; victory or defeat could hang upon minutes and seconds used decisively at top speed or tragically wasted in indecision.<sup>95</sup>

These kind of letters from Eisenhower terrified Churchill, Eden, and the British Foreign Office into thinking that he might embroil the entire world in world war. Eisenhower believed that he could make these nuclear decisions in minutes and seconds, while other

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<sup>93</sup> See *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954. Volume XIV Part 1, China and Japan*, (Washington, D.C. Dept. of State, 1985), 518-519. During a meeting of the National Security Council on August 5, 1954, "He (Eisenhower) said that if the communists tried an invasion of Formosa by a fleet of junks, this might make a good target for an atomic bomb."

<sup>94</sup> Boyle, ed., *The Churchill-Eisenhower Correspondence, 1953-1955*, 186. Eisenhower to Churchill, January 25, 1955, "And now, even as we contemplate the grim picture depicted in your memorandum, we gain only a glimmering of the paralysis that could be inflicted on an unready fighting force, or indeed the whole nation, by some sudden foray that would place a dozen or more of these terrible weapons accurately on target."

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 186-187.



world leaders, such as Churchill, infirmed by age, might be subject to tragic indecision. A nuclear attack against China could lead to the invocation of the Sino-Soviet Treaty and global thermonuclear war.

Eisenhower daringly proposed a new deterrent defense built on logic and strategic studies, in order to know when, not if, to use nuclear weapons. Allies and adversaries faced the real danger of being pushed into war through miscalculation. Yet, Eisenhower took particular offense at British fears of the United States being drawn into a nuclear war with China. Eisenhower wrote Churchill, “I note that in the memorandum accompanying your letter, your government fears that during the next two or three years the United States may, through impulsiveness or lack of perspective, be drawn into a Chinese war. I trust that my message to the Congress reassured you as to our basic attitudes and sober approach to critical problems.”<sup>96</sup> Eisenhower deeply resented being painted in British documents as either a warmonger or a fool.

Finally, Eisenhower argued that the United States could not abandon its friends, particularly Formosa, without the possibility of a major breakdown in the fight against communism in Asia. The psychological impact of abandonment on the Asians could not be played down: “God knows I have been working hard in the exploration of every avenue that seems to lead toward the preservation and strengthening of the peace. But I am positive that the free world is surely building trouble for itself unless it is united in basic purpose, is clear and empathetic in its declared determination to resist all forceful

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 187-188.

communist advances, and keeps itself ready to act on a moment's notice, if necessary."<sup>97</sup>

From the tone of the letter, Eisenhower assumed the communists were ready to take over Asia, unless met with counterforce.

The American congressional resolutions on Formosa further confused both the Chinese and America's Western allies.<sup>98</sup> Chou En-lai believed it was a declaration of war by the United States.<sup>99</sup> Nevertheless, the Chinese continued to threaten Formosa with liberation.<sup>100</sup> Winston Churchill thought that the United States should defend Formosa and the Pescadores Islands. These islands should be protected at "all cost and by all means."<sup>101</sup> Churchill, however, advocated removal of the Chinese nationalists from all coastal islands in the next three months:

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Anna Kasten Nelson, "John Foster Dulles and the Bipartisan Congress," *Political Science Quarterly* 102, no. 1 (Spring, 1987), 55. "The skillful handling of the Formosa resolution gave the President, as well as his principal foreign policy advisor, an unprecedented blank check. The resolution ensured that any unforeseen development surrounding the Formosa issue could be met without fear of political reprisals on the domestic front. Congress had been consulted and had given its approval. Meanwhile, as they relinquished their war powers, the bipartisan congressional leaders were convinced they not only had been consulted but had been taken into the President's confidence." See also Robert Accinelli, "Eisenhower, Congress, and the 1954-55 Offshore Island Crisis" *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No. 2, Eisenhower Centennial Issue (Spring, 1990), 335. "The Formosa Resolution was intended to serve multiple purposes. It removed any uncertainty about Eisenhower's congressional authority to use American armed forces as he saw fit in the Formosa Strait area. If there should be hostilities involving American forces, he would not be as vulnerable to criticism as Truman had been dispatching forces to Korea without congressional authorization. The resolution would boost the morale of the Nationalists and perhaps mollify some of their resentment at being asked to evacuate the Tachens and to acquiesce in a UN cease-fire action. The resolution would similarly counterbalance possible negative reaction from pro-Nationalist partisans to the Tachen evacuation and the UN resolution. Above all, it would signal the Chinese communists (and their Soviet allies) that a united and resolute America was determined to uphold its interests in the Formosa Strait area."

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Vol. 2 The President, 1952-1969*, 235.

<sup>101</sup> PM's Minute, from Winston Churchill to Anthony Eden on January 29, 1955, FO 800/ 787, Far East, 1955, Avon Papers.

If the Chinese communists interfered with the nationalists moving out all of their troops from the coastal islands then there should be a war between the United States and China. The United States should not have to worry about being attacked while removing 50,000 nationalists on Quemoy. The removal of Chiang from the coastal islands meant that a clear demarcation could be made between communist China and Formosa. This should be what the Americans really want. If this could be done as an ultimatum to the Chinese this would greatly reduce any kind of embarrassment the United States might feel in overseeing a nationalist withdrawal. I do not know whether there is any chance of the Americans accepting this sensible withdrawal under cover of their formidable threats and military precautions and also the whole thing being on their initiative and decision. They would say in the fact: 'as negotiations have become impossible nothing is left to us but to decide the matter for ourselves; this is what we are going to do. Beware!<sup>102</sup>

He argued for a hybrid of a policy that incorporated American brinkmanship with British pragmatic substance. Eden, once more, disagreed with Churchill, counseling more patience in negotiating with the Chinese:

Our object must surely be to bring the United States government along to a position which we would be able to support. Would it not be best to see whether the evacuation of the Tachens goes through without any communist interference? If it does we shall be in a stronger position to argue with the Americans over the other coastal islands. I would therefore urge that the message should be kept up our sleeves until (a). we know the result of the Tachen operation, (b). we have the promised Russian reply to us and the Indians. Meanwhile I am sending a telegram to Washington to continue trying to soften the United States government a little further.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Message from Anthony Eden to Winston Churchill on February 10, 1955, FO 800/787, Far East, 1955, Avon Papers.. "Our object must surely be to bring the United States government along to a position which we would be able to support. Would it not be best to see whether the evacuation of the Tachens goes through without any communist interference. If it does we shall be in a stronger position to argue with the Americans over the other coastal islands. I would therefore urge that the message should be kept up our sleeves until (a). we know the result of the Tachen operation. (b) we have the promised Russian reply to us and the Indians. Meanwhile I am sending a telegram to Washington to continue trying to soften the United States Government a little further."

Eden's position demonstrated the breakdown of the transatlantic alliance.

On February 10, 1955, Eisenhower wrote another long letter to Churchill explaining his belief that nothing could be worse than global war and that the Soviets did not want such a war at this time. Eisenhower revealed to Churchill his belief that even if the Americans fought against the Chinese, the Soviets would avoid any kind of direct intervention.<sup>104</sup> Instead, the Soviets might supply the Chinese with weapons and use American intervention for propaganda purposes. Eisenhower knew that the Soviets feared an American bombing campaign against their homeland. He recognized the danger of U.S. intervention in China due to the Sino-Soviet treaty. But for Eisenhower this created even more of a dilemma for the Soviets, for they must decide whether they would plunge the world into a global war over China:

It would not be an easy decision for the men in the Kremlin, in my opinion. But all this is no excuse for fighting China. We believe our policy is the best that we can design for staying out of such a fight. In any event, we have got to do what we believe to be right, if we can figure out the right, and we must show no lack of firmness in a world where our political enemies exploit every sign of weakness, and are constantly attempting to disrupt the solidarity of the free world's intentions to oppose their aggressive practices.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-1957. Volume II, China*, (Washington, D.C. Dept. of State, 1986), 137. See NSC 505 paragraph 4-c, which the Joint Chiefs wanted deleted, but Eisenhower wanted retained. "Thereby convincing the communist rulers that aggression will not serve their interests, that it will not pay. So long as the Soviets are uncertain of their ability to neutralize the U.S. nuclear-air retaliatory power, there is little reason to expect them to initiate general war or actions which they believe would carry appreciable risk of general war, and thereby endanger the regime and the security of the USSR."

<sup>105</sup> Boyle, ed., *The Churchill-Eisenhower Correspondence, 1953-1955*, 191-192.

Eisenhower wanted to draw a line on communist expansion in Asia. If the Chinese crossed this line, he was prepared to eliminate China's capacity to wage war and conduct subversive activity throughout Asia even if that meant war with the Soviet Union. By raising the stakes in Asia so high, Eisenhower believed that the Soviet Union would choose national interest over communist ideology. The Soviet Union would be forced to back off in its commitment to China based on the Sino-Soviet Treaty or face the prospect of a global thermonuclear war.

Eisenhower clearly articulated an American foreign policy of brinkmanship based on unchanging moral principles, inflexible and tough, against both the Chinese and the Soviets.<sup>106</sup> In a reply to Eisenhower on February 15, 1955, Churchill pointed out that the coastal islands legally remained part of China and therefore could not be a cause for war. Churchill and Eden, who assisted Churchill in the writing of this particular letter, made the case against Eisenhower based on international law and then added that a war to keep Quemoy and Matsu under Chiang Kai-shek could not be defended in Great Britain's current political climate.<sup>107</sup> Churchill argued that Formosa could easily be defended by U.S. naval and air forces. Furthermore, Chiang Kai-shek should be persuaded to remove

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<sup>106</sup> See also Bennett C. Rushkoff, "Eisenhower, Dulles and the Quemoy-Matsu Crisis, 1954-1955," *Political Science Quarterly* 96, no. 3 (Autumn 1981), 473. "In the message to Churchill, however, the president stated explicitly that because it 'would destroy the reason for the existence of the Nationalist forces on Formosa' the capture of Quemoy and Matsu by the communists would bring about the surrender of Taiwan soon afterwards. While he have purposely exaggerated the importance of these islands in order to gain Churchill's support for what many British thought to be an aggressive American policy, Eisenhower clearly believed that the security of Taiwan would be seriously threatened by the loss of the offshore positions."

<sup>107</sup> Message from Winston Churchill to Dwight D. Eisenhower on February 15, 1955, FO 800/787, Far East, 1955, Avon Papers. "But a war to keep the coastal islands for Chiang would not be defensible here."

his military forces from the indefensible coastal islands.<sup>108</sup> Churchill made Britain's case that the offshore islands should be evacuated by the nationalist Chinese.

Eisenhower expressed his extreme displeasure with British policy in a lengthy letter to Churchill on February 18, 1955: "It would surely not be popular in this country if we became involved in possible hostilities on account of Hong Kong or Malaya, which our people look upon as colonies, which to us is a naughty word. Nevertheless, I do not doubt that, if the issue were framed in this way, we would be at your side."<sup>109</sup>

Eisenhower openly attacked what he perceived to be British hypocrisy on the subject and the British failure to take the Chinese threats seriously enough.<sup>110</sup> Yet, the British did not budge. Churchill believed that the communists had successfully divided the West with its propaganda over Quemoy and Matsu. He had earlier told the cabinet on February 15, 1955, "Peking's threats to seize Formosa by force were idle words: in fact it would be quite impossible for the Chinese communists to mount an effective attack against Formosa in the face of United States opposition."<sup>111</sup> He thought it a preposterous idea that China could take Formosa.

On February 19, 1955, Churchill wrote to Eden, "The Soviets, it seems to me, are

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<sup>108</sup> Message from Winston Churchill to Dwight D. Eisenhower on February 15, 1955, FO 800/787, Far East, 1955, Avon Papers. "He deserves the protection of your shield but not the use of the sword."

<sup>109</sup> Boyle, ed., *The Churchill-Eisenhower Correspondence, 1953-1955*, 198.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 197. "I am increasingly led to feel it would be dangerous to predicate our thinking and planning on the assumption that when the Chinese communists talk about their resolve to take Formosa, this is just 'talk,' and that they really would be satisfied with the coastal islands. I suspect that it is the other way around. What they are really interested in is Formosa-and later on Japan- and the coastal islands are marginal. They do not want to have another Chinese Government in their neighborhood, particularly one which has military power and which poses a threat to their center if ever they attack on their flanks."

<sup>111</sup> Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill: Never Despair 1945-1965*, 1092.

playing a dangerous game if they are stimulating communist China to talk big about Formosa. They are quite right in thinking that this provokes the Americans into an awkward and unhandy policy which loses them support in Britain and Europe. They are quite wrong if they think the consequences will divide the free world, or be very agreeable to China should they go too far.”<sup>112</sup> In a sense, Churchill, not Eisenhower, proposed a “middle path” by suggesting that the United States force Chiang Kai-shek to give up the coastal islands in favor of a promise by the communists not to take Formosa or the Pescadores Islands. Churchill and Eden, acting as mediators between East and the West, continued to lose influence with their powerful ally.

Near the end of his second administration, Churchill appeared completely powerless to influence American foreign policy and so transatlantic relations deteriorated irreparably. Some historians have argued that “his summit diplomacy led to rising American mistrust of the idiosyncrasy and lack of reliability of its British ally. Thus, paradoxically, during Churchill’s peacetime government, the anticommunist and pro-American prime minister contributed to an increased international acceptance of coexistence with the Soviet world, while at the same time increasing the mistrust between

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<sup>112</sup> Letter from Winston Churchill to Anthony Eden on February 19, 1955, FO 800/ 787, Far East, 1955, Avon Papers. “They do not mean to let Japan go Red. I also feel they may easily get tired of being insulted by the Chinese communists. In this connection I send you a paper I had prepared of the abuse which Chiang and Chou En-lai, etc., are hurling at each other. I should have thought it was rather dangerous thing for Chou En-lai to say that he will in certain conditions wipe the aggressors, meaning the Americans, off the face of the earth.” See also Chang and Di, “The Absence of War in the U.S.-China Confrontation over Quemoy and Matsu in 1954-1955,” 1516. “Since the United States did not pose a genuine threat to China in Mao’s eyes, Beijing could continue to keep pressure on to split the allied camp and weaken the main enemy, the United States, without risking widespread conflict. As a Central Committee comment on British-Chinese relations put it, maintaining the campaign against Taiwan would ‘enlarge the contradiction between England and the United States’.”

Britain and the United States.”<sup>113</sup> Churchill, at age eighty, found himself fighting Eden, the Americans, the Soviets, and the Chinese.

For his part, Dulles with Eisenhower’s permission predictably escalated the crisis with new warnings to the communist Chinese.<sup>114</sup> In a news conference on March 16, Eisenhower suggested that tactical nuclear weapons would be used in the Far East if war broke out:

Charles von Fremd of CBS asked him to comment on Dulles’s assertion that in the event of war in the Far East, ‘we would probably make use of some tactical small atomic weapons.’ Eisenhower was unusually direct in his answer: ‘Yes, of course they would be used.’ He explained, ‘in any combat where these things can be used on strictly military targets and for strictly military purposes, I see no reason why they shouldn’t be used just exactly as you would use a bullet or anything else.’ But would not the United States itself be destroyed in a nuclear war? Eisenhower replied, ‘I have one great belief; nobody in war or anywhere else ever made a good

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<sup>113</sup> Klaus Larres and Kenneth Osgood, eds., *The Cold War After Stalin’s Death: A Missed Opportunity for Peace?* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2006), 151.

<sup>114</sup> Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Vol. 2 The President, 1952-1969*, 239. “On March 12, 1955, Dulles said in a speech that the United States had ‘new and powerful weapons of precision which can utterly destroy military targets without endangering unrelated civilian centers.’ Three days later, he was even more specific, saying that the United States was prepared to use tactical atomic weapons in case of war and the Formosa Straits. This was a clear and unambiguous threat, much clearer than those Dulles and Eisenhower had made against the Chi Coms two years earlier with regard to Korea. Dulles cleared his statement with the president before making it. Inevitably, it set off an uproar within the U.S. and throughout the world.” See also *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954. Volume II, China*, (Washington, D.C. Dept. of State, 1986, 336-337. Memorandum of Conversation Between the President and the Secretary of State, March 6, 1955. “The President indicated his agreement with me that, under present conditions, we should help to support these two coastal positions. I said that this would require the use of atomic missiles. The President said that he thoroughly agreed with this, and, indeed, he suggested my putting into my proposed speech a paragraph indicating that we would use atomic weapons as interchangeable with conventional weapons.” See also H.W. Brands, “The Age of Vulnerability: Eisenhower and the National Insecurity State,” *The American Historical Review* 94, no. 4 (October 1989): “Indeed, Dulles went so far as to characterize war as ‘a question of time rather than a question of fact’ and he concurred with Pentagon predictions that such a conflict would quickly lead to the use of nuclear weapons. Preparing for the worst, Eisenhower directed the military to set war plans in motion. The Joint Chiefs responded by giving the commander of the U.S. Seventh Fleet authority to conduct reprisals against mainland installations in the event of attacks on American ships and by ordering the Strategic Air Command to begin, on an ‘urgent basis’ target selection for an ‘enlarged atomic offensive’ against the People’s Republic of China.”



decision if he was frightened to death. You have to look facts in the face, but you have to have the stamina to do it without just going hysterical.<sup>115</sup>

On March 17, 1955, Vice President Nixon also endorsed the use of nuclear weapons.<sup>116</sup> Admiral Robert B. Carney, Chief of Naval Operations, added to the growing crisis by tipping off the national press that the United States might take out China altogether. “On March 25, 1955, Admiral Carney briefed correspondents at a private dinner. He said the president was considering acting militarily on an all-out basis ‘to destroy Red China’s military potential and thus end its expansionist tendencies.’”<sup>117</sup>

Gordon H. Chang wrote:

Carney said he himself expected war to break out by April 15, the start of the Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung, Indonesia. Eisenhower was furious with Carney’s disclosure, but he privately agreed that Carney might be right about the need for the United States to fight, ‘because the Red Chinese appear to be completely reckless, arrogant, possibly overconfident, and completely indifferent as to human losses.’ As Carney had revealed, the military was planning extensive nuclear attacks on China.<sup>118</sup>

By taking out China, all the intractable problems in the Far East might be eradicated.

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Gordon H. Chang, “To the Nuclear Brink: Eisenhower, Dulles, and the Quemoy and Matsu Crisis,” *International Security* 12, no. 4 (Spring 1988), 108. “On March 17 in Chicago, Vice President Richard Nixon echoed the president, stating that ‘tactical atomic weapons are now conventional and will be used against the targets of any aggressive force’ He warned China against making belligerent moves. These references were meant to deter the communists as much as to prepare the American people for nuclear warfare.”

<sup>117</sup> Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Vol. 2 The President, 1952-1969*, 240.

<sup>118</sup> Chang, “To the Nuclear Brink,” 111-112.

On March 29, 1955, Eisenhower wrote his last letter to the departing Prime Minister Churchill about the Quemoy and Matsu crisis and the marked differences between the United States and Great Britain:

Although we seem always to see eye to eye with when we contemplate any European problem, our respective attitudes towards similar problems in the Orient are frequently so dissimilar as to be almost mutually antagonistic... The conclusion seems inescapable that these differences come about because we do not agree on the probable extent in the importance of further communist expansion in Asia. In our contacts with New Zealand and Australia, we have the feeling that we encounter a concern no less acute than ours; but your government seems to regard communist aggression in Asia as of little significance to the free world's future.<sup>119</sup>

In this lengthy letter to Churchill, Eisenhower expanded on his view that the loss of Quemoy and Matsu could lead to the loss of Formosa and possibly to the loss of the Philippines and the rest of the Far East. Eisenhower pointedly refused to put a lot of pressure on Chiang to remove his troops from Quemoy and Matsu. The United States and Great Britain continued to quarrel on this issue.

Another area of difference between the two countries included a proper understanding of when SEATO should be implemented. Laos had asked John Foster Dulles for reassurance that the Manila Pact would come into effect if the communist Chinese or Viet Minh entered their country. Dulles reassured the Laotians that the United States would pursue this under the Manila Pact. At the same time, the British and the French assured the Laotians that they would not intervene under SEATO provisions under any circumstances. Eisenhower coldly reminded Churchill, "As a result, we have a

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<sup>119</sup> Boyle, ed., *The Churchill and Eisenhower Correspondence, 1953-1955*, 204. Message from Dwight D. Eisenhower to Winston Churchill, March 29, 1955.

situation in which the communists, in the affected areas of Laos, grow stronger and stronger, and we face a possibility of ultimately losing that entire territory to the communists, just as we lost North Vietnam.”<sup>120</sup> The implication could not be clearer, the Western allies had not lived up to their agreements and communism could completely takeover the Far East, particularly Indochina. Eisenhower continued,

We have come to the point where every additional backward step must be deemed a defeat for the Western world. In fact, it is a triple defeat. First, we lose a potential ally. Next we give to an implacable enemy another recruit. Beyond this, every such retreat creates in the minds of the neutrals the fear that we do not mean what we say when we pledge our support to people who want to remain free. We show ourselves fearful of the communistic brigands and create the impression that we are slinking along in the shadows, hoping that the beast will finally be satiated and cease his predatory tactics before he finally devours us. So the third result is that the morale of our friends crumbles.<sup>121</sup>

He harshly denounced British appeasement in the Far East.

Eisenhower’s alleged ambiguous and deceptive diplomacy on Quemoy and Matsu could have easily led to a nuclear war over two strategically insignificant Chinese coastal islands. The fact that no one knew whether Eisenhower would use nuclear weapons led not only to a major crisis between the United States and China, but more important a major division between the United States and Great Britain. Eisenhower’s crisis management allowed him to keep his options open, but at the cost of a possible third world war and the destruction of transatlantic relations. While flexibility may have played an important role in ending the Second World War, in the case of Quemoy and

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 205.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 206. Message from Dwight D. Eisenhower to Winston Churchill, March 29, 1955.

Matsu, it may very well have led to disaster. The fact that no one knew precisely how Eisenhower would react to an invasion of Quemoy and Matsu, literally could have ended the world. Through a bumbling misstatement, Eisenhower might have caused the Chinese to respond, thus setting off a chain of events that could have ended in a tragic cataclysm.

Unquestioningly, then, the evidence clearly indicates that Eisenhower never bluffed about atomic warfare, but intended to use nuclear weapons, if in his mind military necessity required their use. He often rejected the advice of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Congress, the British, and other allies. He seriously contemplated using atomic bombs in North Korea and China if the Korean War continued to be a stalemate.

With regard to Indochina, John Foster Dulles warned China of “massive retaliation.” In March 1954, Dulles proposed “United Action” as a joint British-American military operation to save the French in Indochina. Admiral Radford proposed, in “Operation Vulture,” to relieve the Vietminh siege of Dien Bien Phu by dropping three atomic bombs. According to French President Bidault, Dulles offered to give two atomic bombs to the French in order to rescue French forces at Dien Bien Phu.

With the fall of Dien Bien Phu, Eisenhower ordered preparations for nuclear strikes against China and the Soviet Union and even more provocatively, he shut down American negotiations at the Geneva Conference. Eden fully deserved the credit for negotiating the peace accords at the Geneva Conference over the profound objections of the Americans. With regard to Quemoy and Matsu, Eisenhower argued aggressively against Churchill and Eden concerning the necessity and the utility of nuclear weapons.

In a press conference on March 16, 1955, he agreed with his Secretary of State that tactical atomic weapons would be used against China in the event of a war. On March 25, 1955, Admiral Carney warned that the Pentagon had plans to “take out” China. Under the threat of nuclear warfare, Chou En-lai reduced the tensions between the United States and China by making peaceful statements at the Bandung Conference effectively ending the crisis in the Formosa Straits. The shelling of Quemoy and Matsu ended on May 1, 1955.

The ultimate question is why Eisenhower did not follow through on his military plans to wage war on China and eliminate the Chinese threat to Asia and rollback communism? Some historians have argued that the threat of war in Asia and the president’s nuclear threats could never be credible, and this led to the demise of brinksmanship. Others have portrayed Eisenhower, behind the scenes, as a master mind and a model of balance and restraint. These depictions of Eisenhower are demonstrably false. The key to Eisenhower’s actions can be seen in the context of his transatlantic relations with Churchill. Eisenhower, with Churchill’s acquiescence, felt free to threaten China with an expanded war and nuclear weapons in order to end the Korean War. He also sought and obtained Churchill’s cooperation in the possible overthrow of President Syngman Rhee of South Korea, in order to obtain a Korean armistice. At the same time, Churchill and Eisenhower agreed to “Operation Ajax,” the military overthrow in 1953 of Mossadegh in Iran. Having received a green light from Churchill, Eisenhower acted vigorously and ruthlessly in carrying out both overt and covert operations. Yet, inevitably Eisenhower and Churchill clashed on the internationalization of the Indochina

War and the importance of the Geneva Conference. Churchill, in effect, vetoed Eisenhower's plans, thus forcing Eisenhower into unilateral military positions that he could not sustain on the global stage. Churchill, allowed for American bellicosity on Formosa, but refused to wage a global thermonuclear war over Quemoy and Matsu. Only later, during his 1956 campaign for the presidency, did Eisenhower promote the mythology of his waging peace and hid the dark reality of his foreign policies from both journalists and historians.

## CHAPTER 5

### COVERT BRINKSMANSHIP: IRAN AND GUATEMALA

In the Cold War, Eisenhower and Churchill sat like Olympian gods, bypassing Congressional and Parliamentary oversight, while deciding the fate of nations. As the leaders of the transatlantic alliance, they agreed to promote stable anti- communist military dictators over reform-minded democrats in both Iran and Guatemala. Anti- communism triumphed over the idea of promoting democracy, social justice, and the principles of international law. The consequences of this policy can be seen in the Bay of Pigs, Operation Mongoose, the Cuban Missile Crisis, Vietnam, and Iran-Contra Scandal. By engaging in secret wars that were hidden from the public, they set a dangerous precedent for the future of the Cold War and transatlantic diplomacy.

#### 5.1 Iran

After the Second World War, Iran remained an important battleground between East and West. The future of Iran in the early twentieth century depended on the fate of British colonialism and the influence of communism in the country. Historian Barry Rubin has written, “In the early 1950s the British Embassy in Tehran was a gigantic compound, covering sixteen city blocks of lovingly landscaped ground. Nearby was the Russian Embassy, an only slightly less impressive expanse surrounded by a high brick

wall. By contrast the American Embassy was tiny.”<sup>1</sup> Great Britain maintained a powerful sphere of influence throughout the Middle East. The Soviets promoted Arab nationalism in order to weaken British influence in the region. The United States opposed Soviet expansionism and tolerated British colonialism.

In 1951, in the Iranian Parliament, *the Majlis* elected a leading nationalist, Mohammad Mossadegh, to be their Prime Minister. In January 1952, *Time* named him “Man of the Year,” explaining, “There were millions inside and outside of Iran whom Mossadegh symbolized and spoke for, and whose fanatical state of mind he had helped to create. They would rather see their own nations fall apart than continue their present relations with the West...He is not in any sense pro-Russian, but he intends to stick to his policies even though he knows they might lead to control of Iran by the Kremlin.”<sup>2</sup> He championed Iranian nationalism and forced the British out of Iran.

Ironically, Iran’s communist Tudeh Party did not support Mossadegh in his struggle to nationalize Iranian oil and eliminate British economic interests in the country. A nationalist, Mossadegh proved antagonistic to the communists, who linked their own interests to the Soviet Union. Iraj Iskandan, a Tudeh Party leader, explained in 1952 that “Mossadegh is fighting for the nationalization of Iranian oil, but the American imperialists are backing his movement, which means that they are guiding it. And so we drew the incorrect conclusion that the communists should not support the nationalist

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<sup>1</sup> Barry Rubin, *Paved With Good Intention: The American Experience and Iran* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 54.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.



movement.”<sup>3</sup> The Tudeh Party should have supported the nationalization of oil for strictly ideological reasons since the elimination of British influence in Iran strongly benefitted the Soviet Union.

The nationalization of Iranian oil in 1951 deeply traumatized the British government. This act had enormous political and economic repercussions. If the British government wanted to gain back its interest in Iranian oil, it needed at least the moral assistance of the American government. The Truman administration refused to support British ambitions, including the overthrow of the Mossadegh government, solely because of their loss of oil revenues. By the fall of 1952, the new Churchill government, taking a different approach from the previous Labour Government, warned Truman and Acheson of the great danger of Iran falling to communism and thus being dominated by the Soviet Union.

British intelligence officials alerted the United States to the significant dangers of communist influence in Iran in November 1952. Christopher Montague (CM) Woodhouse, a British intelligence officer who had previously worked in the British Embassy in Tehran, argued: “Not wishing to be accused of trying to use the Americans to pull British chestnuts out of the fire, I decided to emphasize the communist threat in Iran rather than the need to recover control of the oil industry. I argued that even if a

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<sup>3</sup> Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 323. See also Cosroe, Chaqeri, “Did the Soviets Play a Role in Founding the Tudeh Party in Iran?” *Cahiers du Monde* 40, no. 3 (July-Sept. 1999), 525. “The biggest challenge the Tudeh faced was when it opposed Iran’s national democratic movement under Mossadegh for the nationalization of Iranian petroleum industry, which had been in the hands of the British since the beginning of the century. The Tudeh’s ferocious opposition to Mossadegh and labeling him an ‘American stooge’ - no doubt a line recommended by its Soviet mentor- cost the party an enormous price, identifying it increasingly with Soviet interests in Iran.”

settlement of the oil dispute could be negotiated with Mossadegh, which was doubtful, he was still incapable of resisting a coup by the Tudeh Party, if it were backed by Soviet support.”<sup>4</sup> The British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) contended to the CIA that Iran needed a much stronger anti-communist leader than Mossadegh. This tactical shift by the British government, to attack the Iranian Government as a danger in the Cold War rather than to recover their oil revenues, would prove to be completely successful.

Mossadegh argued that Iran required more economic assistance from the United States. In early January 1953, he wrote President-elect Dwight D. Eisenhower to complain that the United States,

while on occasions displaying friendship for Iran, has pursued what appears to the Iranian people to be a policy of supporting the British government and the former company. In this struggle it has taken the side of the British government against that of Iran in international assemblies. It has given financial aid to the British government while withholding it from Iran and it seems to us it is given at least some degree of support to the endeavors of the British to strangle Iran with a financial and economic blockade.<sup>5</sup>

Mossadegh’s letter posed a serious dilemma for the new president: He could support Mossadegh’s nationalist agenda in Iran in the name of anti-colonialism and anti-communism, yet would risk alienating America’s closest and most important Western ally, Great Britain. The alternative, to prop up British colonialism, might doom

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<sup>4</sup> James A. Bill, “America, Iran, and the Politics of Intervention, 1951-1953,” in James A. Bill and Wm. Roger Louis, eds., *Mussadiq, Iranian Nationalism and Oil* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988), 280.

<sup>5</sup> Richard W. Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1979), 215.

American efforts to foster nationalist movements in the Middle East that promoted anti-communism.

Numerous plots by the Iranian military and foreign countries sought to bring down the Mossadegh government. Historian Nikki R. Keddie discovered that, “In late February 1953, General Fazlollah Zahedi, a former collaborator with Nazi Germany, was arrested for plotting with foreigners to overthrow the government. In March there were serious conflicts between Mossadegh and the Shah in which Mossadegh emerged victorious after large popular demonstrations in his favor.”<sup>6</sup> Zahedi would later be released by the Mossadegh government, and become a key participant, along with the Shah, in the Iranian revolution of August 1953 that removed Mossadegh as prime minister.

Secretary of State John Foster Dulles cautioned the National Security Council in March 1953 that Mossadegh completely dominated Iran. The great danger to the United States would be the possible fall of the Iranian government. Such an event, he warned, would constitute an open invitation for the Soviet Union to take over Iran and its oil assets. Dulles pointed out that the Soviets “would secure these assets and thus henceforth, be free of any anxiety about their petroleum situation. Worse still, if Iran succumbed to the communists there was little doubt that in short order the other areas of the Middle East, with some 60% of the world’s oil reserves, would fall into communist

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<sup>6</sup> Nikki R. Keddie, *Roots of Revolution: An Interpretive History of Modern Iran* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 138.

control.”<sup>7</sup> The Soviets could take over Iranian oil and possibly all of the Middle East and drastically change the global balance of power.

In this key NSC meeting on Iran, Vice President Richard M. Nixon predicted greater hostility from the Soviets even with the recent death of Stalin; he also promoted the idea that the Soviets might indeed take over Iran in a coup d'état. In fact, Nixon contended the situation in Iran could lead to world war. He asserted that Iran represented a truly dangerous state of affairs and concluded that the British seemed oblivious to the danger. Nixon maintained that the United States, rather than the Soviet Union, must influence events in Iran.<sup>8</sup>

Eisenhower also worried that if the Soviet Union moved against Iran, this action would lead to total war. The president insisted that if the U.S. government failed to move, it would be regarded as a “second rate power.”<sup>9</sup> “If, said the President, I had \$500 million of money to spend in secret, I would give \$100 million of it to Iran right now.”<sup>10</sup> Eisenhower sought to discuss Iran with both Dulles and Eden in order to discern what the

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<sup>7</sup> *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954, Vol. X, Iran 1951-1954*, Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1989, 693.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 698.

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

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

British thought could be done.<sup>11</sup> He believed, however, that unilateral action by the United States might be required in order to save Iran from the communists.<sup>12</sup>

In a message to Churchill on March 5, 1953, Eden related a detailed conversation he had recently had with President Eisenhower and Secretary of State Dulles:

Mr. Dulles said that he was certain that Mossadegh would turn down the latest Anglo-American offer and the President remarked that, in this event, he would like to send to Iran a man whom the Iranians had confidence, with authority to make the best arrangement he could to get the oil flowing again... He said the American people would never be brought to understand the need to make sacrifices in the Middle East and that the consequences of an extension of Russian control of Iran, which he regarded as a distinct possibility, would either involve the loss of the Middle East oil supplies or the threat of another world war. I suggested that Russian control of Iran, if it was ever achieved, would not necessarily involve the control of other Middle Eastern oil supplies, and that they could not benefit from Iranian oil resources but only deny them to the West where they were not needed any longer... I several times emphasized the effect on other countries of a bad agreement with Iran. While the President accepted this, he seemed obsessed by the fear of a communist Iran.<sup>13</sup>

Eisenhower and Dulles, unlike Eden, genuinely feared that Iran would become communist and subsequently fall into the control of the Soviet Union. By contrast, Eden believed that Mossadegh continued to play the great powers against each other in order to maintain his power in Iran.

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<sup>11</sup> Bill, "America, Iran, and the Politics of Intervention," 279. "American foreign policy makers were somewhat in awe of the British experience and expertise concerning Iran. Eden, for example, had read oriental languages at Oxford and had emphasized Persian as his first language of study and Arabic his second."

<sup>12</sup> *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954, Vol. X, Iran 1951-1954*, 699.

<sup>13</sup> Eden, *Full Circle*, 234-235.

Eisenhower and Eden did have a major point of agreement: the constant bribing of Mossadegh through promises of economic aid had grown tiresome. The British and the Americans really preferred a new leader in Iran. After his meeting with Eisenhower, Eden telegraphed Churchill, “The difficulty of the situation remains that the Americans are perpetually eager to do something. The President repeated this several times. . . For my part I had many times felt in the last two years that if we could just stay put for a while the chances of settlement would be improved.”<sup>14</sup> Eden once again counseled patience and diplomacy to both Churchill and Eisenhower. They soundly rejected his advice in favor of a policy of covert action, while Eden, seriously ill, and took a leave of absence from the Foreign Office through the fall of 1953.

Eisenhower and Churchill, through their subordinates, authorized the planning for “Operation Ajax,” the overthrow of Mossadegh, which began the American era of covert subversion of democratically elected governments. Historian H.W. Brands has noted, “Historians of U.S. covert operations have placed the anti-Mossadegh coup near the beginning of a long and checkered history of U.S. paramilitary warfare, assassination attempts, economic sabotage, and political subversion throughout the Third World.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid. 236.

<sup>15</sup> H.W. Brands, “The Cairo-Tehran Connection in Anglo-American Rivalry in the Middle East, 1951-1953,” *The International History Review* 11, no. 3 (August 1989), 434. See also Brands’s footnote 1 about books on the Iranian Crisis:

James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: The Tragedy of American-Iranian Relations* (New Haven, Conn., 1988), is the best survey. Also excellent is Barry Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions: The American Experience and Iran* (New York, 1980). Mark Hamilton Lytle, *The Origins of the Iranian-American Alliance, 1941-1953* (New York, 1987), touches on the 1950s but focuses on the previous decade, as does Bruce Robellet Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey, and Greece* (Princeton, N.J., 1980). David S. Painter, *Oil and the American Century: The Political Economy of U.S. Foreign Oil*

Both the United States and Great Britain employed their intelligence services to come up with a plan to overthrow the Iranian government. CIA plans called for a new Iranian government to arrange for a “fair” Anglo-Iranian oil agreement and continued opposition to the communist Tudeh Party, all under the Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi.

The CIA started planning a military coup against the Iranian government. The State Department and CIA notified Loy W. Henderson, U.S. Ambassador to Iran, and Roger Goiran, CIA Chief in Tehran, of this intent. On April 4, 1953, CIA Director Allen Dulles “approved a budget of \$1 million which could be used by the Tehran station in any way that would bring about the fall of Mossadegh.”<sup>16</sup> Both Eisenhower and Churchill clearly intended to intervene directly in the internal affairs of a sovereign nation.

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*Policy, 1941-1954* (Baltimore, 1986), concentrates on the oil factor. Wm. Roger Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East, 1945-1951: Arab Nationalism, the United States, and Postwar Imperialism* (Oxford, 1984), provides the British background but also includes considerable material on U.S. policy. An early rendering of the U.S. role in Mossadegh’s fall is Richard and Gladys Harkness, “The Mysterious Doings of the CIA,” *Saturday Evening Post*, 6 November, 1954, pp. 34-35. The CIA’s top officer for the Middle East and the organizer of Operation Ajax, Kermit Roosevelt gives the most complete account in *Counter-coup: The Struggle for the Control of Iran* (New York, 1979); C.M. Woodhouse, *Something Ventured* (London, 1982), describes his and Great Britain’s connections with the affair. For the Iranian context see Bill, *Eagle and Lion*; Richard W. Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran* (Pittsburgh, 1964, 1979); Nikki R. Keddie, *Roots of Revolution: An Interpretive History of Modern Iran* (New Haven, Conn., 1981); Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran: Between Two Revolutions* (Princeton, N.J., 1982); Sepher Zabih, *The Mossadegh Era: Roots of the Iranian Revolution* (Chicago, 1982); and Farhad Diba, *Mohammad Mossadegh: A Political Biography* (London, 1986). John Prado’s and Gregory Trevorton’s surveys of U.S. covert operations are, respectively: *Presidents’ Secret Wars: CIA and Pentagon Covert Operations Since World War II* (New York, 1986), and *Covert Operations: The Limits of Intervention in the Postwar World* (New York, 1987). Prados’s notes and bibliography and Trevorton’s notes provide convenient summaries of the literature of U.S. covert activities. John Ranelagh, *The Agency: The Rise and the Decline of the CIA* (New York, 1986) is also useful.

<sup>16</sup> Donald Newton Wilbur, *Clandestine Service History: Overthrow of Premier Mossadeq of Iran, November 1952-August 1953* (Washington D.C.: Central Intelligence Agency, Clandestine Service, 1969), 2-3.

The CIA certainly assumed that Mossadegh could be overthrown by covert action and the CIA and the British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) worked together in planning the overthrow of the Iranian government.<sup>17</sup> The important question for historians is, why did the British now support this covert operation? As historian William Roger Louis has written, “The answer can be summed up in one word: Churchill.”<sup>18</sup> He has contended that, “After Eden became ill, Churchill took on responsibility for foreign affairs” and changed the government’s course.<sup>19</sup> Churchill disdained timidity and authorized “Operation Boot.” Churchill initiated a covert military operation rather than endure a sustained diplomatic stalemate in Iran.

Anthony Eden’s illness prevented him from opposing this extremely risky plan. Historian James A. Bill has argued that, “Eden may have been outraged by the Iran act of nationalization, but he was clearly not willing to approve this kind of intelligence adventure. Ultimately, he did not have to. In April he underwent the first of three operations related to a serious gallbladder problem and did not return to the Foreign Office until October.”<sup>20</sup> In his absence, Churchill took over the Foreign Office and energetically supported plans for the Anglo-American intervention in Iran.

Churchill and Eisenhower, much more than their predecessors Attlee and Truman, determined to oppose the communist threat posed by both the Tudeh Party and an

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<sup>17</sup> Wilbur, *Clandestine Service History*, iii-iv.

<sup>18</sup> Wm. Roger Louis, “Mussadiq and the dilemmas of British imperialism,” in James A Bill and Wm Roger Louis, eds, *Mussadiq, Iranian Nationalism and Oil* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988), 252.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 253. Operation Boot was the British code name for Operation Ajax.

<sup>20</sup> James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 89-90.



expansionist Soviet Union. They both eagerly favored a covert operation that their predecessors had tried to avoid. The two leaders rationalized the necessity of direct intervention in Iran, a policy that completely contravened international law.<sup>21</sup> By the end of April, the CIA and SIS had settled on a coordinated plan.<sup>22</sup>

While Churchill and Eisenhower planned his overthrow, Mossadegh continued to plead for more economic assistance from the United States. On May 28, 1953, he wrote to Eisenhower:

The Iranian nation hopes that with the help and assistance of the American Government the obstacles placed in the way of the sale of Iranian oil can be removed and that if the American Government is not able to effect a removal of such obstacles, it can tender effect of economic assistance to enable Iran to utilize her other resources.... The exploitation of these resources would solve the present difficulties of the country. This, however, is impossible without economic aid.<sup>23</sup>

Mossadegh's plea proved futile as Kermit Roosevelt, CIA Chief of the Near East and Africa Division, completed his plan to overthrow Mossadegh. Before the State Department would approve Roosevelt's plan, though, it required assurances that the United States could provide sufficient economic aid to maintain an Iranian government headed by the Shah. The Department also insisted that the British government formally express "its intention to reach an early oil settlement with a successor Iranian government

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<sup>21</sup> Bill, "America, Iran, and the Politics of Intervention," 280.

<sup>22</sup> Wilbur, CIA, Appendix A, "Initial Operational Plan for TPAJAX as Cabled from Nicosia to Headquarters on June 1, 1953"

<sup>23</sup> Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran*, 215.

in the spirit of goodwill and equity.”<sup>24</sup> In other words, the British must promise to negotiate in good faith. John Foster Dulles and the State Department subsequently accepted the CIA plan.

Eisenhower finally responded to Mossadegh’s one-month-old plea for economic aid:

I fully understand that the government of Iran must determine for itself which foreign and domestic policies are likely to be the most advantageous to Iran and to the Iranian people... I am not trying to advise the Iranian government on its best interests. I am merely trying to explain why... the government of the United States is not presently in a position to extend more aid to Iran ... the United States government hopes to be able to continue to extend technical assistance and military aid on a basis comparable to that given during the past year. I note the concern reflected in your letter at the present dangerous situation in Iran and seriously hope that before it is too late the government of Iran will take such steps as are in its power to prevent further deterioration of that situation.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Wilbur, *Clandestine Service History*, v-vi. The British Government’s reply may be seen in CIA, Appendix C, “Foreign Office Memorandum of 23 July 1953 from British Ambassador Makins to Assistant Under Secretary of State Smith” “Her Majesty’s Government have noted the State Department’s views as got out in a report on the conversation between Mr. Byroade and Mr. Bealey on 7 July, and have much sympathy for them. The overriding consideration is that the whole question of compensation must be left to the impartial arbitration of an international tribunal. Furthermore the terms of any future arrangements must be such as not to appear to provide a reward for the tearing up of contractual obligations or to disturb the pattern of world oil prices. Subject to this Her Majesty’s Government are prepared to go to the utmost help...with the problem of presenting an agreement to the public’ locally. They are also convinced that the Company, who have not been consulted, will adopt a generous attitude as regards methods and duration of payments as regards any compensation awarded to them. The answers therefore to the specific questions raised in the report from Washington Embassy are as follows: (a) The United Kingdom can do without this oil, although it would be an advantage to have it flowing into its traditional markets (the UK) once more. Her Majesty’s Government are, however, anxious to dispose of the dispute which poisons their relations with the country concerned and is a disturbing element in the area as a whole. They would therefore ‘be ready to cooperate’ with a new government in trying to reach an agreement, provided that the principles referred to in paragraph 2 above are safeguarded. (b) Her Majesty’s Government take the wording of the plan to mean that the initiative would be left to the future Prime Minister both as to the priority of an oil agreement in relation to his general programme and as to the nature of it. They hope he would agree to look at the February proposals, and they would of course ‘help him in regard to the presentation of the agreement’. If he had any alternative proposals, Her Majesty’s Government would consider them with equal sympathy, subject always to the principles mentioned above being safeguarded.”

<sup>25</sup> Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Mandate for Change*, 162.

Eisenhower's reply to Mossadegh was totally disingenuous. While he wrote that Iran's foreign and domestic policies must be left to the government of Iran, at the same time, he secretly authorized direct American interference in Iranian affairs. He used his well-known obfuscation to deceive Mossadegh about why the United States would not extend more economic aid to Iran. Eisenhower dishonestly stated that the U.S. government's policies with regard to technical assistance and military aid had not changed from the previous year, when he had already decided to reduce both technical assistance and military aid. Finally, he expressed hope that the government of Iran would take steps to prevent the further deterioration of the current situation. In his letter, Eisenhower deliberately misled the Iranian leader, obviously to protect and proceed with his covert plan.

The men instrumental in organizing Operation Ajax included Under-Secretary of State Walter Bedell Smith, CIA Director Allen Dulles, Secretary of Defense Charles Wilson, Kermit Roosevelt, Frank Wisner, and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles.<sup>26</sup> The CIA planned to use millions of dollars to bribe military personnel and incite riots in Tehran, leading to Mossadegh's ouster. Dulles expressed his enthusiasm for the plan by

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<sup>26</sup> Bill, "America, Iran, and the Politics of Intervention," 282. On Allen Dulles, Kermit Roosevelt, and Frank Wisner, "All were gregarious, intrigued by possibilities, liked to do things, had three bright ideas a day, shared the optimism of the stock market plungers, and were convinced that the CIA could find a way to reach it. They also tended to be white, Anglo-Saxon patricians from old families with old money, at least in the beginning, and they somehow inherited traditional British attitudes toward the colored races of the world- not the pukka sahib arrogance of the Indian Raj, but the mixed fascination and condescension of men like T.E. Lawrence, who were enthusiastic partisans of the alien cultures into which they dipped for a time and rarely doubted their ability to help, until it was too late."

proclaiming, “So this is how we get rid of that madman Mossadegh!”<sup>27</sup> In July 1953, the Department of State and the British Foreign Office authorized the project, and President Eisenhower approved giving the field command in Tehran to Kermit Roosevelt. Roosevelt would direct both the initial unsuccessful coup and the successful countercoup in Iran.<sup>28</sup>

Eisenhower firmly believed that Iran would soon be dominated by the Tudeh Party and that the Soviet Union would seize Iranian resources. He explicitly stated that Mossadegh “was moving closer and closer to the communists.”<sup>29</sup> Eisenhower wrote disdainfully of Mossadegh in his memoirs. He called him “a semi-invalid who, often clad in pajamas in public, carried on a fanatical campaign with tears and fainting fits and street mobs of followers, to throw the British out of Iran, come what might.”<sup>30</sup> The expulsion of the British greatly diminished Western influence in Iran, and Eisenhower believed that Mossadegh “was looking forward to receiving \$20 million from the Soviet Union, which would keep his treasury afloat for the next two or three months. By the end of July the Tudeh Party came out openly for Mossadegh, the Soviet Union sent a new and hopeful ambassador to Tehran, and the Shah, his life in danger was forced to take

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<sup>27</sup> Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Vol. 2 The President, 1952-1969*, 111.

<sup>28</sup> Wilbur, *Clandestine Service History*, vi.

<sup>29</sup> Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Vol. 2 The President, 1952-1969*, 112.

<sup>30</sup> Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Mandate for Change*, 163.

refuge.”<sup>31</sup> In his memoirs, Eisenhower applauded the military coup that took place in Iran without recording his own role in authorizing it.<sup>32</sup>

Whether the Shah would actively participate in the coup against Mossadegh remained the most important and unknown factor of Operation Ajax. The plan required that the Shah give orders for a new prime minister to replace Mossadegh, but he proved both cowardly and indecisive. In fact, the CIA used Ashraf Pahlavi, the Shah’s twin sister, to buck up the Shah’s nerves in ordering the dismissal of Mossadegh.<sup>33</sup>

The chronology of the Iranian Revolution of 1953 remains murky even today, but a top-secret unsigned British memorandum dated September 2, 1953 in the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series provides an interesting and detailed “Political Review of the Recent Crisis in Persia.”<sup>34</sup> Having signed off on final authorization of Operation Ajax, Eisenhower and Dulles created a vast political distance between Washington and Tehran. In a press conference on July 28, 1953, when asked about the increasing power of the Tudeh Party, Dulles stated: “Recent developments in Iran, especially the growing activity of the illegal communist party, which appears to be tolerated by the Iranian government have caused us concern. These developments make it more difficult for the United States to give assistance to Iran so long as its government

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 163.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 159-166.

<sup>33</sup> Wilbur, *Clandestine Service History*, vii-viii.

<sup>34</sup> See *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954, Vol. X, Iran 1951-1954*, 780-788.

tolerates this sort of activity.”<sup>35</sup> On August 4, 1953, in a speech to U.S. governors, Eisenhower stepped up the pressure on the Iranian government, suggesting that Mossadegh “moved toward getting rid of his parliament and of course he was in that move supported by the communist party of Iran.”<sup>36</sup> These beliefs caused Eisenhower and Dulles to further distance themselves from the Iranian government.

A military coup to overthrow Mossadegh seemed imminent by August 1953. General Norman Schwarzkopf, former advisor to the Persian Gendarmerie, had probably discussed with the Shah the full details of a military coup d'état.<sup>37</sup> This first plan for a coup unfortunately had been leaked by communist sympathizers in the Iranian military to the Tudeh press on August 8, 1953.<sup>38</sup> On August 11, 1953, the Shah and Queen took a vacation at Ramsar on the Caspian Sea. From there, on August 13, 1953, the Shah issued a decree removing Mossadegh as Prime Minister and replacing him with General Fazlollah Zahedi. This order came from Ramsar to Tehran by way of Colonel Nasiri of the Imperial Guards.

The Tudeh press announced further details about the upcoming military coup on August 14, helping Mossadegh plan for counter military action. On August 15, 1953, Colonel Nasiri delivered the Shah's message to Mossadegh replacing him as prime minister. Shortly after his message was sent, Mossadegh had Colonel Nasiri placed under house arrest. This first military coup failed due to leaks in the Iranian army, most

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 740.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 741 n 3.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 781.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 782.

likely originating from communist sympathizers. On August 16, 1953, as a result of the failed coup, the Shah fled to Baghdad.<sup>39</sup>

Numerous anti-Shah demonstrations took place in Tehran on August 17, 1953. The protestors contended that by fleeing the country, the Shah had, in actuality, abdicated the throne and therefore a new Iranian Republic should be established. Mossadegh's opposition, in contrast, believed that the Shah had legally replaced Mossadegh with General Zahedi as prime minister, and therefore he legally represented the government. A second coup that sought the ouster of Mossadegh occurred just as the American Ambassador Loy Henderson returned to Tehran. The next day, the Tudeh Party tipped off Mossadegh of an imminent coup and requested 10,000 rifles to defend his rule. The Shah, in the meantime, fled Baghdad for the much safer and more luxurious exile of Rome.<sup>40</sup>

Two days later, a final coup started at 8 AM with a crowd of three thousand men holding sticks and clubs. The ruffians appeared to have royalist sympathies, but most likely were paid by the CIA. As the demonstrators roamed the streets, the police chief gave orders that they were not to be arrested.<sup>41</sup> The Iranian police force actively supported the protests, while Mossadegh ordered the military to disperse the crowds. Instead, diverse segments of Iranian society -- businessmen, police, and the military-- joined in the demonstrations against Mossadegh. By late afternoon, General Zahedi had proclaimed himself the new prime minister. This new coup succeeded because it had

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 782.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 783-784.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 784.

been well-planned, kept secret, and was funded by the United States. The new Iranian government detained Mossadegh the next day and on August 22, 1953, the Shah of Iran returned to Tehran and received a hero's welcome.<sup>42</sup>

In a prescient memorandum of September 2, 1953, an unknown British analyst warned about the success of Operation Boot and the Shah's problems with the progressive elements in Iran:

General opinion was that recent events have confirmed that the monarchy was still popular in Persia, because of its historic traditions. It was considered to be the symbol of national independence and sovereignty and the bulwark against communism. The future popularity of the Shah was generally agreed to be dependent on whether he acted as a strict constitutional monarch, or whether he resorted to his previous practices, which made him so unpopular in recent years. It should not be forgotten that measures adopted by Dr. Mossadegh to restrict the Shah's interference in the army had the universal support of the people, and that any future infringement of the Constitution by the Shah would be met by the opposition of all progressive elements in the country.<sup>43</sup>

The United States and Great Britain maintained that Iran had been saved from a communist takeover. "The general feeling in Tehran among influential people was one of jubilation that the U.S.A. should have come to the country's rescue when Dr. Mossadegh was about to deliver it to the Tudeh Party."<sup>44</sup> Any fears about the Shah as a dictator would be left for the future.

The mastermind of Operation Ajax, Kermit Roosevelt, met with Lord Salisbury, the Acting British Foreign Secretary, and also with the ailing Prime Minister, Winston

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 785-786.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 786.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.



Churchill, on August 26, 1953. Roosevelt recalled that the Shah had favored reconciliation with Great Britain and the United States, “The past is past. I don’t intend to fight over the old issues. I recognize that Great Britain is anti-communist, which is what I care most about, and also that she is strong in this part of the world. It is essential that Persia should have good relations with her’.”<sup>45</sup> The Shah hoped that a fair and equitable oil deal would be settled, in time, with the United States, Great Britain, and Iran.

Later that afternoon, Roosevelt met with Churchill at 10 Downing Street. Recovering from his stroke of the previous June, Churchill appeared physically weak. Roosevelt remembered that “He had great difficulty in hearing; occasional difficulty in articulating; and apparent difficulty in saying to his left. In spite of this he could not have been more kind personally nor more enthusiastic about the operation.”<sup>46</sup> Churchill told Roosevelt Operation Ajax was “the finest operation since the end of the war.”<sup>47</sup> He informed Roosevelt that financial aid to Iran should not depend on the immediate restoring of diplomatic relations or a quick oil deal. Roosevelt reported, “He commented that the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) had really ‘fouled things up’ in the past few years and that he was determined that they should not be allowed to foul things up any further.”<sup>48</sup> Churchill further stated: “Our operation had given us a wonderful and

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Wilbur, *Clandestine Service History*, 81.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 82.

unexpected opportunity which might change the whole picture in the Middle East.”<sup>49</sup> He took great pride in the SIS for helping the CIA in overthrowing Mossadegh. Churchill and Eisenhower had once again used covert measures to get their way in the Cold War. The transatlantic partnership reached its zenith during Mossadegh’s overthrow in August 1953.

## 5.2 Guatemala

Eisenhower’s patronizing view of Central American nations in the 1950s could be seen in his attitude and his policies. As historian Stephen G. Rabe has pointed out, Eisenhower once told Mexican Ambassador Robert Hill, “You know, they’re rascals at heart. You can’t trust them and so forth, but they’re lovable types, and you know, I sure would like to get away on holiday and go back to relive that youth of mine in the military, those happy days in Mexico.”<sup>50</sup> This patronizing attitude especially colored American foreign policy with regard to Guatemala.

Selwyn Lloyd, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, warned Winston Churchill on May 9, 1953, “Guatemala is in effect now a communist country, and her attitude towards us is unfriendly. We are maintaining troops in British Honduras specifically as a deterrent to armed action on the part of Guatemala.”<sup>51</sup> The British feared a communist Guatemala would be a possible threat to neighboring British Honduras. Secretary of State Dulles also believed that the United States should maintain a strong anti-communist

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>50</sup> Stephen G. Rabe, *Eisenhower and Latin America: The Foreign Policy of Anticommunism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1988), 26-27.

<sup>51</sup> Message from Selwyn Lloyd on Arms to Guatemala to Winston Churchill on May 9, 1953, FO 800/802, Latin America 1952-1954, Avon Papers.

stance in Latin America. Dulles favored recognizing the accomplishments of Latin Americans whenever possible, “Such efforts, Dulles told Eisenhower, were ‘a very good way of doing things’, for ‘you have to pat them a little and make them think that you are fond of them’.”<sup>52</sup> Eisenhower and Dulles obviously had an extraordinarily condescending attitude towards Central America.

The fundamental issue in U.S. diplomacy toward Latin America involved the question of whether or not the United States should risk promoting democracy and possibly political instability over anti-communist but stable military dictators. The danger of promoting democracy in Latin America meant the real possibility of political, economic, and cultural turmoil. John Drier, U.S. Ambassador to the OAS, stated, “Secretary Dulles would’ve been happy to see ‘flourishing little democracies’ in Latin America, but ‘I think that he was somewhat inclined to feel that governments which contributed to a stability in the area were preferable to those which introduced instability and social upheaval, which would lead to communist penetration.”<sup>53</sup> The U.S. government preferred stable military dictators to unstable democracies in Latin America.

Under Eisenhower and Dulles, anti-communist policies supporting military dictators in Latin America allowed little room for concern about the niceties of political and civil liberties. A well-educated lawyer trained to follow the law, Dulles had no problem or scruple in directly violating treaties or organizational commitments in order to keep communism out of the Western Hemisphere. Thus Eisenhower and Dulles

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<sup>52</sup> Rabe, *Eisenhower and Latin America*, 33.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

demanded in 1954 the overthrow of the democratically-elected President Jacobo Arbenz of Guatemala.<sup>54</sup>

Eisenhower and Dulles initiated the overthrow of Arbenz only months after the successful removal of Mossadegh from Iran. Eisenhower, John Foster Dulles, Allen Dulles, and a few others kept the operation top secret. Historian Richard Immerman has written, “Any operative brought in on the project was sworn to secrecy. In all likelihood, a good deal of the discussion took place in Eisenhower’s study late in the afternoon, when the president would meet with the secretary over cocktails, or at the Sunday lunch that Eleanor Dulles hosted for her two brothers each week.”<sup>55</sup> The secrecy of the planning allowed Eisenhower the option of plausible deniability, very important in the event that the operation failed and became public.

While no one can know the exact date and time this operation commenced, it is clear that “Operation PBSuccess” began after the success of Operation Ajax in Iran.

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 40-41. See also Richard H. Immerman, “Guatemala as Cold War History,” *Political Science Quarterly* 95, no. 4 (Winter 1980-81), 629-630. Footnote 1:

The most widely cited sources remains Ronald Schneider, *Communism in Guatemala, 1944-1954* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1958), although more recent studies such as Cole Blaiser, *The Hovering Giant: U.S. Responses to Revolutionary Change in Latin America* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1976) pp.151-77; Max Gordon, “A Case History of U.S. Subversion: Guatemala, 1954,” *Sciences and Society* 35 (Summer 1971): 129-55; and Stephen Schlesinger, “How Dulles Worked the Coup d’Etat,” *Nation* (28 October 1978), p. 425 draw on better data. Works depicting the intervention as a background episode include Walter LeFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945-1975*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1976), pp.159-61; and Joyce and Gabriel Kolko, *The Limits of Power: The World and United States Foreign Policy, 1945-1954* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), pp. 700-701. Representative exponents of the economic thesis are David Horowitz, *The Free World Colossus* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1965), pp. 163-86; and Richard J. Barnet, *The Intervention and Revolution* (New York: The World Publishing Co., 1968), pp. 229-36. The foremost example of treating the coup as a stage in the CIA’s development is David Wise and Thomas Ross, *The Invisible Government* (New York: Vintage Books, 1964), pp. 165-83.

<sup>55</sup> Richard H. Immerman, *The CIA in Guatemala: The Foreign Policy of Intervention* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982), 133-134.

Piero Gleijeses has written, “The decision was taken with little internal debate and a heartening unanimity among the few policymakers involved. Eisenhower reserved the right to grant or deny the final approval before H-hour, but this was standard procedure for operations of this nature.”<sup>56</sup> Subversion and the undermining of democratically elected governments had become a standard feature of U.S. foreign policy.

The paradox at the center of this particular operation was that the United States wanted to deny its involvement in the overthrow of Arbenz, while at the same time knowing that the operation really depended on Arbenz believing that the United States backed the operation to overthrow him. Eisenhower used psychological warfare against Arbenz. Strong condemnations of the Guatemalan government by State Department officials might reveal American intentions, while saying nothing about communism in Guatemala could also be perceived as unusual behavior by the State Department. Eisenhower and Dulles walked a fine line in their public pronouncements on Guatemala.<sup>57</sup>

The new U.S. Ambassador to Guatemala, John E. Peurifoy, arrived in November 1953 to “manage” the Guatemalan government. In his first meeting with Arbenz, Peurifoy bluntly indicated to him that communist elements in the Guatemalan government needed to be purged. Peurifoy later reported: “there appears no alternative to our taking steps to make more difficult for the continuation of his regime’, even though, in the short term, this might intensify communist control. ‘It seemed to me that the man

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<sup>56</sup> Piero Gleijeses, *Shattered Hope: The Guatemalan Revolution and the United States, 1944-1954* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), 243.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 247.

thought like a communist and talked like a communist, and if not actually one, would do until one came a long’.”<sup>58</sup> In January 1954, Peurifoy publicly communicated his views on Guatemala in an interview for *Time*: “Public opinion in the U.S. might force us to take some measures to prevent Guatemala from falling into the lap of international communism. We cannot permit a Soviet republic to be established between Texas and the Panama Canal.”<sup>59</sup> Peurifoy with these words brashly alerted the American public about the dangers of communism in Guatemala.

In a cabinet meeting in February 1954, Dulles claimed, “The major interest of the Latin American countries at this [Caracas] conference would concern economics whereas the chief United States interest is to secure a strong anti-communist resolution which would recognize communism as an international conspiracy instead of regarding it merely as an indigenous movement.”<sup>60</sup> Anti-communism in Latin America remained the highest priority of the U.S. government. Human rights and economic development were clearly secondary issues. Eisenhower refused to lose sleep over the possible nationalization of United Fruit Company. Instead, he worried about communism gaining a major foothold in Guatemala, then in all of Central America: “My God, Eisenhower told his cabinet, just think what it would mean to us if Mexico went communist!” He shook his head at the thought of that long, unguarded border, and all those Mexican communists to the south of it. To prevent the dominoes from falling, he was prepared to,

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<sup>58</sup> John W. Young, “Great Britain’s Latin American Dilemma: The Foreign Office and the Overthrow of ‘Communist’ Guatemala, June 1954,” *The International History Review* 8, no. 4 (Nov. 1986), 575.

<sup>59</sup> Immerman, *The CIA in Guatemala*, 138.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

and did, take great risks over tiny Guatemala.”<sup>61</sup> Eisenhower perceived Guatemala as the first domino to fall in Latin America!

At a meeting of the Organization of American States (OAS) in March 1954, Dulles successfully secured a resolution that vigorously condemned communism in the Western Hemisphere. The Declaration of Caracas was titled “Declaration of Solidarity for the Preservation of the Political Integrity of the American States against Communist Intervention.” It denounced communism as ‘alien intrigue and treachery’, the resolution concluded by proposing that communist domination or control of any country would justify ‘appropriate action in accordance with existing treaties’.<sup>62</sup> Guatemala dissented on the vote for the declaration at the OAS meeting. As a result, “in May, the State Department recommended specific OAS action against Guatemala, saying: ‘The contest is of crucial importance in the global struggle between free nations and the communist forces... what has happened in Guatemala is a part of Moscow’s global strategy.’<sup>63</sup> The State Department demonized Guatemala as under the control of the Kremlin.

Any direct link between Guatemala and the Kremlin remained unsubstantiated. Historian Richard Immerman argued, “Yet even President Eisenhower conceded that the expropriations were not conclusive proof. He wrote of Guatemala in his memoirs, ‘Expropriation in itself does not, of course prove communism; expropriation of oil and

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<sup>61</sup> Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Vol. 2 The President, 1952-1969*, 197.

<sup>62</sup> Immerman, “Guatemala as Cold War History,” 644. “Existing treaties referred implicitly to the 1947 Rio Pact, which called for a Meeting of Consultation of the Foreign Ministers of the Organization of American States to determine acceptable measures for the common defense in the event of aggression. The State Department began to solicit support for such a meeting.”

<sup>63</sup> Young, “Great Britain’s Latin American Dilemma,” 575.

agricultural properties years before in Mexico had not been fostered by communists.”<sup>64</sup>

Yet, this did not deter Eisenhower from taking action against Guatemala.

The Eisenhower administration considered Guatemala a communist refuge in Central America directed by the Kremlin to undermine U.S. interests in Latin America. The British Foreign Office sharply disagreed with what they considered the Americans’ unsophisticated, fearful analysis of Central America. British historian John Young wrote, “Officials at the Foreign Office, already annoyed at Washington’s simplistic view of events and its tendency to threaten Guatemala, were inclined to treat Guatemalan anti-Americanism as originating in more than mere communism. In particular, they held the United Fruit Company responsible for widespread discontent.”<sup>65</sup> Although the British did recognize the existing communist elements in the Guatemalan government, they preferred a much more nuanced view of the situation, rather than the stark black-and-white picture drawn by Washington.

Differences in the transatlantic partnership over Guatemala focused on two policies. The United States defended a strict naval blockade of Guatemala and also supported the ouster of the Arbenz government. Immerman wrote, “Nothing the Arbenz

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<sup>64</sup> Immerman, “Guatemala as Cold War History,” 636-637. “The prime illustration of this principle of guilt by association was the well-known ‘duck test’. In 1950 Richard C. Patterson, Jr., then ambassador to Guatemala but already declared persona non grata by the Arevalo government and recalled to Washington, explained in a speech how to uncover communists. His explanation is particularly instructive in that it makes explicit this ‘methodology’ and how it could be applied to detect communists and communist influences. ‘Many times it is impossible to prove legally that a certain individual is a communist; but for cases of this sort I recommend a practical method of detection—the ‘duck test’. The duck test works this way: suppose you see a bird walking around in a farm yard. This bird wears no label that says ‘duck’. But the bird certainly looks like a duck. Also, he goes to the pond and you notice he swims like a duck. Well, by this time you have probably reached the conclusion that the bird is a duck, whether he’s wearing a label or not.”

<sup>65</sup> Young, “Great Britain’s Latin American Dilemma,” 575-576.



government could say or do could shake Washington's preexisting beliefs. When Arbenz purchased arms from Czechoslovakia in a last minute attempt to defend the revolution against an impending invasion, Eisenhower's officials jumped to the conclusion that Guatemala's neighbors were in peril."<sup>66</sup> The British Foreign Office, keenly interested in maintaining good transatlantic relations, normally deferred to Washington on issues involving Central America. The British looked grimly on the American plan to search ships going to Guatemala, especially during peacetime. Indeed, the Foreign Office deemed the stopping of ships on the high seas as illegal, even possibly an act of war. If the U.S. Navy stopped a British ship, the British public and the Labor Party would certainly react vehemently against such an action.<sup>67</sup>

Reacting to U.S. policy, Eden and the Foreign Office looked-for a compromise with Dulles on the naval blockade of Guatemala. By May 31, 1954, a British cabinet paper proposed: "if Washington were willing to guarantee compensation, the British would put pressure on merchants to halt shipments and would try to persuade suspected vessels on the high seas to sail to a British-controlled port to be searched; ultimately they would even let the U.S. Navy search suspected British ships, on condition that Whitehall be notified in good time and permission be obtained in each case."<sup>68</sup> On June 2, 1953, British Ambassador Sir Roger Makins informed Dulles of this latest British proposal on the high seas. Dulles acknowledged that the United States might have to search a British

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<sup>66</sup> Richard H. Immerman, "Psychology," *The Journal of American History* 77, no. 1 (June 1990), 178.

<sup>67</sup> Young, "Great Britain's Latin American Dilemma," 577.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 578.

ship without warning. British historian John Young has written, “The Foreign Office was taken aback. Eden, hoping to make it quite clear to Dulles that the Americans ‘really will raise a row’ by searching British ships without permission, instructed Makins to see Dulles again. But in a second interview, on June 5, Dulles gave the same response: the Americans might have to search British ships without warning.”<sup>69</sup> This rebuff and bullying by Dulles genuinely shocked the British.

To the British Foreign Office, Dulles’s position on boarding neutral ships appeared as a serious breach of international law. Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, Ivone Kirkpatrick stated; “I have written a private letter to Sir R Makins asking him whether Mr. Dulles is going fascist. I can think of no other explanation.”<sup>70</sup> The British newspapers published stories on June 19, 1954, about the on-going nautical dispute between the United States and Great Britain. On June 21, 1954, Eden forcefully defended Great Britain’s naval policy on the high seas: “she condemned the sale of arms to Guatemala; that the Royal Navy in the West Indies would do all possible to prevent this; and that Great Britain would not allow her ships to be searched by the United States.”<sup>71</sup> Eden compellingly reasserted Great Britain’s rights on the high seas and unequivocally disputed U.S. policy.

Castillo Armas invaded Guatemala from Honduras on June 18, 1954, in an effort to overthrow Arbenz. The critical factor in the success of the CIA effort in Guatemala depended on U.S. air support. Even the ever secretive Eisenhower referred to the

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 578.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 579.

importance of air support in the removal of Arbenz in his memoirs. He gave Armas the planes he needed in order to successfully complete Operation PBSuccess. Historian Richard Immerman wrote: “Allen Dulles, on the other hand, informed the president that, with the planes, Castillo Armas chances of success were no greater than 20 percent. Without them, they were zero. In his own words, Eisenhower ‘knew from experience the important psychological impact of even a small amount of air support, our proper course of action-indeed my duty-was clear to me.’ He replaced the planes.”<sup>72</sup>

This contrasts sharply with President Kennedy’s decision-making at the Bay of Pigs. When Kennedy faced a similar situation, namely of providing U.S. air support to the Cubans at the Bay of Pigs, he declined to provide the requested air support and a fiasco ensued. Eisenhower later expressed nothing but contempt towards President Kennedy’s decision-making process during the Bay of Pigs. When faced with a similar situation, Kennedy fearing international condemnation stepped on the brakes. Consequently, he suffered a grievous defeat, while Eisenhower, knowingly breaking international law, stepped on the gas and persevered to victory. If an American president commits himself to a military action, Eisenhower firmly believed the U.S. government must be willing to provide the necessary military support to see it through successfully.<sup>73</sup>

The British and Americans continued to be alienated from each other on the conflicting issue of whether the United Nations or the Organization of American States

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<sup>72</sup> Immerman, “Psychology,” 168.

<sup>73</sup> Rabe, *Eisenhower and Latin America*, 60. “The president recalled that he warned his closest advisors that ‘if you at any time take the route of violence or support of violence... then you commit yourself to carry it through, and it’s too late to have second thoughts, not facing up to the possible consequences, when your midway in an operation.’”

should investigate the violence now occurring in Guatemala. The United States maintained that Guatemala suffered from a civil war, an issue outside the jurisdiction of the United Nations; thus, the Organization of American States should investigate. Eisenhower and Dulles could effectively manage the Organization of American States.

The British contended that a UN team should investigate the Guatemalan situation. On June 24, 1954, the British delegation at the United Nations backed a UN peace commission. Secretary of State Dulles sought the counsel of President Eisenhower on how to overcome the British proposal at the United Nations. Historian Young wrote: “The president took a hard line. He was prepared to overrun any opposition, if necessary to invoke United States’ UN veto, hitherto not used weapon, but one capable of grave harm to the UN organization. The US was ‘being too damned nice to the British on this,’ said Eisenhower. ‘The British expect us to give them a free ride... on Cyprus and yet they won’t even support us in Guatemala. Let’s give them a lesson’.”<sup>74</sup> Eisenhower’s slow burn on Guatemala would later develop into full outrage over Suez.

Eisenhower gave Dulles his marching orders to tell Lodge to block the British move in the United Nations. Dulles then called Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge at 9:55 AM on June 24, 1954:

Dulles: the president said he thinks you should let the British and French know that if they take independent line backing Guatemalan move in this matter, it would mean we would feel entirely free without regard to their position in relation to any other such matters as any of their colonial problems in Egypt, Cyprus, etc. If they feel they can take independent line, the counterpart will be that they must consider that we will be free

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<sup>74</sup> Young, “Great Britain’s Latin American Dilemma,” 583-584.

equally to be independent when any of the matters such as North Africa, Middle East, etc., comes up before the UN.

Lodge: I will do that.

Dulles: He (the President) wanted to avoid making it in the form of a threat but make it a clear understanding that if they don't take into account our needs and consideration in this matter, it will be a two-way street and they must accept it.

Lodge: Yes, I see. It's a terrible thing. I will get this to them. Will determine just when and how to do it.

Dulles: Use your own judgment as to the time.

Lodge: If there is an open split between British and French, Russians will be very much pleased. But we cannot put off a meeting much longer.

Dulles: Guatemala itself, as I understand it, is violating the terms of the Charter article 53 (2), I think. The whole status of regional organizations is at stake in this particular matter. That was the thing we fought for (Vandenberg and I) at San Francisco. The whole concept is being destroyed.

Lodge: No question about it. At the same time, I will have to have a meeting, probably tomorrow. If the British and the French pursue this, we will have an open split. I will try to keep agenda from being adopted. I put it to the Frenchman this morning, and he didn't like it at all. Thank you very much. I will be guided accordingly.<sup>75</sup>

Lodge did meet with Pierson Dixon, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the United Nations, and Henri Hoppenot, Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, "and told them bluntly that if Great Britain and France took an independent line on Guatemala, they need no longer count on US support in Egypt or Cyprus, Tunisia or Morocco; this was not a threat, he insisted, merely a statement of

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<sup>75</sup> Memo for Record: Phone Conversation between Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and UN Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge on June 24, 1954 at 9:55 AM, John Foster Dulles File June 1954 (1), Dulles-Herter Series Box No. 3, Ann Whitman File, Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953-61.

position.”<sup>76</sup> Dixon tried to argue that the British did not oppose an OAS oversight role, but if it failed they saw no problem with a UN investigation. “Lodge however ‘listened without much interest’ and professed not to understand the British arguments; if London wanted to oppose US policy they knew what the price would be.”<sup>77</sup> Lodge calculatingly stonewalled any UN investigation of Guatemala

Winston Churchill and Anthony Eden arrived in Washington on June 25, 1954, to discuss international affairs with Eisenhower and Dulles. While this Washington conference dealt with numerous problematic issues including relations with the Soviet Union, Indochina, Egypt, and the European Defense Community the real sticking point turned out to be Guatemala. Dulles told Makins “that Guatemala ‘might well be the touchstone of the Anglo-American alliance’, was now, even before reaching the White House, pressing Eden for full support.”<sup>78</sup> Undoubtedly, Dulles has been ordered to do so by Eisenhower.

Churchill once again came to the rescue of the Americans and completely rebuffed the policy of Eden, Dixon, and the Foreign Office. Guatemala should not be allowed to disrupt transatlantic relations. Churchill stated, “I’d never heard of this bloody place Guatemala until I was in my seventy-ninth year. We ought not to allow (it) to jeopardize our relations with the United States, for on them the safety of the world

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<sup>76</sup> Young, “Great Britain’s Latin American Dilemma,” 584.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

might depend.”<sup>79</sup> U.S. Representative to the United Nations Henry Cabot Lodge Jr. and Churchill had a conversation at the White House on June 26, 1954. As Lodge remembered it, “He said that he was not at all sympathetic with the communist government in Guatemala and, as a matter of fact, that he does believe that it would have been much better to have organized world peace on the basis of a few strong regional organizations, which might then choose representatives to a central world organization.”<sup>80</sup> Churchill exuberantly backed the American plan.

Minutes later, Lodge engaged in a similar conversation with Eden. Lodge thanked Eden for the abstention vote in the Security Council on Friday. Lodge recorded Eden’s reply, “It will mean a lot of trouble for me explaining that in the House of Commons.’ I said that it should not make too much trouble for him in as much as two minutes earlier I had been told by the Prime Minister himself that he longed favored strong regional organizations.”<sup>81</sup> British historian John Young has concluded that: “Ultimately it must be said that the Americans escaped from the Guatemalan crisis with astonishing success. Arbenz was overthrown, the communist menace of Latin America was defeated, and the full extent of the US role remained undiscovered.”<sup>82</sup> Churchill and Eisenhower had carefully defused the issue of Guatemala and Central America, while the on-going feud between Dulles and Eden continued.

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 585-586.

<sup>80</sup> Memorandum of Conversation between Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr. on June 26, 1954, Churchill-Eden Visit June 25-29, 1954 (1) File, Series Box No. 5, John Foster Dulles Papers, 1951-59, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Young, “Great Britain’s Latin American Dilemma,” 590.

Unlike Truman, Acheson, and Kennan, Eisenhower made the case for rolling back communism, regardless of international law. Dulles proclaimed that Guatemala was “the biggest success in the last five years against communism.”<sup>83</sup> President Eisenhower invited the CIA agents involved in the overthrow of Arbenz to the White House, “He joshed with them, wondering why they had let Arbenz escape. And he shook everyone’s hand, ending with Allen Dulles, and said: ‘Thanks Allen, and thanks to all of you. You’ve averted a Soviet beachhead in our hemisphere.’”<sup>84</sup> Eisenhower believed he had simply and successfully enforced the Monroe Doctrine.

New documentation, released by the CIA, shockingly reveals that the CIA planned assassinations. The State Department ruled that such plots would be counterproductive and even today the names of the people targeted for assassination remain classified.<sup>85</sup> The point is that once committed to military force, Eisenhower refused to allow these covert actions to fail. Failure was not an option. This president escalated events, allowed for a second coup in Iran, and pushed for planes to Colonel Armas in Guatemala. Could he have walked away from these actions had they failed? Eisenhower believed, as Karl Von Clausewitz, that battles are won or lost before they are fought.

In conclusion, it must be noted that U.S. policy on Iran and Guatemala set a dangerous pattern for the rest of the 1950s and beyond. The United States and Great

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<sup>83</sup> Rabe, *Eisenhower and Latin America*, 60-61.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 68. See also, Nick Cullather, *Secret History: The CIA’s Classified Account of its Operations in Guatemala, 1952-1954* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006).



Britain had learned from the tactics of covert activity and initiated a new era in which the transatlantic partnership ruthlessly engaged in political subversion, insurrections, rebellions, military coups, economic sabotage, economic disruptions, guerilla wars, and assassinations. These secret wars gave presidents of the United States and British prime ministers unprecedented and unlimited power. An American president could order the CIA to overthrow a democratically elected government anywhere in the world. A British prime minister could order MI6 to assassinate a troublesome Middle East leader without telling his cabinet or Foreign Office. Anything could be justified in fighting the communists in the Cold War; significantly, the general public was always to be kept in the dark.

## CHAPTER 6

### THE SUEZ CRISIS AND ECONOMIC BRINKSMANSHIP

Throughout 1956, Eden and Eisenhower became increasingly concerned with Soviet influence in the Middle East. Eden regarded Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser as a tool of the Soviet Union who wanted to undermine British political hegemony in the region. In his book *The Philosophy of the Revolution*, written in 1954, Nasser called for Egypt to take the lead in creating an Arab Islamic empire that would stretch from North Africa through the rest of the Middle East. He also advocated the complete destruction of the State of Israel.<sup>1</sup> While Eden viewed Nasser as a new Hitler or Mussolini, Eisenhower saw Nasser as an Arab leader fighting against British colonialism. For Eisenhower, the problem was not as black and white as it was for Eden. This difference in outlook explains the differences in strategy and tactics employed by the British and the Americans in dealing with the Suez Crisis.

During the Suez Crisis, Prime Minister Eden charged Eisenhower and Dulles with undermining British interests. He also authorized MI6, on numerous occasions, to assassinate Nasser.<sup>2</sup> President Eisenhower, having been made aware of British

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<sup>1</sup>See Gamal Abdel Nasser, *Egypt's Liberation: The Philosophy of the Revolution* (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1955).

<sup>2</sup>See Stephen Dorril, *MI6: Inside the Covert World of Her Majesty's Secret Intelligence Service* (New York: Free Press, 2000).

assassination plans, consistently opposed the assassination of Nasser.<sup>3</sup> The British and Americans did manage to cooperate in “Project Omega,” a covert plan to overthrow the Nasser regime. They also agreed on “Operation Straggle,” a planned overthrow of the pro-Soviet Syrian government. But with the Egyptian seizure of the Suez Canal, the British cabinet unilaterally authorized “Operation Musketeer,” direct military intervention into Egypt for the purpose of taking back the Suez Canal and removing Nasser from power. Eisenhower vigorously opposed this direct British military intervention. He publicly favored negotiations with Egypt on the canal while at the same time secretly supporting Project Omega.

The British falsely blamed Eisenhower and Dulles for the failure of diplomacy during the Suez Crisis. In memoirs on the Suez Crisis, Eden and Selwyn Lloyd wrote many pages censuring the Americans for British diplomatic failures during the Suez Crisis. If the British had wanted a negotiated deal with Nasser on the Suez Canal, they could have reached a diplomatic agreement. The British, however, believed that they were dealing with a new Hitler. They insisted on direct military intervention and they wrongly assumed that the United States would follow their lead. The British military attack on Suez took place at a most inopportune time for Eisenhower—right before his re-election. Eisenhower turned on the British with a fury that is little understood to this day.

Eisenhower’s wrath led him to declare economic war against Great Britain. He orchestrated the Federal Reserve and Wall Street dumping sterling holdings at an

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

excessive discount, lowering the value of sterling and the pound, thus sinking the British economy. Eisenhower also made a secret deal with King Saud of Saudi Arabia to cut off all oil from the Middle East going to Great Britain and France. Moreover, he halted all official U.S. communications with the British government, but most importantly with Eden and the Foreign Office. Finally, through the Ambassador to Great Britain Winthrop Aldrich, Eisenhower conspired with Macmillan, Butler, and Salisbury to remove Anthony Eden from the premiership to end the Suez Crisis.

Prime Minister Anthony Eden, after having received reports from MI6 in the fall of 1955 about Soviet activity in Egypt and Syria, became increasingly alarmed about the dangers of communism in the Middle East. Eden informed Eisenhower that “it becomes increasingly clear that the Saudis, the Russians, the Egyptians and the Syrians are working together. If we don’t want to see the whole of the Middle East fall into communist hands, we must first back the friends of the West in Jordan and in Iraq.”<sup>4</sup> Eden believed that the Soviets were now making a play for the Middle East.

In trying to counteract Soviet expansionism, Eden had already initiated and supported the Baghdad Pact of 1955, in which Iran, Iraq, Turkey, and Pakistan pledged to act as an anti-communist barrier to Soviet penetration of the northern tier of the Middle East. Furthermore, the British retained protectorates over Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, and Oman in the Persian Gulf. They also maintained military bases in Libya, Cyprus, Malta, and Iraq. Jordan was protected by the Arab Legion, an army subsidized by the British government and controlled by British officers. Eden sought to strengthen the British

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<sup>4</sup> Peter G. Boyle, ed., *The Eden-Eisenhower Correspondence, 1955-1957*, 110.

military presence throughout the Middle East in order to promote British political hegemony throughout the region.<sup>5</sup>

MI6 began making plans to assassinate President Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt as early as February 1956. George Young (SIS) spoke to James Eichelberger, a CIA officer in London: “He talked openly of assassinating Nasser, instead of using a polite euphemism like liquidating. He said his people had been in contact with suitable elements in Egypt and the rest of the Arab world, and...with the French, who were thinking along the same lines.”<sup>6</sup> Another CIA officer in London, Chester Cooper, also knew that Young wanted Nasser either removed or assassinated.<sup>7</sup>

Although Eden shunned the use of nuclear weapons, he readily approved the use of political assassination in the Middle East. Eisenhower, the old soldier who had proposed the use of nuclear weapons in the Far East, was adamantly opposed to political assassinations. Enthrillingly, James Eichelberger, the American CIA Officer, leaked British assassination plans to Nasser in order to thwart the assassination.<sup>8</sup> Eden and Eisenhower, who had violently disagreed on both strategy and tactics in the Far East, would now violently disagree about strategy and tactics in the Middle East. British historian Stephen Dorril has noted: “For Nasser, this was an early confirmation of his suspicion that the Americans were playing their own game in Egypt and the rest of the

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<sup>5</sup> Dooley, “Great Britain’s ‘Last Battle’ in the Middle East,” 487.

<sup>6</sup> Dorril, *MI6*, 610. “Indeed, the French intelligence service, SDECE, already had a special operations action branch in Egypt, code named Rap 700, supervised by Capt. Paul Leger. As early as 1954 a paid hitman from the action branch had organized an attempt on Nasser with an agent, Jean-Marie Pellay, who just missed his target.”

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

region.”<sup>9</sup> Nasser correctly understood that the interests of Great Britain and the United States widely diverged in North Africa and the Middle East.

Eden wanted to maintain the British Empire throughout the region by a military presence despite the drain on Great Britain’s economy and vital financial resources. By killing Nasser, the British would eliminate the leader of insurrectionary forces throughout the Middle East. By contrast, Eisenhower and Dulles favored evolutionary change in the Middle East, covertly supporting anti-Nasser elements in Egypt. The British and the Americans could agree only on these anti-Nasser covert activities.

When King Hussein of Jordan summarily dismissed Lt. General John Bagot Glubb, the British commander of the Arab Legion on March 1, 1956, he distanced himself and Jordan from the British Empire. This severely irritated Prime Minister Anthony Eden. He personally blamed Nasser and his agents for this dismissal and for the loss of British influence in Jordan. He soon began referring to Nasser as a Hitler or a Mussolini.

Eden’s assessment of Nasser could not have been any blunter than with this brutal description in his memoirs: “Some say that Nasser is no Hitler or Mussolini. Allowing for a difference in scale, I am not so sure. He has followed Hitler’s pattern, even to concentration camps and the propagation of Mein Kampf among his officers. He has understood and used the Goebbels pattern of propaganda in all its lying ruthlessness. Egypt’s strategic position increases the threat to others from any aggressive militant

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

dictatorship there.”<sup>10</sup> Eden saw Nasser as a dictator who tried to hide the right-wing nature of his regime through a socialist label, just as Hitler had.

On March 12, Eden told Evelyn Shuckburgh, Assistant Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office in charge of the Middle East, “it is either him or us and don’t forget that.”<sup>11</sup> He saw Nasser as the leader of Pan-Arabism, an ideology that favored Arab nationalism under one leader for all of the Arab people. This Arab leader, presumably Nasser, would then rule an Islamic Empire from North Africa to Asia.

Eden became increasingly irrational with regard to Nasser’s threat to the British Empire. Dorril has written:

Part of Chester Cooper’s job for the CIA while liaising with the British in London was to keep himself informed about the state of Eden’s health. “By then he was quite ill, a nervous person anyway, he was taking some sort of drug which was affecting his nervous system”. Surgery on his bile duct had not been completely successful and poison was seeping into his bloodstream and eating away at his whole system. He was taking increasing doses of Benzedrine to disguise the condition. The Prime Minister was accompanied everywhere by “a great chest of pills and at times required injections”. He was highly emotional and often worked in an atmosphere of frenzied hysteria. His private secretary, Frederick Bishop, admitted that Eden was subject to fits of temper which led to “throwing things across the room”. Eden compensated for his personal ailments and political frustrations by dreaming of his enemies destruction.<sup>12</sup>

One of the well-known side effects of Benzedrine, an amphetamine, is that it can cause severe paranoia. Another example of Eden’s instability occurred in a meeting with the famous British historian Liddell Hart: “In the ensuing silence,

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<sup>10</sup> Eden, *Full Circle*, 484.

<sup>11</sup> Evelyn Shuckburgh and John Charmley, *Descent to Suez: Diaries, 1951-1956* (New York: Norton, 1987), 12-3-56.

<sup>12</sup> Dorril, *MI6*, 612-613.

Eden's face reddened, then he threw an old fashioned inkwell at the historian.

Liddell Hart watched for a moment as the blue stains spread through his light summer suit, then he stood up, grasped a wastebasket, jammed it over the head of the prime minister and walked out.”<sup>13</sup> Drugs had probably affected Eden's mind.

Anthony Nutting, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, wrote a memorandum to the Prime Minister proposing that the United Nations needed to intervene in the Middle East and added that Nasser should be politically isolated. That evening, during a dinner party, Nutting received a phone call from the Prime Minister. Eden shouted, “What's all this poppycock you've sent me? ...What's all this nonsense about isolating Nasser or neutralizing him, as you call it? I want him destroyed, can't you understand? I want him murdered, and if you and the Foreign Office don't agree, then you better come to the cabinet and explain why.”<sup>14</sup> Eden had a similar conversation with Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick, Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, “I don't think we have a department for that sort of thing, Prime Minister, Kirkpatrick replied, ‘But if we do, it certainly is not under my control.’”<sup>15</sup> Without informing the Foreign Office, Eden ordered MI6 to come up with plans to assassinate Nasser.

Eden worked directly with MI6 on a number of plans to assassinate Nasser while keeping the Foreign Office in the dark including, apparently, his Foreign Secretary Selwyn Lloyd. Eden directed these activities through Patrick Dean, chairman of the Joint

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<sup>13</sup> Donald Neff, *Warriors at Suez: Eisenhower Takes America into the Middle East* (New York: Linden Press/ Simon and Schuster, 1981), 316.

<sup>14</sup> Nutting, *No End of a Lesson*, 34-35. In the book Nutting used the word removed rather than what Eden actually said, which Nutting later claimed was murdered.

<sup>15</sup> Dorril, *MI6*, 613.



Intelligence Committee (JIC): “It would appear that Eden and Dean, in turn, did not seek the approval of the Chief of MI6, ‘Sinbad’ Sinclair, who was seen as a weak figure by senior officers. Instead, decisions on priorities in the Middle East, and on Egypt in particular, and those concerning any assassination attempts, were left to George Young, a man on a high after the success of the 1953 coup against Mossadegh in Iran.”<sup>16</sup> Eden used George Kennedy Young and MI6 for his top secret activities in the Middle East.

Prime Minister Eden apprised Eisenhower in a letter on March 15 that Nasser intended to remove the pro-Western leaders of Iraq, Jordan, and Libya. Nasser’s ultimate goal was to lead these new Arab republics.<sup>17</sup> Eisenhower agreed with Eden that Nasser might be an unwitting agent of the Soviet Union. On March 21, Selwyn Lloyd argued before the British cabinet that British foreign policy must fundamentally change in the Middle East with the goal of undermining the anti-Western governments of Egypt and Syria.<sup>18</sup>

Eisenhower initially approved a transatlantic diplomatic initiative to undermine Nasser in Egypt and the rest of the Middle East. “Ike approved Operation Omega, designed to avoid ‘any open break which would throw Nasser irrevocably into a Soviet satellite status’, but to use both diplomacy and covert action to thwart his ambitions in the

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 614.

<sup>17</sup> Boyle, ed., *The Eden-Eisenhower Correspondence, 1955-1957*, 123-124. Also see Dooley, “Great Britain’s ‘Last Battle’ in the Middle East,” 488. “Playing the themes of pan-Arab unity, anti-imperialism, and neutralism brought Nasser formidable influence throughout the region, and raised the specter that Egypt, commanding a union of Arab states, could someday fill the vacuum left by the waning of British power.”

<sup>18</sup> Dooley, “Great Britain’s ‘Last Battle’ in the Middle East,” 490. “Great Britain had taken its first strategic decision on the road to Suez: to topple the governments of Egypt and Syria, and re-group the Middle Eastern states around Iraq.”

Arab world. ‘We should make sure we concert the overall plan with the British—i.e. Eden and Lloyd’, he [Eisenhower] instructed.”<sup>19</sup> Eisenhower and Eden agreed to Project Omega and covert measures to undermine Nasser’s leadership. A political or military coup within Egypt, it was hoped, would not inflame the surrounding Arabs or the Soviets.<sup>20</sup>

The British and Americans continued to discuss the assassination of President Nasser. British historian Christopher Andrew has written, “At least for a time, Eden seems to have been attracted by the possibility of a covert operation to assassinate Nasser. Eisenhower was not. At the end of March CIA officials were sent to London to confer with SIS on plans for covert action in the Middle East. The CIA had instructions to discourage any proposal to go ahead with the assassination plan.”<sup>21</sup> While the CIA discouraged the British from assassinating Nasser, SIS, with approval of the British cabinet, suggested overthrowing the Soviet-backed Syrian government.<sup>22</sup> The CIA

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<sup>19</sup> Christopher M. Andrew, *For the President’s Eyes Only: Secret Intelligence and the American Presidency from Washington to Bush*. (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1995), 224-225.

<sup>20</sup> Mohamed Ḥasanein Heikel, *The Cairo Documents; The Inside Story of Nasser and His Relationship with World Leaders, Rebels, and Statesmen* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1973), 116.

<sup>21</sup> Andrew, *For the President’s Eyes Only*, 225. See also Dooley, “Great Britain’s ‘Last Battle’ in the Middle East,” 490-491. “Behind the scenes, officials in Whitehall began talking of ‘when war comes’ rather than ‘if war comes’. By the end of March 1956, an apocalyptic mood pervaded MI6. The deputy director, George Kennedy Young, told an American intelligence colleague, Wilbur Crane Eveland of the CIA, that ‘Britain is now prepared to fight its last battle; ‘no matter what the cost, we will win’; and ‘we have to face the possibility that Nasser might close the canal’.”

<sup>22</sup> Dooley, “Great Britain’s ‘Last Battle’ in the Middle East,” 491. “The code-name given to the coup planned for the autumn of 1956 in Syria was Straggle. Although most Public Record Office files for Syria and Iraq in 1956 remains classified, trials held in Damascus between December 1956 in February 1957, and later in Baghdad after the 1958 revolution, exposed a labyrinthine conspiracy involving the Iraqis, the British and the Americans. A note in the Foreign Secretary’s private files, dated 2 May, also records that ‘covert action to diminish Nasser’s influence in other Arab states is being actively prepared’,

agreed to join SIS in planning and executing the overthrow of the Syrian government. In July 1956, Eisenhower approved "Operation Straggle."<sup>23</sup>

Nasser continued to infuriate Eisenhower and Dulles, when in May 1956, he officially recognized communist China. He also played games on the funding of the Aswan Dam by pitting the United States against the Soviet Union. The Soviets had earlier provided Egypt with military support through a Czech arms deal in 1955. In June 1956, the Soviets offered to fund the Aswan Dam through a \$1.2 billion loan at 2 percent interest.<sup>24</sup> Nasser was able to successfully play the East against the West

British Foreign Secretary Selwyn Lloyd has correctly concluded in his memoirs that Nasser's real goals had been plainly stated in his book *The Philosophy of the Revolution*: "Therefore, Egypt must be the head of the Arab states, the Arab circle, with oil as its motive power. Second, the white man must be eliminated from the Middle East and Asia. Third, a universal Islamic Empire must be created, with limitless power."<sup>25</sup> Moreover, Nasser advocated the complete destruction of the State of Israel. Like Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, Lloyd believed Nasser's *Philosophy of Revolution* was a blueprint for his future actions.

The real trigger for the Suez Crisis occurred when Secretary of State Dulles formally withdrew U.S. aid for the Aswan Dam on July 19, 1956. The consequences of

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while the agenda for a Foreign Office meeting scheduled for 30 May contains the cryptic notation: 'Syria, Straggle'."

<sup>23</sup> Andrew, *For the President's Eyes Only*, 225.

<sup>24</sup> James E. Dougherty, "The Aswan Decision in Perspective," *Political Science Quarterly* 74, no. 1 (March 1959), 22.

<sup>25</sup> Selwyn Lloyd, *Suez 1956: A Personal Account* (New York: Mayflower Books, 1978), 33-34.

this decision should have been carefully weighed by President Eisenhower. Selwyn Lloyd wrote, “The president had only been consulted that morning. Makins, British Ambassador, was informed one hour before the meeting. I had no idea that there was going to be this abrupt withdrawal. We had discussed it in cabinet on July 17 without any sense of urgency, and I had promised to circulate a memorandum on how the withdrawal of our offers should be put to the Egyptians.”<sup>26</sup> Obviously upset with American action, Eden had been once again “informed but not consulted.”<sup>27</sup> The denial of the funds for the Aswan Dam led directly to Nasser’s nationalization of the Suez Canal. Presumably, Nasser thought, by nationalizing the canal, the Soviets would provide the funds necessary to build the Aswan Dam.

From the beginning of the crisis, Eisenhower and Eden exhibited fundamental differences about how to resolve the Suez Crisis. Eisenhower’s goals included stopping Soviet expansionism in the Middle East and North Africa while protecting access to Arab oil. While the United States, in theory, supported the Baghdad Pact, Eisenhower and Dulles for political reasons had adamantly refused to formally join the alliance with Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Pakistan out of fear of alienating Jewish voters in the United States during the election of 1956.<sup>28</sup> Selwyn Lloyd believed, moreover, that many of the American diplomats in the Middle East looked plainly anti-British. Lloyd argued, “At

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 70-71.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 71. See also Dooley, “Great Britain’s ‘Last Battle’ in the Middle East,” 493. “When the Americans renege was announced on 19 July, perhaps with more fanfare than the British would have liked, the Foreign Office noted: ‘Mr. Dulles has taken the decision for us. We were not absolutely in step at the last moment but the difference between us was no more than a nuance’.”

<sup>28</sup> See Nigel John Ashton, “The Hijacking of a Pact: The Formation of the Baghdad Pact and Anglo-American Tensions in the Middle East, 1955-1958,” *Review of International Studies* (1993): 19, 133.

best, they were indifferent; at worst, the McGhees in Iran, the Sweeneys in the Sudan, the Cafferys in Cairo, Aramco in Saudi Arabia, had shown themselves openly anti-British. Herbert Hoover Jr., Under-Secretary of State, was thoroughly anti-British, judging at least by what he said and did. It was a mixture of anti-colonialism and hardheaded oil tycoonery.”<sup>29</sup> Lloyd’s analysis was essentially correct.

Meanwhile in Algeria, the French were engaged in a war against Islamic rebels who had the financial backing of Nasser.<sup>30</sup> Nasser’s dream of an Islamic Empire stretching across North Africa directly conflicted with French as well as British colonialism. The French, like the British, wanted Nasser destroyed. French and British colonialism, nonetheless, came into direct conflict with both Eisenhower’s reelection plans and his sincere anti-colonialism. Eisenhower genuinely believed that the peace of the world depended on his reelection and that Nasser posed only a minor threat. Eden and Lloyd thought Nasser a major menace in the Middle East and a grave danger to Western civilization. This divergence of opinion on the nature of the threat posed by Nasser would lead to calamitous results.

Yet, this diabolical Nasser did put Eden into a terrible dilemma. If Nasser were like Hitler, how could a person negotiate with him? Good faith negotiations with a Hitler or a Mussolini make no sense, since dictators could not be trusted. Consequently, Eden approved assassination attempts, covert operations, Operation Omega, military plans, Operation Musketeer that were all designed to destroy Nasser. A successful diplomatic

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<sup>29</sup> Lloyd, *Suez 1956*, 78.

<sup>30</sup> Terence Robertson, *Crisis: The Inside Story of the Suez Conspiracy* (New York: Atheneum, 1965), 50.

negotiation with Nasser might have the unintended consequence of actually strengthening him. Throughout his memoirs, Eden falsely argued that it was the Americans who deliberately damaged his diplomacy with Nasser, which led to the Suez debacle. The only real conclusion is that Eden never intended to negotiate in good faith with Nasser. Nasser was Hitler or Mussolini. The negotiations at the London Conference and at the United Nations were nothing more than a British charade designed to cover a military operation, all planned by a master diplomat.

In his memoirs, Lloyd echoed Eden on the nature of the threat posed by Nasser: “Here we were confronted with what we regarded as another megalomaniac dictator, leader of a less powerful nation but with much easier targets to attack, who if unchecked would do infinite damage to Western interest, as Eisenhower admitted when he wrote his book nine years later.”<sup>31</sup> Lloyd defended Eden’s contention that Eisenhower and Dulles deliberately weakened their diplomatic negotiations and that he and Eden had sought only a peaceful resolution to the conflict. But why would one negotiate with a megalomaniac? Why would Eden or Lloyd want a successful negotiation that might enhance Nasser’s standing in the Middle East?

As Stephen Ambrose has noted, Eisenhower took a much calmer view of Nasser and the Suez Crisis from the start:

But as to the British claims that Egypt had committed a crime, Eisenhower can only say that ‘the power of eminent domain within its own territory could scarcely be doubted’, and that ‘Nasser was within his rights’. As to the British claim that the Egyptians could not run the canal, Eisenhower scoffed at it. The Panama Canal, he said, was a much more complex operation; he had no doubt the Egyptians could run it. But he also said that

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<sup>31</sup> Lloyd, *Suez 1956*, 90-91.

‘thinking of our situation and Panama, we must not let Nasser get away with this action’. He decided to place his hopes on a conference, which would at least slow things down.<sup>32</sup>

Eisenhower also took a much more measured view and completely scorned the British view of Nasser as a Hitler or Mussolini. Well briefed by State Department lawyers, Eisenhower contended that Nasser operated within his legal rights in nationalizing the Suez Canal. Rather than being a Hitler or Mussolini, Nasser acted in the tradition of George Washington, moving against British imperialism.

Nasser’s nationalization of the Suez Canal upset British Prime Minister Eden: “An angry Eden told conservative MP Robert Boothby that ‘we must crush this man at all costs’. Shortly after, Boothby bumped into Kirkpatrick at the Foreign Office and told him: ‘I believe our Prime Minister is mad’. Kirkpatrick replied, ‘I could’ve told you that weeks ago’.”<sup>33</sup> Eden looked, not for a peaceful solution, but for any possible excuse to intervene militarily in Egypt.<sup>34</sup>

The British cabinet set up a special Egypt Committee consisting of Eden, Lloyd, Macmillan, Salisbury, Home, (Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations) and Monckton, (Minister of Defense):

The Egypt Committee acknowledged, somewhat cryptically, that toppling Nasser ‘might perhaps be achieved by less elaborate operations than those required to secure physical possession of the canal itself’, but as Great Britain’s ‘case before world opinion was based on the need to secure international control over the canal’, a diplomatic charade would be necessary. The committee’s original scenario envisioned a conference of

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<sup>32</sup> Ambrose, *Eisenhower. Vol. 2, The President, 1952-1969*, 332.

<sup>33</sup> Dorril, *MI6*, 627.

<sup>34</sup> Harold MacMillan, *Riding the Storm 1956-1959* (New York: Harper Row, 1971), 111-112.

maritime powers convened to ratify a scheme sponsored by Great Britain, France, and the United States; to be communicated to Egypt by Great Britain in the form of ‘a virtual ultimatum’; and when Nasser balked, to be followed by military operations. The only problem foreseen was that the conference might offer ‘an unwelcome opportunity’ for proposed members ‘to indulge in prolonged discussion’, and as some would be reluctant to contemplate drastic measures, the conference might be led towards an equivocal policy.<sup>35</sup>

MI6 produced several more assassination plans for a more permanent solution to the problem of Nasser in Egypt.

Many of the MI6 assassination plots against Nasser involved the use of poison. In one attempt, James Mossman, a BBC correspondent in Cairo and former MI6 official, would drop off a package that was meant for Nasser’s doctor. “The package had contained 20,000 pounds in English banknotes which was intended as a bribe to Nasser’s doctor to poison Nasser.”<sup>36</sup> Another plan included injecting poison into boxes of chocolates. But then some members of MI6 became concerned about the morality of passing on poisoned chocolates. Major Frank Quinn worried that an innocent may be handed one of these chocolates: “I voiced my apprehensions to the operational section head, but was assured that there would be no danger of this in the planned precise arrangements for donation and subsequent removal of the evidence. The chocolates were handed over; though it appears they never reached their intended destination.”<sup>37</sup> For the most part, morality played no role in designing assassination plans.

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<sup>35</sup> Dooley, “Great Britain’s ‘Last Battle’ in the Middle East,” 495.

<sup>36</sup> Dorril, *MI6*, 633.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*



Another MI6 plan included the use of nerve gas. MI6 officials John Henry and Peter Dixon thought nerve gas would be the best way to kill Nasser. The plan, however, required gassing Nasser's headquarters in Cairo, which probably would have led to a good number of innocent lives being lost. Eden was morally opposed to this plan because he "personally disliked the idea of poison gas. During the Second World War, he had been against what he termed 'the war crimes business', but by 1956 he seems to have had no qualms about other bizarre methods of assassination which MI6 dreamed up."<sup>38</sup> Other methods of assassination included the use of poison darts.<sup>39</sup>

Based on available evidence, Eisenhower stalwartly opposed Nasser's assassination because he feared the reaction the Arab world would have to such a transparent abuse of power. He also feared that such an action would catapult the Arab world into the Soviet camp. Facing reelection, Eisenhower needed to maintain the illusion of his waging peace during his first term; thus, a military intervention or a political assassination by the British in Egypt should be avoided at all costs. A covert operation *after* the November election would be the preferred plan of action against

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 633-634.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 634. "The French and the Israelis, too, organized a number of assassination plots. The head of the SDECE and former socialist resister Pierre Boursicot, who supervised the various meetings that worked out the plan for the Suez expedition, Musketeer, was an important go-between with the British and Israeli secret services. SDECE had a special operations action branch in Egypt which scheduled one attempt for September 1, the original date for Musketeer. A French commando team was to cross the West bank of the Nile from the French embassy, in rubber boats, and destroy Nasser's Revolutionary Command Council building at the northern tip of Gezira Island. When the date was changed, the plan was aborted. An Israeli assassination attempt employed a Greek waiter from one of the famous catering companies, who was to slip a poison pill in to Nasser's coffee. It probably would've succeeded 'but his hand shook so much when it came time to the point that he gave up and confessed'. CIA operative Miles Copeland claimed to have knowledge of the MI6 assassination plans. He joked with Nasser: 'Turn your head, Gamal, and let me see if I can put this poison in your coffee'. Nasser, pointing to his nearby bodyguards, said it would not work."

Nasser. Meanwhile, Dulles's numerous calls for negotiations pushed the British to seek peaceful means to resolve the crisis.<sup>40</sup>

The Suez Crisis embodied a duel between Eden and Nasser. Eden had set the tone for confrontation in a speech to the House of Commons on the morning of July 27, 1956: "The unilateral decision of the Egyptian government to expropriate the Suez Canal Company, without notice and in breach of the Concession agreements, affects the rights and interests of many nations. Her Majesty's Government is consulting other Governments immediately concerned with regard to the serious situation thus created."<sup>41</sup> Eden's attack on Egypt based on a treaty negotiated in 1888 appeared legally problematic to State Department lawyers.<sup>42</sup>

Nasser took a much different approach in explaining his expropriation of the Suez Canal. He put it in terms of Egyptian nationalism resisting British imperialism: "It is a battle against imperialism and the methods and tactics of imperialism, and a battle against Israel, the vanguard of imperialism...As I told you; Arab nationalism has been set on fire from the Atlantic Ocean to the Persian Gulf. Arab nationalism feels its existence,

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<sup>40</sup> Andrew, *For the President's Eyes Only*, 225-226.

<sup>41</sup> Eden, *Full Circle*, 473.

<sup>42</sup> Khosrow Mostofi, "The Suez Dispute: A Case Study of a Treaty," *Western Political Quarterly* 10, no. 1 (March 1957): 1. "The Suez Company was a private Egyptian corporation. The shares were originally owned by the Egyptian government and a number of private investors, principally French; but, as is well known, the Egyptian shares came into the hands of the British Government in 1875. This transaction did not change the character of the Company or of the Canal. Both remained subject to Egyptian law, and the nationalization was an exercise of the familiar power of eminent domain."

its structure and strength.”<sup>43</sup> Eden’s internationalist outlook clashed directly with Nasser’s Egyptian nationalism.

The British prime minister sent a telegram to President Eisenhower on July 27, 1956, making clear that he would not allow Nasser to control the Suez Canal. Eden pointed to the dangers of Middle East oil being cut off from most of Western Europe. He argued against any legalistic interpretation that might support the right of the Egyptian government to nationalize the canal, which had been the position of the State Department’s lawyers. Eden took a much broader view of the threat Nasser posed. In the final analysis, economic pressure on Nasser would not be enough to force him to give up the Suez Canal. Eden wrote, “My colleagues and I are convinced that we must be ready, in the last resort, to use force to bring Nasser to his senses. For our part we are prepared to do so. I have this morning instructed our Chief of Staff to prepare a military plan accordingly.”<sup>44</sup> This part of Eden’s telegram landed in the White House like a bombshell.

The president quickly decided that he needed to send U.S. Ambassador-at-large Robert Murphy to London to find out what exactly the British planned to do and to keep them from any precipitous actions. Murphy convinced Eden to agree to an international conference to determine the fate of the Suez Canal. On July 31, 1956, Eisenhower met with Allen Dulles, John Foster Dulles, Admiral Arleigh Burke, Herbert Hoover Jr., Secretary of the Treasury George Humphrey, and Colonel Andrew Goodpaster.

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<sup>43</sup> Eden, *Full Circle*, 473-474.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 477.

According to Goodpaster's notes, "In essence it stated that the British had taken a firm, considered decision to 'break Nasser' and to initiate hostilities at an early date for this purpose (estimating six weeks to be required for setting up the operation). Eisenhower opened the discussion by saying 'he considered this to be a very unwise decision on [Eden's] part.'"<sup>45</sup> The Americans correctly surmised that British diplomacy would be a mere cover for military action.

Eisenhower concluded that the United States required congressional approval for any type of military action in order to support Eden's military plans to take back the canal, and this approval was highly unlikely. Believing that Eden had dramatically overreacted to the crisis, Eisenhower decided to send Dulles to London to make the case for negotiations rather than pursue any overt military intervention. The American president sought to make it absolutely clear to Eden that he completely opposed direct British military intervention. Eisenhower warned, "To join with the British against Nasser might well array the world from Dakar to the Philippine Islands against us."<sup>46</sup> Dulles believed that Nasser needed to give up the Suez Canal, but he worried "the British went into World War I and World War II without the United States, on the calculation that we would be bound to come in."<sup>47</sup> Eisenhower sent Eden a stern letter on July 31, 1956, discouraging any plans for using force to resolve the Suez Crisis.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Ambrose, *Eisenhower. Vol. 2, The President, 1952-1969*, 331.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> Boyle, ed., *The Eden-Eisenhower Correspondence, 1955-1957*, 156-157.

The president sent Dulles to London on August 1 in order to slow down any plans for British military intervention in Suez. Dulles did agree with the British that “a way had to be found to make Nasser disgorge what he was attempting to swallow... we must make a genuine effort to bring world opinion to favor the international operation now... it should be possible to create a world opinion so adverse to Nasser that he would be isolated.”<sup>49</sup> Eden claimed, “These were forthright words. They rang in my ears for months.”<sup>50</sup> Eden believed that Dulles’s words wholly justified Operation Musketeer, the British military plan to take back the Suez Canal. Operation Musketeer had just been approved by the Egypt committee on August 2, 1956.<sup>51</sup>

The next day, after ruminating on the problems of British colonialism, Eisenhower wrote to his old friend Swede Hazlett, “We unavoidably give to the little nations opportunities to embarrass us greatly. The great Western nations had no choice but to swallow their pride, accept insults, and attempt to work to bolster the underlying concepts of freedom, even though this was frequently costly. Yet there can be no doubt

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<sup>49</sup> Eden, *Full Circle*, 487.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 487. See also Memorandum of Conversation with the President, Dwight D. Eisenhower and John Foster Dulles, 9:30 AM on August 29, 1956, File Meetings with the President, Aug.- thru Dec. 1956 (6), White House Memoranda Series Box no. 4, A67-28, Papers of John Foster Dulles, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library. “Suez. I outlined to the President my talks with the British, particularly those with Eden, Macmillan, Salisbury, and Lloyd, indicating the British were determined to move militarily unless there was a clear acceptance of the 18-Power plan by Nasser by around the 10<sup>th</sup> of September. I said that Eden had indicated that their military planning would have to take a definite and irrevocable status by about that time and could not be left up appreciably longer in a state of indecision.”

<sup>51</sup> Dooley, “Great Britain’s ‘Last Battle’ in the Middle East,” 497-498. “There were four military plans. Three are known in some detail: the initial plan, conceived in the immediate aftermath of nationalization; Operation Musketeer, developed in early August; and modification, Musketeer Revise, the basis for Anglo-French operations between 30 October and 6 November. Declassification of the Suez documents open to inspection a Winter Plan which would have gone into effect had the diplomatic standoff continued any longer.”

that in the long run such faithfulness will produce real rewards.”<sup>52</sup> Returning from London, Secretary Dulles advocated a peaceful solution to the nationalization of the Suez Canal.<sup>53</sup>

The London Conference ran from August 16 to August 23, 1956, where eighteen of twenty-two countries came to an agreement on the need for international control of the Suez Canal. The agreement reached “would entrust the operation of the canal to an international board, including Egyptian membership, with other countries chosen in the light of their maritime interests and pattern of trade. Its object would be to secure the best possible operating results, without political motivation in favor of, or against, any user.”<sup>54</sup> The Suez Canal should be run by an international board rather than by the Egyptians.

The Menzies mission, a delegation headed by Prime Minister Robert Menzies of Australia, attempted to sell this plan to Nasser. This mission, not surprisingly, failed. In their memoirs, Eden and Lloyd put the blame squarely on Eisenhower for deflating their negotiating position with Nasser. In a press conference, Eisenhower indicated that he favored only a peaceful solution to the Suez crisis.<sup>55</sup> The British contended that the

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<sup>52</sup> Ambrose, *Eisenhower. Vol. 2, The President, 1952-1969*, 333.

<sup>53</sup> John Foster Dulles Statement upon returning from London on August 3, 1956, Anthony Eden file, Duplicate Correspondence Box 102, John Foster Dulles Papers, Seeley G. Mudd Library, Princeton University. “We do not, however, want to meet violence with violence.”

<sup>54</sup> Lloyd, *Suez 1956*, 76.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 129-130. “Next morning, September 5, there were flaring headlines in the newspapers: Eisenhower, questioned at a press conference about the possible use of force, had rejected it completely and unconditionally. If Nasser rejected the present proposals, others would have to be worked out: ‘We are committed to a peaceful settlement of this dispute, nothing else’. That destroyed any chance Menzies might have had of success and made the mission futile.”

possible use of force bolstered their negotiating position with Nasser, the exact argument that Dulles had used in threatening military intervention in Indochina at the Geneva Conference of 1954. Eden, Lloyd, and Menzies concluded that Eisenhower's comments had completely damaged their position in the negotiations. Nasser rejected the London Conference's proposals, which Lloyd viewed as a great tragedy.<sup>56</sup> By publicly opposing military intervention, Eisenhower had done to the British what the British had done to the Americans at the Geneva Conference in 1954. Eden and Lloyd did not see the irony of the situation.

The Dulles proposal in September for a Suez Canal Users Association (SCUA) again delayed British military intervention. SCUA had the halfhearted backing of the British, but this time Dulles undermined his own idea. As Lloyd wrote, "He said at a press conference during the second day's debate in the Commons that if an American ship sailing under the auspices of SCUA was stopped 'we do not intend to shoot our way through. It should go around the Cape'. Later he said SCUA had never had any teeth in it anyhow."<sup>57</sup> The success of the Egyptian government in running the canal with Egyptians rather than the British ultimately doomed any chance that Dulles's proposal might have had. Selwyn Lloyd thought that Dulles's undermining of SCUA was the second tragic mistake made by the Americans. Eisenhower seemed to undercut British diplomacy throughout the Suez Crisis.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 76.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 76-77.

<sup>58</sup> Memorandum of Conversation the President, Dwight D. Eisenhower and John Foster Dulles town 4:30 PM, August 30, 1956, File Meetings with the President, Aug.- thru Dec. 1956 (6), White House

Eisenhower wrote a letter to Eden on September 2, 1956, to point out the dangers of any British military intervention in Egypt:

I am afraid, Anthony, that from this point onward our views upon this situation diverge. As to the use of force or the threat of force at this juncture, I continue to feel as I expressed myself in the letter Foster carried to you some weeks ago. Even now military preparations and civilian evacuation exposed to public view seemed to be solidifying support for Nasser which has been shaky in many important quarters. I regard it as indispensable that if we are to proceed solidly together to the solution of this problem, public opinion in our several countries must be overwhelmingly in support. I must tell you frankly that American public opinion flatly rejects the thought of using force, particularly when it does not seem that every possible peaceful means of protecting our vital interests has been exhausted without result. Moreover, I greatly doubt we could here secure congressional authority even for the lesser support measures for which you might have to look to us.<sup>59</sup>

Eisenhower was using the same reasoning that Eden had used against him concerning military intervention in Indochina in 1954. Eden had argued then that the Americans had tried to sabotage the Geneva Convention in order to intervene militarily in Indochina.

President Eisenhower asserted that the British, prematurely deciding on military intervention, had not pursued every means possible for a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Eisenhower used Eden's own arguments against him:

I really do not see how a successful result could be achieved by forcible means. The use of force would, it seems to me, vastly increase the area of

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Memoranda Series Box no. 4, A67-28, Papers of John Foster Dulles, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library. "I said I wanted to be sure that my mind was working along with that of the President on the basic issues of Suez matter. I said I had come to the conclusion that, regrettable as it might be to see Nasser's prestige enhanced even temporarily, I did not believe the situation was one which should be resolved by force. I could not see any end to the situation that might be created if the British and the French occupied the Canal in parts of Egypt. They would make bitter enemies of the entire population of the Middle East and most of Africa lost for a generation, if not a century."

<sup>59</sup> Boyle, ed., *The Eden-Eisenhower Correspondence, 1955-1957*, 162-163.



jeopardy. I do not see how the economy of Western Europe can long survive the burden of prolonged military operations, as well as the denial of Near East oil. Also, the peoples of the Near East and North Africa and, to some extent, of all of Asia and all of Africa, would be consolidated against the West to a degree which, I fear, could not be overcome in the generation and, perhaps, not even in a century particularly having in mind the capacity of the Russians to make mischief. Before such action were undertaken, all our people should unitedly understand that there were no other means available to protect our vital rights and interests.<sup>60</sup>

Eisenhower also thought that war between Great Britain and Egypt might not only bring down the economies of Western Europe, but also alienate Arab, African and Asian people throughout the world. The Third World could be lost not just for a generation, but for a century. Moreover, Britain's war on Egypt would open the door to massive Soviet expansionism.

In a letter dated September 6, 1956, Eden responded by accusing Eisenhower of appeasement: "It was argued either that Hitler had committed no act of aggression against anyone or that he was entitled to do what he liked in his own territory or that it was impossible to prove that he had any ulterior designs or that the covenant of the League of Nations did not entitle us to use force and that it would be wiser to wait until he did commit an act of aggression."<sup>61</sup> Eden argued that the nationalization of the Suez Canal amounted to an act of aggression against the international community.<sup>62</sup> He believed

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 163.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 165.

<sup>62</sup> *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-1957 Volume XVI, Suez Crisis July 26-December 31, 1956*, 250. Memorandum from Carl W. McCardle of the Senior Staff of Advisors in the delegation at the Suez Canal Conference to the Secretary of State, London, August 21, 1956. "Ivone Kirkpatrick in a conversation at the Reception [10 Downing Street] was, as usual, quite blustery. He said in effect that we would, as he put it, 'have to have a row' with Nasser. He said we might as well have it early as late. He

Eisenhower's arguments sounded just like the arguments of those who had championed appeasement in the 1930s.<sup>63</sup>

Eisenhower retorted to Eden on September 8, 1956 by reiterating his position that British government's use of force would be a mistake. Such action would only lead many Arabs to support Nasser.<sup>64</sup> Eisenhower warned: "It might cause a serious misunderstanding between our two countries because I must say frankly that there is as yet no public opinion in this country which is prepared to support such a move, and the most significant public opinion that there is seems to think that the United Nations was formed to prevent this very thing."<sup>65</sup> Eisenhower used the same British arguments that the British had used against his position on Indochina in 1954. Eisenhower advised Eden: "Nasser thrives on drama. If we let some of the drama go out of the situation and concentrate upon the task of deflating him through slower but sure processes such as I described, I believe the desired results can more probably be obtained."<sup>66</sup> In short, Eden

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compared Nasser to Hitler and the Rhineland and said it was just a question of how long all of us would have to go along to appease Nasser 'before we have the inevitable row'."

<sup>63</sup> Memorandum of Conversation with the President, Dwight D. Eisenhower, John Foster Dulles, and Herbert Hoover Junior, September 6, 1956, File Meetings with the President, Aug.- thru Dec. 1956 (6), White House Memoranda Series Box no. 4, A67-28, Papers of John Foster Dulles, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library. "I said that one of the problems we faced was whether we should put pressure on the British and the French that they could pass the blame to us and the subsequent losses they might incur in the Middle East and Africa as a result of Nasser's 'getting away with it'. I said if this happened, it could have a serious effect for some time upon good relations between our countries and certainly the existing British and French Governments would have a tendency to try to find an alibi for themselves in our action."

<sup>64</sup> See *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-1957 Volume XVI, Suez Crisis July 26-December 31, 1956*, "Probable Repercussions of British-French Military Action in the Suez Crisis" Special National Intelligence Estimate, September 5, 1956, p. 382-391.

<sup>65</sup> Boyle, ed., *The Eden-Eisenhower Correspondence, 1955-1957*, 168.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 169.

and Eisenhower reversed roles in 1956. Eisenhower, the five star general, became a dove, while Eden, the master diplomat, became a hawk.

Nasser officially rejected the Menzies Mission on September 9, 1956. Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick, Permanent Undersecretary of State at the Foreign Office, analyzed the situation in this way: “Dulles, having rejected the idea of going to the Security Council, having refused to stop paying dues to the Egyptian Authority, having decided that other economic pressure was not possible, having thought up SCUA, would very soon find out that SCUA did not work. The choice would then be force or surrender to Nasser.”<sup>67</sup>

Kirkpatrick continued his analysis:

It seems to me that there is a certain analogy, as Walter Lippman points out, between our attitude to America over China, and theirs to us over the Middle East. There is only one substantial difference. The Americans never believed that the Chinese would wreck them, at all events for a very long time. But for the reasons I have outlined very sketchily above, we, rightly or wrongly, believe that if we are denied the resources of Africa and the Middle East, we can be wrecked within a year or two.<sup>68</sup>

Kirkpatrick skillfully analyzed the crisis and clearly suggested that Dulles was merely delaying the inevitable military confrontation between Great Britain and Egypt.

The British came to believe firmly that Dulles acted less like a diplomat and more like a campaign manager for Eisenhower’s reelection.<sup>69</sup> In his press conference on September 11, 1956, Eisenhower stated, “I don’t know exactly what you mean by

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<sup>67</sup> Lloyd, *Suez 1956*, 130.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 131.

<sup>69</sup> Letter from Anthony Eden to Winston Churchill on September 21, 1956, Chur 2/216, The Sir Winston Churchill Archive Trust, Churchill Archives, Churchill College, University of Cambridge. “Foster assured us that U.S. is as determined to deal with Nasser as we are—but I fear he has an incidental caveat about November 6. We cannot accept that.”

backing them. As you know, this country will not go to war ever while I am occupying my present post unless the Congress is called into session and Congress declares such a war.”<sup>70</sup> In a press conference the following day, Dulles made the situation worse by declaring, “We do not intend to shoot our way through. It may be we have the right to do it but we don’t intend to do it as far as the United States is concerned.”<sup>71</sup> Eisenhower and Dulles obviously rejected the gunboat diplomacy that Eden, Lloyd, and the Foreign Office openly advocated. Eden and Lloyd, again, censured the Americans for the failure of the negotiations on Suez Canal Users Association (SCUA).

British pilots left their jobs running the Suez Canal on September 14, 1956. New Egyptian pilots came in the following day and the canal ran smoothly.

Thus, as Eisenhower wrote in his memoirs, ‘the assumption upon which the User’s Association was largely based proved groundless’. Eisenhower felt that Nasser’s action made ‘any thought of using force... almost ridiculous’. In his opinion, the British should accept the Egyptian offer for compensation for their 44 percent interest in the Suez Canal Company and get back to their real problems, such as restoring their economy and making their contribution to meeting the Russian threat.<sup>72</sup>

Once Nasser rejected the SCUA proposals, the British and French in late September finally brought their case before the United Nations Security Council. Whether the British or French genuinely sought peace or needed to hide their moves toward a war on Egypt is unclear. The British, it seems, really favored a path to war with

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<sup>70</sup> Eden, *Full Circle*, 535.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.* 539.

<sup>72</sup> Ambrose, *Eisenhower. Vol. 2, The President, 1952-1969*, 339-340.

only one serious hesitation. What effect would a war have on the price of sterling?<sup>73</sup>

Eden wrote a top secret memorandum on September 23 telling Harold Macmillan, his Chancellor of the Exchequer that “The Americans’ main contention is that we bring Nasser down by degrees rather than on the Mossadegh lines. Of course if this is possible we should warmly welcome it and I am all for making every effort provided the results show themselves without delay.”<sup>74</sup> Eden appeared to desire action sooner rather than later, while the Americans preferred to wait until after the elections.

The next day, Macmillan met with President Eisenhower in the White House. He reported, “On Suez, he [Ike] was sure that we must get Nasser down. The only thing was, how to do it. I made it quite clear that we could not play it long, without aid on a very large scale—that is, if playing it long involved buying dollar oil.”<sup>75</sup> The differences between the British and Americans appeared to have become merely a difference in tactics. The Eisenhower administration favored a slow, covert war against Nasser while the British favored swift military intervention to take back the canal and destroy Nasser in the process. Macmillan had inadvertently revealed to Eisenhower Britain’s Achilles’ heel, its serious economic weakness in the event of a prolonged war.

Later that day, Macmillan visited with Dulles at the State Department. The British government had recently announced the Anglo-French proposal to put the Suez

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<sup>73</sup> Dooley, “Great Britain’s ‘Last Battle’ in the Middle East,” 497. “Sir Leslie Rowan sent a memorandum to Macmillan hypothesizing ‘negotiations, fall of Nasser, friendly Egyptian government’. ‘Can we then hope for a major return of confidence’, he asked, ‘which will then place sterling in a safe position? The answer is, unfortunately, almost certainly ‘no’, for without US support, sterling would be in ‘the greatest danger’. Macmillan minuted: ‘This is gloomy but very likely correct’.”

<sup>74</sup> Andrew, *For the President’s Eyes Only*, 226.

<sup>75</sup> Harold Macmillan, *Riding the Storm, 1956-1959*. (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 134.

Crisis on the agenda of the UN Security Council.<sup>76</sup> Having not been consulted but merely informed of this decision, Dulles was surprised and angry. Macmillan wrote, “He was, therefore, deeply hurt to find that we had taken this decision without further consultation. We should get nothing but trouble in New York; we were courting disaster. (From the way Dulles spoke you would have thought he was warning us against entering a bawdy house.)”<sup>77</sup> Dulles looked upon the United Nations as a hopeless diplomatic quagmire.

In a letter to Eisenhower on October 1, 1956, Eden tried to tie Nasser to Soviet expansionism. He observed: “There is no doubt in our minds that Nasser, whether he likes it or not, is now effectively in Russian hands, just as Mussolini was in Hitler’s. It would be ineffective to show weakness to Nasser now in order to placate him as it was to show weakness to Mussolini. The only result was and would be to bring the two together.”<sup>78</sup> Eden also tried once again to tie Egypt to various communist movements throughout the Arab world that sought the downfall of the West.

The following day, Secretary of State Dulles made clear in a press conference the real differences between the British and the Americans:

There were, I admit, differences of approach by the three nations to the Suez dispute, which perhaps arise from fundamental concepts. For while we stand together, and I hope shall always stand together in treaty relations covering the North Atlantic, any areas encroaching in some form

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 155. “The new doctrine about the infallibility of the United Nations, whether in the Security Council or in the Assembly, was declared by Gaitskell and his colleagues with all the infatuation of ultramontaniam. Gaitskell in this respect resembled in 1956 Cardinal Manning in 1870.”

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 135-136.

<sup>78</sup> Boyle, ed., *The Eden-Eisenhower Correspondence, 1955-1957*, 172.

or manner on the problem of so-called colonialism, find the United States playing a somewhat independent role. The shift from colonialism to independence will be going on for another 50 years, and I believe that the task of United Nations is to try to see that this process moves forward in a constructive, evolutionary way, and does not come to a halt or go forward through violent, revolutionary processes which would be destructive of much good.<sup>79</sup>

The British responded to Dulles by accusing the Secretary of State of diminishing their negotiating position at the United Nations. In his memoirs Eden wrote, “It would be foolish to pretend that Mr. Dulles’s remarks on colonialism did not represent his feelings and those of many of his countrymen. These sentiments certainly played their part in the reaction of some Americans to the Anglo-French intervention at Suez.”<sup>80</sup> Yet, Dulles could not have been clearer. He reiterated the American idea of evolutionary change in the Middle East rather than upholding British colonialism or endorsing radical and violent Arab or Islamic revolutions. British and American foreign policies again diverged on fundamental questions of strategy and tactics in the Middle East and North Africa.

To help resolve these differences, Patrick Dean, British Joint Intelligence Committee chairman, came to Washington to review Project Omega with U.S. officials in early October 1956. British Historian Stephen Dorril has written: “Dulles mentioned MI6 plans for his [Nasser’s] overthrow, but Eisenhower repeated that ‘we should have nothing to do with any project for a covert operation against Nasser personally’. As

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<sup>79</sup> Eden, *Full Circle*, 556-557.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 557.

George Young feared, the Americans would not join.”<sup>81</sup> Eisenhower made a special point of rejecting the assassination of Nasser: “On October 8, 1956, Herbert Hoover, Jr., the Under-Secretary of State, told Eisenhower that ‘one of our agencies’ had devised a plan that was quicker and more direct ‘on how to topple Nasser’. Whether or not that was a euphemism for assassination, Eisenhower rejected the premise. Goodpaster noted, ‘the President said that an action of this kind could not be taken when there is as much active hostility as at present.’”<sup>82</sup> Despite Eisenhower’s steadfast objections, the British continued to make plans to assassinate Nasser.<sup>83</sup>

While visiting his wife in the hospital, Eden was himself struck by a life threatening fever on October 5, 1956. Kennett Love has written: “Eden was felled that day, a Friday, by a chill, ague, and raging fever during a visit to his wife in the University College Hospital, where, it was authoritatively said, she was recuperating from a

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<sup>81</sup> Dorril, *MI6*, 636. See also Memorandum of Conversation, Dwight D. Eisenhower and John Foster Dulles, on October 2, 1956, File Meetings with the President, Aug.- thru Dec. 1956 (5), White House Memoranda Series Box no. 4, A67-28, Papers of John Foster Dulles, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library. “But the question was whether the British or French really wanted a peaceful solution. I referred to the various projects of the British seemingly in different directions—one favoring a settlement by negotiation, another favoring overthrow by economic pressures; another favoring overthrow by a covert operation and another favoring open use of military force. The president felt that we should have nothing to do with any project for a covert operation against Nasser personally.”

<sup>82</sup> Ambrose, *Eisenhower. Vol. 2, The President, 1952-1969*, 351.

<sup>83</sup> Dorril, *MI6*, 638-639. “Eden had a ‘toothy grin’ when Young laughingly said that ‘thuggery is not on the agenda’. Dick White claimed that he expressly told the Prime Minister that he would not sanction MI6’s further involvement in Nasser’s assassination. He ‘made it clear that MI6 was a hostile service, but not a collection of hit men’. Officers of the time smile at the denial. Everyone, it appears, was knowingly playing the deniability game. By then MI6 no longer had any assets in Cairo and it was decided that a three-man hit team would be sent by the SPA [Special Political Actions] Group from London as ‘a Special Service to assassinate Nasser’. They apparently did enter Egypt but got ‘cold feet and left’. At the same time, the Egyptian security service had been tipped off about the presence in Cairo of a German mercenary who had been hired by MI6 for a ‘wet job’. He disappeared before the security net was closed and was believed to have been smuggled out of the country under diplomatic cover. There was also a British plan to use SIS troops in the run-up to the invasion to kill or capture Nasser. Senior SIS officers gave an assurance that ‘any evidence of their involvement would be removed so smartly as to be deniable’.”



miscarriage. Eden lost consciousness in an elevator in a fit so severe that his aides thought he was going to die. His fever mounted to 106 degrees.”<sup>84</sup> Eden stayed in the hospital for the weekend and then miraculously returned to work the following Monday.<sup>85</sup> The strain and the pressure of Suez and personal problems had overwhelmed the prime minister.

Eisenhower held a press conference on October 12: “I have an announcement. I have got the best announcement that I could possibly make to America tonight. The progress made in the settlement of the Suez dispute this afternoon at the United Nations is most gratifying. Egypt, Britain and France have met through their foreign ministers and agreed on a set of principles on which to negotiate, and it looks like here is a very great crisis that is behind us.”<sup>86</sup> In fact, he was wrong. The United Nations resolution would not be agreed to, was vetoed by the Soviet Union, and so the Suez Crisis began to grow, not diminish.

Through U-2 spy flights over Israel, Eisenhower learned that the Israelis had purchased sixty French Mystere jets. This action clearly violated the Tripartite Declaration of 1950, an agreement between the United States, Great Britain, and France to maintain the military status quo in the Middle East by restricting arm sales. The United States had approved 24 French Mystere jets to Israel, but not 60. Ironically, the brand new American U-2 spy planes were not being used to spy on the Soviet Union, but

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<sup>84</sup> Kennett Love, *Suez—The Twice-Fought War: A History* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969), 444.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> Lloyd, *Suez 1956*, 160.

to spy on American allies, the British, the French, and the Israelis. Historian Stephen Ambrose has explained:

Over the next two weeks, there was a virtual blackout on communication between the United States on the one side and the French and the British on the other. Simultaneously, American interceptors picked up heavy radio traffic between Britain and France. American code breakers were unsuccessful in unraveling the content of the messages; they could only report that the sheer volume of traffic was ominous. Eisenhower's own expectation was that the Israelis would attack Jordan, supplied by the French and with covert British sanction, and that the British and the French would then take advantage of the confusion to occupy the canal. He was, in other words, badly misinformed, and had reached the wrong conclusions. He was about to be as completely surprised as he had been on December 7, 1941, by Pearl Harbor, or on December 16, 1944, by the Ardennes's counter offensive. The difference was that this time it was his friends were fooling him.<sup>87</sup>

The British chose to deliberately conceal their actions from the Americans. Selwyn Lloyd argued, "Eisenhower's mind was concentrated on the election campaign, appearing as the candidate who could preserve the peace of the world. The fact was that he had twice let us down and relieved the pressure on Nasser at critical moments."<sup>88</sup> Lloyd and Eden deliberately blamed the Americans for the failure of the peace negotiations, thus justifying their deceit of the Americans. If the British had truly desired a peaceful resolution of the conflict, they could have easily attained it.

In his book, *The Art of the Possible*, Rab Butler described what happened next on October 18, 1956:

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<sup>87</sup> Ambrose, *Eisenhower. Vol. 2, The President, 1952-1969*, 353.

<sup>88</sup> Lloyd, *Suez 1956*, 168.

I went straight to No. 10 where I found the Foreign Secretary, Selwyn Lloyd, in the lobby outside the Cabinet Room. He seemed moved and, gripping my arm, described how he had got back from the U.N. early on the 16<sup>th</sup> and immediately wafted to Paris in the wake of the Prime Minister to attend a conference with Mollet and Pineau. They had discussed the ever closer line up between Jordan, Syria and Egypt and the consequences of a preemptive strike by Israel, and it had been suggested that, if war broke out in the Middle East between Israel and Egypt, Britain and France would jointly intervene in the canal area to stop hostilities. Selwyn Lloyd seemed anxious about my own reaction. At that moment I was summoned into the Cabinet Room.<sup>89</sup>

The British cabinet was planning a war in the Middle East.

Shockingly, Lloyd had just admitted to the Israelis the day before that Great Britain and Egypt were within seven days of reaching an agreement on the Suez Canal. Moshe Dayan, Chief of Staff of the Israeli Defense Forces, recorded in his memoirs, “If all was so well and good, why, then, was he here? Because, he[Lloyd] explained, such an agreement would not only fail to weaken Nasser, it would actually strengthen him, and since her Majesty’s Government considered that Nasser had to go, it was prepared to undertake military action in accordance with the latest version of the Anglo-French plan.”<sup>90</sup> This admission blatantly contradicted the Eden-Lloyd thesis that the Americans ought to be held responsible for the Suez Crisis.

The new military plan called for the Israelis to reach Suez within forty-eight hours. The Anglo-French ultimatum would then be issued for the Israelis and the Egyptians to withdraw. If, as planned, Egypt rejected the ultimatum, the British and

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<sup>89</sup>Richard Austen Butler, *The Art of the Possible: The Memoirs of Lord Butler* (Boston: Gambit, 1972), 193.

<sup>90</sup>Moshe Dayan, *Moshe Dayan: Story of My Life* (New York: Morrow, 1976), 218.

French would take the Suez Canal and overthrow Nasser.<sup>91</sup> Negotiated between October 22 and 24, 1956, between Great Britain, France, and Israel, Protocol of Sevres formally sealed the deal.<sup>92</sup> Upset that a written document existed, Eden sent Patrick Dean back to Paris to request that the other copies of the document be destroyed. The French refused. The Israelis had already returned to Israel with their copy.<sup>93</sup>

On October 23, 1956, Selwyn Lloyd deliberately misled U.S. Ambassador to Great Britain Winthrop Aldrich about Israeli intentions in the Middle East. He told Aldrich: “A major Israeli attack either on Jordan or Egypt at this time would put Britain

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Avi Shlaim, “The Protocol of Sevres, 1956: Anatomy of a War Plot,” *International Affairs* 73, no. 3 (1997): 509-530. “The results of the conversations which took place at Sevres 22-24 October 1956 between the representatives of the Governments of the United Kingdom, the State of Israel and of France are the following: 1. The Israeli forces launched in the evening of 29 October 1956 a large scale attack on the Egyptian forces with the aim of reaching the Canal Zone the following day. 2. On being apprised of these events, the British and French Governments during the day of 30 October 1956 respectively and simultaneously make two appeals to the Egyptian government and the Israeli government, on the following lines: A. To the Egyptian Government a) halt all acts of war. b) withdraw all its troops 10 miles from the Canal. c) accept temporary occupation of key positions on the Canal by the Anglo-French forces to guarantee freedom of passage through the canal by vessels of all nations until a final settlement. B. To the Israeli Government: a) hold all acts of war. b) withdraw all its troops 10 miles to the east of the canal. In addition, the Israeli Government will be notified that the French and British Governments have demanded of the Egyptian Government to accept temporary occupation of key positions along the Canal by Anglo-French forces. It is agreed that if one of the Governments refused, or did not give its consent, within 12 hours the Anglo-French forces would intervene with the means necessary to ensure that their demands are accepted. C. the representatives of the three Governments agree that the Israeli Government will not be required to meet the conditions in the appeal addressed to it, in the event that the Egyptian government does not accept those in the appeal addressed to it for their part. 3. In the event that the Egyptian Government should fail to agree within the stipulated time to the conditions of the appeal addressed to it, the Anglo-French forces will launch military operations against Egyptian forces in the early hours of the morning of 31 October. 4. The Israeli Government will send forces to occupy the western shore of the Gulf of Aqaba and the group of islands Tirane and Sanafir to ensure freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba. 5. Israel undertakes not to attack Jordan during the period of operations against Egypt. But in the event that during the same period Jordan should attack Israel, the English government undertakes not to come to the aid of Jordan. 6. The arrangements of the present protocol must remain strictly secret. 7. They will enter into force after the agreement of the three governments. (signed) David Ben-Gurion, Patrick Dean, Christian Pineau.”

<sup>93</sup> Patrick Dean, The Dean Memorandum, FCO 73/ 205, The National Archives, Kew, London, United Kingdom.

in (an) impossible situation... He (was) unwilling (to) believe the Israelis would launch a full scale attack upon Egypt despite the temptation to do so, in present circumstances... Lloyd's major concern is (the) threat (of) further large-scale attacks on Jordan."<sup>94</sup> The American ambassador, having been deceived by the British Foreign Secretary, was misled into thinking that Israel planned to attack Jordan. The inability of the Americans to grasp the collusion of the British, French, and Israelis stemmed from British statesmen who excelled at prevarication.

The following day the Israelis launched a military attack, not against Jordan but against Egypt. At a meeting at the White House that evening, Eisenhower quickly recognized the British deception. He declared, "We should let them know at once...that we recognize that much is on their side in the dispute with the Egyptians, but that nothing justifies double crossing us."<sup>95</sup> After this meeting, Eisenhower called in the British diplomat, J. E. Coulson, and asked him about French collusion with Israel, pointing to the 60 French Mystere jets that had been sold to Israel. He did not charge the British with collusion but wanted only to "redeem (their) word about supporting any victim of aggression."<sup>96</sup> Eisenhower referred to the Tripartite Treaty of 1950. That treaty called for the United States, Great Britain, and France to defend any Middle Eastern nation against an aggressor. In this case, the treaty required the United States, Great Britain, and France to defend Egypt against Israel.

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<sup>94</sup> Andrew, *For the President's Eyes Only*, 231.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 232.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 233.

Eisenhower wanted to know what the British and the French planned to do. British historian Christopher Andrew has written, “Ike was so much in the dark that he speculated that ‘the hand of Churchill’, rather than of Eden, might be behind the British Suez adventure, since it was ‘in the mid-Victorian style’.”<sup>97</sup> Eisenhower began to receive reports that British and French military forces also had attacked Egypt. A series of telegrams flew between Eisenhower and Eden on October 30.

The final message Eisenhower sent to Eden no longer read “Dear Anthony” instead it read, “Dear Prime Minister:”

I have just learned from press of the 12- hour ultimatum which you and the French Government have delivered to the Government of Egypt requiring, under threat of forceful intervention, the temporary occupation by Anglo-French forces of key positions at Port Said, Ismailia and Suez in the Suez Canal Zone. I feel I must urgently express to you my deep concern at the prospect of this drastic action even at the very time when the matter is under consideration as it is today by the United Nations Security Council. It is my sincere belief that peaceful processes can and should prevail to secure a solution which will restore the armistice condition as between Israel and Egypt and also justly settle the controversy with Egypt about the Suez Canal.<sup>98</sup>

Eisenhower sent this message because he recognized the ultimatum as a pretext for the very military intervention that he had long opposed: “When news of the ultimatum reached Eisenhower, it is reported that ‘the White House crackled with barrack-room language the kind of which had not been heard since the days of General Grant’. The president rang Eden but was connected to his Press Secretary, William Clark, by mistake.

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Boyle, ed., *The Eden-Eisenhower Correspondence, 1955-1957*, 181.

‘Anthony’, Ike told Clark, believing him to be the Prime Minister, ‘you must have gone out of your mind.’”<sup>99</sup> Eisenhower realized he had been double-crossed by his friend and ally, Anthony Eden.

Other foreign events further complicated the crisis: the new Hungarian Prime Minister, Imre Nagy, announced a new coalition government that included non-communist members on October 31, 1956. At the same time, the Soviets promised to evacuate the Red Army from Hungary quickly. The Dulles brothers wrongly believed this coalition government signaled “the beginning of the collapse of the Soviet Empire.”<sup>100</sup> Meanwhile, the British and the French had started hostilities by bombing Egyptian airfields. Eisenhower’s immediate reaction: “How could we possibly support Britain and France if in doing so we lose the whole Arab world?”<sup>101</sup> Eisenhower, after much deliberation, chose the Arab world over his Western allies.

After considering Eisenhower’s response, Eden now realized that he had lost the support of the United States government. British historian Howard J. Dooley noted, “Eisenhower administered a lesson about superpower authority and British dependency. In the Mediterranean, the United States used its powerful Sixth Fleet as a weapon of intimidation, harassing the Anglo-French invasion fleet, submerging submarines in its path, buzzing the ships with aircraft, rattling its commanders, and perhaps delaying its arrival off Port Said by twenty-four hours.”<sup>102</sup> Eisenhower rattled the saber.

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<sup>99</sup> Andrew, *For the President’s Eyes Only*, 234.

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

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 235.

Eden did, however, take some comfort from an article in the *New York Times* that ran on November 1, 1956 that clearly understood his position:

It would be ridiculous to permit Colonel Nasser to pose before the United Nations or the world as the innocent victim of aggression, or to hold a protecting hand over him. On the contrary, in so far as there is anyone man guilty of aggression it is the Egyptian President, for he has waged war against Israel, Britain and France by propaganda, by gun-running, by infiltration of murderous bands, by stirring up rebellion in French North Africa, by seizing the Suez Canal by force and scrapping a treaty in the same manner in which Hitler marched into the Rhineland, by blocking the canal for Israeli shipping in defiance of United Nations orders—finally, by his whole loudly proclaimed program of throwing Israel into the sea in alliance with other Arab states and creating an Arab Empire under his own hegemony which would expand his influence in concentric circles to all Africa and the whole Moslem world.<sup>103</sup>

Eden wanted Nasser gone.

Eden knew that in some cases the national interests of the United States and Great Britain would conflict. In his memoirs, Eden tried to explain the dissimilarities between the United States and Great Britain over the Suez Canal Crisis:

It is obvious truth that safety of transit through the canal, though clearly a concern to the United States, is for them not a matter of survival as it is to us and, indeed, to all Europe and many other lands. Indeed, Mr. Dulles himself made this clear on August 28 when he said the United States' economy is not dependent upon the canal. Of course that is true. We must all accept it, and we should not complain about it, but it is equally true that throughout all these months this fact has inevitably influenced the attitude of the United States to these problems, as compared to that of ourselves and France. If anyone says that on that account we should have held up action until agreement could be reached with the United States as to what to do, I can only say that this would have been to ignore what

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<sup>102</sup> Dooley, "Great Britain's 'Last Battle' in the Middle East," 515.

<sup>103</sup> Eden, *Full Circle*, 590-591.



everyone here and in the United States knows to have been different approaches to some of these vital Middle Eastern questions. They know it. We know it. Of course, we deplore it, but I do not think that it can carry with it this corollary, that we must in all circumstances secure agreement from our American ally before we can act ourselves in what we know to be our own vital interests.<sup>104</sup>

The National Security Council met on November 1 at the White House to discuss the two crises, the Hungarian Revolution and the Suez Canal. Allen Dulles reported on Hungary. Historian Christopher Andrew wrote, “In a sense, what had occurred there was a miracle. Events had belied all our past views that a popular revolt in the face of modern weapons was an utter impossibility. Nevertheless, the impossible just happened, and because of the power of public opinion, armed forces could not effectively be used.”<sup>105</sup> Allen Dulles erroneously thought that the Soviet Empire was unraveling.

In the same meeting, John Foster Dulles spoke out on Suez, “It is nothing less than tragic that at this very time, when we are on the point of winning an immense and long-hoped-for victory over Soviet colonialism in Eastern Europe, we should be forced to choose between following in the footsteps of Anglo-French colonialism in Asia and Africa, or splitting our course away from their course.”<sup>106</sup> Dulles precisely described the

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 595-596.

<sup>105</sup> Andrew, *For the President's Eyes Only*, 235.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid. See also National Security Meeting, November 1, 1956, NSC Series Box No. 8, Ann Whitman File, Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953-61. “Secretary Dulles warned with emphasis that if we were not now prepared to assert our leadership in this cause, leadership would involve us in some very basic problems. For many years now the United States has been walking a tight rope between the effort to maintain our old and valued relations with our British and French allies on the one hand, and on the other trying to assure ourselves of the friendship and understanding of the newly independent countries who have escaped colonialism. It seemed to Secretary Dulles but in view of the overwhelming Asian and African pressure upon us, we could not walk this tightrope much longer. Unless we now assert and maintain this leadership, all of these newly independent countries will turn from us to the USSR. We will be looked

terrible division between the United States and Great Britain.

Eisenhower unwaveringly retold his decision that between Great Britain and France or the Arab world, he must choose the Arab world. Eisenhower's main concern in the Middle East was not defending Anglo-French colonialism but rather defeating Soviet expansionism. He even worried that the Soviets might give the Egyptians atomic weapons.

In the United Nations, Secretary of State Dulles sponsored a resolution calling for a cease-fire. On November 2, this UN resolution passed by a vote of 64 to 5 with six abstentions. The five votes against the resolution included Britain, France, Israel, Australia, and New Zealand.<sup>107</sup>

A bitter Anthony Eden later remarked, "It was not Soviet Russia, or any Arab state, but the government of the United States which took the lead in Assembly against Israel, France and Britain. Their Secretary of State said he moved the resolution with a heavy heart."<sup>108</sup> Eden believed that a cease-fire would not resolve the existing problems, but would instead exacerbate the problems in the Middle East. He complained that the United Nations did not create an effective international force to maintain the Suez Canal. The United States sponsored move for a cease-fire, would merely restore the status quo before the crisis had begun.

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upon as forever tied to British and French colonialist policies. In short, the United States would survive or go down on the basis of the fate of colonialism if the United States supports the French and British on the colonial issue. Win or lose, we will share the fate of Britain and France."

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 236.

<sup>108</sup> Eden, *Full Circle*, 604.

On the same day as the UN vote, Vice President Richard Nixon delivered a campaign speech that stated: “For the first time in history we have shown independence of Anglo-French policies towards Asia and Africa which seemed to us to reflect the colonial tradition. That Declaration of Independence has had an electrifying effect throughout the world.”<sup>109</sup> The British interpreted the Vice President’s statement as political electioneering, not the world’s vote of confidence in Eisenhower’s policies as the Vice President had suggested.

A short time later, Eisenhower told General Alfred Gruenther, the Supreme Commander of NATO, “If one has to fight then that is that. But I don’t see the point in getting into a fight to which there can be no satisfactory end and in which the whole world believes you are playing the part of the bully and you do not even have the firm backing of your entire people.”<sup>110</sup> The British, French, and Israelis assumed that Eisenhower, distracted by a presidential election, would be forced to go along with them. They badly misjudged him.

In the meantime, Secretary of State Dulles underwent emergency cancer surgery at Walter Reed Hospital on November 3, 1956 allowing the anglophobe Herbert Hoover Jr. to take over his responsibilities at the State Department. Prime Minister Eden rejected the cease-fire as called for by the United Nations. The Soviet Union then vetoed the American resolution demanding the withdrawal of the Red Army from Hungary. Eisenhower, who had originally inspired Hungarian freedom fighters with his broadcasts

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<sup>109</sup> Lloyd, *Suez 1956*, 202.

<sup>110</sup> Ambrose, *Eisenhower. Vol. 2, The President, 1952-1969*, 365.

from Radio Free Europe, now refused to help the Hungarians against the Soviets. He declined the CIA's request to assist Hungarian freedom fighters, and prohibited the possible use of American troops because he considered Hungary "as inaccessible to us as Tibet."<sup>111</sup> In this case, Eisenhower's commitment to rolling back communism in Eastern Europe proved to be hollow rhetoric.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff delivered a dire warning for the president about the Middle East: "By use of propaganda, agents and local communist parties the Soviets can cause extensive anti-Western rioting, sabotage and general disorder throughout the area, particularly at Western oil installations. To direct and assist in such operations the Soviets could introduce small numbers of professional agents and saboteurs."<sup>112</sup> In sum, the Soviets could bring political and economic chaos to the Middle East, chaos that might spread swiftly to Western Europe.

Soviet troops totaling 200,000 redeployed on Budapest in order to crush the Hungarian Revolution on November 4. Eisenhower's response: "We could do nothing."<sup>113</sup> The American refusal to come to the aid of the Hungarian freedom fighters indicated that Eisenhower would not use covert or overt military intervention to stop the Soviets in their admitted sphere of influence in Eastern Europe.

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 367.

<sup>112</sup> *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-1957 Volume XVI, Suez Crisis July 26-December 31, 1956*, 970.

<sup>113</sup> Andrew, *For the President's Eyes Only*, 236.

The next day British and French troops finally landed in Egypt near the Suez Canal.<sup>114</sup> President Bulganin of the Soviet Union sent letters to the leaders of Great Britain, France, and Israel, accusing them of unwarranted aggression against Egypt and used a veiled threat to use nuclear weapons against London and Paris unless British, French, and Israeli forces were withdrawn from Egypt. He warned of a third world war and suggested a joint Soviet-American force to clear the region of British and French troops. Eisenhower dismissed the proposal of joint Soviet-American action against Britain, France, and Israel as a ludicrous idea.

Eisenhower, for his part, now compared the Soviets to Hitler: “Those boys are both furious and scared. Just as with Hitler, that makes for the most dangerous possible state of mind. And we better be damned sure that every intelligence point and every outpost of our armed forces is absolutely right on their toes.”<sup>115</sup> Eisenhower continued, “We have to be positive and clear in our every word, every step. And if those fellows start something, we may have to hit ‘em—and, if necessary, with everything in the bucket.”<sup>116</sup> While having refused to help the Hungarian freedom fighters, Eisenhower prepared for the real possibility of launching an all-out nuclear attack against the Soviet

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<sup>114</sup> Memorandum of Conference with the President with Gov. Adams, Sec. Hoover, Mr. Phleger, Mr. Hegarty, Emmet Hughes, and Colonel Goodpaster on November 5, 1956, Memorandum by Goodpaster on November 7, 1956, File Meetings with the President, Aug.- thru Dec. 1956 (3), White House Memoranda Series Box no. 4, A67-28, Papers of John Foster Dulles, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library. “Mr. Hoover said the British and the French may be in a position from which they cannot pull back until Nasser is out. The question may well be ‘Eden or Nasser’. He added that Nasser’s position is wobbly at the moment. The President said this is something quite new said the British have always said their aim was to ‘deflate’ Nasser. Mr. Hoover suggested for consideration the possibility that Hammarskjold tell Nasser he must resign. The British may still have a coup in mind, as Nasser’s position deteriorates.”

<sup>115</sup> Ambrose, *Eisenhower. Vol. 2, The President, 1952-1969*, 368.

<sup>116</sup> Emmet John Hughes, *The Ordeal of Power: A Political Memoir of the Eisenhower Years* (New York: Atheneum, 1963), 222-223.

Union. He did not even blink over the possibility of a total global thermonuclear war, particularly if the Soviets introduced troops into the Middle East.<sup>117</sup>

On Election Day, Eisenhower remained apprehensive that the Soviets might take unilateral military action against British, French, or Israeli forces or use Syrian airfields, “If the Soviets attacked the British and the French we would be in war, and we would be justified in taking military action even if Congress were not in session.”<sup>118</sup> Colonel Goodpaster gloomily noted that in this meeting: “The President asked if our forces in the Mediterranean are equipped with atomic anti-submarine weapons.”<sup>119</sup> Eisenhower gravely contemplated nuclear war without seeking the advice or consent of the U.S. Congress.

British historian Christopher Andrew has noted that Eden and Lloyd wanted to continue the British military intervention until the canal was taken:

Macmillan and a majority of ministers, however, believed that Britain could not afford to go on. The crisis had begun a heavy run on the pound and a dramatic fall in British gold reserves. When Macmillan telephoned Washington, he was told that the price of American support for an IMF loan to prop up the pound was a cease-fire by midnight on November 6.

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<sup>117</sup> Brian McCauley, “Hungary and Suez, 1956: The Limits of Soviet and American Power,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 16, no. 4 (Oct. 1981), 795. “The irony was that the Soviets, by their abandonment of Egypt until 5 November, and the Americans, by their policy of ‘active non-involvement’ in Hungary and Poland, aided each other’s attempts to quell the crises in their own sphere of influence. In areas of the world where they were relatively powerless, both the Soviet Union and the United States felt that in times of crisis, the status quo was preferable to a complete breakdown in the existing power balance. Neither was prepared to risk a major war over an area it had little prospect of controlling. Geography, then, played a central role in determining the response of the Soviet Union to the Suez Crisis and the United States to the Hungarian Revolution. The belligerent calls for ‘rollback’ and ‘liberation’ on the American side and the ardent support for ‘anti-colonial’ wars and ‘wars of national liberation’ on the Soviet side proved to be nothing but empty rhetoric in the autumn of 1956.”

<sup>118</sup> Ambrose, *Eisenhower. Vol. 2, The President, 1952-1969*, 368.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*

The Eden government was thus forced into a humiliating climbdown, without achieving either control of the canal or the overthrow of Nasser.<sup>120</sup>

Churchill later stated, “When things become known it will turn out, I think, that Anthony has been bitched, and that he wanted to go and complete the military operation. When the cabinet wouldn’t let him he tried to resign, but they told him that he would split the Conservative Party.”<sup>121</sup> Eisenhower appeared relieved that the fighting had stopped and the Soviets had not militarily intervened.

What the public did not know and the British cabinet only realized slowly was that Eisenhower had declared economic war against Great Britain. He had launched an incredibly successful speculative financial attack on the value of sterling, which threatened to completely destabilize the British economy. Herbert Hoover Jr., an expert at international finance, suggested to Eisenhower the strategy of the Federal Reserve quickly dumping their sterling holdings at basement prices in effect, an attack on Britain’s currency. Historian Ricky-Dale Calhoun has concluded, “Hoover did not share Dulles’s negative view of Nasser and played a key role in persuading Eisenhower to

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<sup>120</sup> Andrew, *For the President’s Eyes Only*, 238. See also Lloyd, *Suez 1956*, 210-211. “Eden’s second reason was the financial one. Macmillan strongly advocated accepting the cease-fire both to me privately beforehand and at the Cabinet meeting. He had been a staunch supporter of our actions at every stage. He saw the dangers of a Nasser victory as clearly as any of us. But in those days the pound was on a fixed exchange rate. It was a reserve currency. A large proportion of world trade was conducted in pounds sterling. Any Chancellor of the Exchequer must have regard to these factors. I wonder whether any of the members of the Cabinet with his responsibilities would have dared to say, go on, whatever the consequences’. I believe from what I learnt of him later, when I knew him very much better, that there was another factor. I think that he was emotionally affected when he was told that the administration of his close wartime friend, Eisenhower, through the mouth of George Humphrey, the American Secretary of the Treasury whom Macmillan also regarded as a friend, was obstructing our drawing from the International Monetary Fund what was our own money. This was the first tranche. He wanted it to protect sterling from speculation against it which, it was suspected, was being stimulated by the United States Treasury.”

<sup>121</sup> Gilbert, *Never Despair: Winston S. Churchill, 1945-1965*, 1224-1225.

instruct the Federal Reserve to dump sterling on the world currency markets at a steep discount, thus threatening the British with severe devaluation of their currency to force them to agree to withdraw from Suez.”<sup>122</sup> Eisenhower played economic hardball with the British.

Eden discussed Eisenhower’s economic threats with French Foreign Minister Christian Pineau, “According to Pineau, the prime minister [Eden] said that he had received a call from Eisenhower, ‘who told me if you don’t get out of Port Said tomorrow, I’ll cause a run on the pound and drive it to zero’.”<sup>123</sup> This massively escalated the existing speculation on British sterling resulting from the Suez Crisis. Britain could not maintain the price of sterling nor a fixed exchange rate for the pound. Cameron F Cobbold, Governor of the Bank of England, declared this “would probably lead to the breakup of the sterling area (possibly even the dissolution of the Commonwealth), the collapse of [the European Payments Union], a reduction in the volume of trade and currency instability at home leading to severe inflation.”<sup>124</sup> In short, this was a major economic catastrophe for Great Britain.

Cobbold probably understated the economic catastrophe awaiting England if the sterling crisis was combined with the oil shortage from the Persian Gulf. Having blown up ships to block the Suez Canal, Nasser had stopped virtually all the oil from the Middle

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<sup>122</sup> Ricky-Dale Calhoun, “The Art of Strategic Counterintelligence, The Musketeer’s Cloak: Strategic Deception During the Suez Crisis of 1956,” Central Intelligence Agency, June 20, 2007 <https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studie...> (14 June 2011), 5.

<sup>123</sup> David A. Nichols, *Eisenhower 1956: The President’s Year of Crisis: Suez and the Brink of War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011), 264.

<sup>124</sup> James M. Boughton, “Northwest of Suez: The 1956 Crisis and the IMF,” *IMF Staff Papers* 48, no. 3 (2001): 435.



East from flowing to Western Europe. In addition, Eisenhower, through Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert Anderson, secretly negotiated and agreed to King Saud's order to stop all oil from Saudi Arabia going to Britain and France.<sup>125</sup> Great Britain's only reliable supplier of oil would be the United States of America. Thus, American oil suppliers could reap a hefty profit from Britain's economic crisis. Using the Federal Reserve and secret deals with the Saudis, Eisenhower orchestrated a British economic crisis that only he could control.

Eisenhower's actions actually threatened the British with a near-term collapse of their economy. Economists Adam Klug and Gregor W. Smith confirmed this reality:

We find that recent historians have been right to downplay the significance of the run on the pound in the first week of November 1956. Although this triggered a massive loss of reserves, the event did not significantly affect forward exchange rates. The historians have been wrong however to assert that there was no financial crisis. From the moment the Canal was nationalized the sterling exchange rate ceased to be credible and such credibility as had been regained was decisively reduced by the invasion. At the end of November these pressures came to a head, as reserve losses and falling exchange-rate credibility coincided and reserves fell below \$2000 million. Moreover, the rate of reserve loss was greater than in other sterling crises.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Nichols, *Eisenhower 1956*, 263. See also *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-1957 Volume XVI, Suez Crisis July 26-December 31, 1956*, 1200. Telegram from the Consulate General in Dharan to the Department of State, from Ambassador Wadsworth, November 26, 1956, "King then said: 'I have great confidence in USG and approve its plan for redistribution of oil, confident at the same time USG will minimize loss which Saudi Arabia will sustain as result[of] its implementation. We will welcome plan after withdrawal British-French forces in accordance UN resolutions, and thereafter it may be possible to restore relations with countries as before'."

<sup>126</sup> Adam Klug and Gregor W. Smith, "Suez and Sterling, 1956," Queen's Economics Department Working Paper No. 1256, Department of Economics, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada, 1999, 17-18.

The day after his overwhelming re-election, President Eisenhower met with Secretary of State Dulles at Walter Reed hospital to discuss the Suez Crisis, “The Secretary then said that the British and the French going into Egypt was ‘a crazy act’. The President said yes, although it was somewhat understandable if in fact the Russians were going to act in any case. The President added, however, that even if this were true, the British and French action was still ill-advised.”<sup>127</sup> Eisenhower then increased the pressure on the British government by putting Anthony Eden into a permanent diplomatic deep freeze. From November 7 until Eden’s retirement in January 1957, Eisenhower only communicated with Eden in the most minimal and perfunctory way. Eden had become, in Eisenhower’s view, *persona non grata*.<sup>128</sup>

British cabinet members, other than Eden and Lloyd, now needed to contact the U.S. government through Ambassador Winthrop Aldrich. Aldrich stated, “I was enormously helped at this time by the willingness of several important members of the British cabinet to exchange views with me with great frankness and permit me to convey their view and ideas directly to Washington, without passing through the Foreign Office.”<sup>129</sup> Eisenhower attacked both the Treasury and the Foreign Office!

The new British Ambassador to the United States, Sir Harold Caccia, and Pierson

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<sup>127</sup> Memorandum of Conversation with President, Secretary of State, Mr. Hoover Junior and Mr. Macomber at Walter Reed Hospital on November 7, 1956, File Meetings with the President, Aug. thru Dec. 1956 (3), White House Memoranda Series Box No. 4, A67-28, Papers of John Foster Dulles, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library.

<sup>128</sup> Victor Rothwell, *Anthony Eden*, 236. “Eisenhower was building up a resentment against Eden which exploded from 7 November as reports reached him from French sources of the three-power collusion, confirming the suspicions which he already entertained. From ‘trying to understand’ Eden his attitude became hostile to the point of vindictiveness.”

<sup>129</sup> Winthrop W. Aldrich, “The Suez Crisis: A Footnote to History,” *Foreign Affairs* 45, no. 3 (April 1967), 548.

Dixon at the UN also had been frozen out.<sup>130</sup> Aldrich recalled that he was “surprised at the vitriolic nature of Eisenhower’s reaction to what happened. I think it was unstatesmanlike; indeed I think it was a dreadful thing the way the U.S. government permitted itself to act towards Eden because of pique or petulance...the President just went off the deep end. He wouldn’t have anything to do with Eden at all. He wouldn’t even communicate with him.”<sup>131</sup> This incredible state of affairs lasted until Macmillan succeeded Eden. Eisenhower and Dulles flatly refused to deal with Prime Minister Eden or the British Foreign Office. This boycott of Britain’s top leaders allowed Eisenhower and Dulles, using Aldrich as a conduit, to conspire with British cabinet members such as Macmillan, Butler, and Salisbury, to work to remove Eden from the premiership without leaving a paper trail.

A National Security Council meeting on November 8, 1956, indicated that Eisenhower still did not believe that the British had not been in on the collusion with the French and the Israelis until the final days before the invasion. He had originally thought the British misled him, but now believed that the British would not have deliberately misled him.<sup>132</sup> Eisenhower only became fully cognizant of British collusion on

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<sup>130</sup> Keith Kyle, *Suez* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), 493.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 497. “Ben Gurion was told by the head of Mossad on 1 December that ‘the Americans will not make up with the English until Eden goes’.”

<sup>132</sup> See also Memorandum of Conversation between the President, Secretary of State, and Mr. Macomber at Walter Reed Hospital on November 12, 1956, File Meetings with the President, Aug.- thru Dec. 1956 (3), White House Memoranda Series Box no. 4, A67-28, Papers of John Foster Dulles, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library. “Returning to the Suez Crisis the President said he now believed that the British had not been in on the Israeli-French planning until the very last stages and they had no choice but to come into the operation. He had felt when the British originally denied collusion with the French and the Israelis that they were misleading us, but he had now come to the conclusion that they were telling the truth. One of the arguments President cited to support this view was the long delay that took place between the time

November 16, when French Foreign Minister Christian Pineau admitted to Allen Dulles that the British and the French had worked together from the beginning. He had been totally double-crossed and lied to by Eden.<sup>133</sup> The British cabinet also experienced the terrible hostility that existed between Washington and London. R.A. Butler and Harold Macmillan had to communicate with Washington through Winthrop Aldrich, behind the back of their prime minister.<sup>134</sup>

Selwyn Lloyd visited John Foster Dulles at Walter Reed Hospital on Saturday, November 17, 1956 and Dulles had one quick question for Lloyd, “Selwyn, why did you stop? Why didn’t you go through with it and get Nasser down?” [Lloyd] replied, ‘Well, Foster, if you had so much as winked at us we might have gone on’.”<sup>135</sup> Dulles confirmed to Lloyd that the differences between the United States and Great Britain were about methods and tactics and that he had wanted Nasser overthrown as well.

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the British declared their intent to go into Egypt and the time they actually went in. He said that the British were meticulous planners and he was sure that if they had been in on the scheme from the beginning that they would have seen to it that they were in a position to move into Egypt in a matter of hours after they declared their intention to do so. The Secretary thought that the British having gone in should not have stopped until they had toppled Nasser. As it was they now had the worst of both possible worlds. They had received all the onus of making the move and at the same time had not accomplished their major purpose.”

<sup>133</sup> *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-1957 Volume XVI, Suez Crisis July 26-December 31, 1956*, 1136.

<sup>134</sup> Telegram from Winthrop Aldrich to Herbert Hoover Junior, November 12, 1956, Foster Dulles Nov. 1956 (2), Dulles-Herter Series Box No. 8, Ann Whitman File, Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953-61. “At evening reception Buckingham Palace November 8, Butler took me aside and said with great earnestness how deeply he deplored the existence of what he termed mutual misunderstandings of policy which had arisen between US and UK governments. He quite evidently was greatly disturbed by the course followed by a majority of the Cabinet although he did not specifically so state. He said to me, ‘I have been meaning to come and see you for a long time to tell you that in my opinion you are the only man who is in a position to explain to your government in detail the various attitudes of the members of our government. Never has an ambassador occupied a more important position than you do at the present moment’. He went on to urge me to see Macmillan at the earliest opportunity.”

<sup>135</sup> Lloyd, *Suez 1956*, 219.

Dulles met with another important visitor that day, President Eisenhower, who had pointedly refused to meet with Lloyd.<sup>136</sup> Eisenhower talked gravely to Dulles about his opinion of Prime Minister Anthony Eden: “The President spoke of the reactions of British Generals, with whom he talked recently, concerning Prime Minister Eden. Both had expressed an increasing lack of confidence in the British Prime Minister.”<sup>137</sup> Dulles further noted, “He said that one of the most pleasant things in life was to find one’s estimate of a man increased each time one had dealings with him. Conversely he thought one of the most disappointing things was to start with an exceedingly high opinion of a person and then have continually to downgrade this estimate on the basis of succeeding contacts with him. He indicated that Eden fell into the latter category.”<sup>138</sup> Eden had won the contempt of both Eisenhower and Dulles.

Furthermore, Eisenhower privately communicated to Macmillan and Butler, through Aldrich, that he required not only a withdrawal of British forces from Suez, but the resignation of Anthony Eden. On November 19, 1956, Macmillan told Aldrich that a

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<sup>136</sup> Herman Finer, *Dulles Over Suez: The Theory and Practice of His Diplomacy* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1964), 446. “The British Foreign Minister could not get to see the President. He could not at first even get to see Herbert Hoover Jr.”

<sup>137</sup> Memorandum of Conversation between Dwight D. Eisenhower and John Foster Dulles, and Mr. Macomber at Walter Reed Hospital on November 17, 1956, File Meetings with the President, Aug.-thru Dec. 1956 (3), White House Memoranda Series Box no. 4, A67-28, Papers of John Foster Dulles, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library.

<sup>138</sup> Memorandum of Conversation between Dwight D. Eisenhower and John Foster Dulles, and Mr. Macomber at Walter Reed Hospital on November 17, 1956, File Meetings with the President, Aug.-thru Dec. 1956 (3), White House Memoranda Series Box no. 4, A67-28, Papers of John Foster Dulles, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library.

major Cabinet shakeup was imminent, with the possible departure of Prime Minister Eden due to poor health.<sup>139</sup>

The next day, Ambassador Winthrop Aldrich called the President,

President: We have been getting your messages, and I want to make an inquiry. You are dealing with at least one person—maybe two or three--- on a very personal basis. Is it possible for you, without embarrassment, to get together the two that you mentioned in one of your messages?

Aldrich: Yes, one of them I have been playing bridge with. Perhaps I can stop him.

President: I'd rather you talk to both together. You know who I mean? One has the same name as my predecessor at Columbia University; the other was with me in the war.

(Note: presumably, Butler and Macmillan)

Aldrich: I know the one with you in the war. Oh yes, now I've got it.

President: Could you get them informally and say of course we are interested and sympathetic, and, as soon as things happen that we anticipate, we can furnish 'a lot of fig leaves'.

Aldrich: I certainly can say that.

President: Will that be enough to get the boys moving?

Aldrich: I think it will be.

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<sup>139</sup>Telegram from Winthrop Aldrich to Dwight D. Eisenhower, John Foster Dulles, and Herbert Hoover Junior, Dulles, JF Nov. 56 (1), Dulles-Herter Series Box No. 8, Ann Whitman File, Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953-61. "Macmillan came to the residence tonight at his request, my telegram No. 2791 appears to have been correct in every detail. Eden has had physical breakdown and will have to go on vacation immediately, first for one week and then for another, and this will lead to his retirement. Government will be run by triumvirate of Butler, Macmillan, and Salisbury. While Macmillan did not say so specifically, I gather that eventual set up will be Butler Prime Minister, Macmillan Foreign Secretary, Lloyd Chancellor of the Exchequer, with Salisbury remaining Lord President Of Council. Possibly Macmillan might be Prime Minister. First action after Eden's departure for reasons of health will be on withdrawal of British troops from Egypt. Macmillan said, 'if you can give us a fig leaf to cover our nakedness' I believe we can get a majority of the cabinet to vote for such withdrawal without requiring conditions in connection with location of United Nations forces and methods of re-opening and operating Canal, although younger members of the cabinet will be strongly opposed." Phone Conversation between Dwight D. Eisenhower and George Humphrey on November 19, 1956, File November 56 Phone Calls, DDE Diary Box 19, Ann Whitman File, Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953-61. "Mr. Humphrey: 'I hate to have a man stick in there, and go to a vote of confidence and get licked. If they throw him out, then we have these Socialists to lick.'"

President: Herb (Hoover) probably will send you a cable later tonight. You see, you don't want to be in a position of interfering between those two. But we want to have you personally tell them. They are both good friends.

Aldrich: Yes, very much so. Have you seen all my messages? Regarding my conversations with them all?

President: Yes—with at least two.

Aldrich: That is wonderful. I will do this--- tomorrow?

President: Yes, first thing in the morning.

Aldrich: I shall certainly do it. And will that communicate with you at once. Can do it without the slightest embarrassment.

President: Communicate through regular channels—through Herb.<sup>140</sup>

Eisenhower and Aldrich spoke in code. One of the “fig leaves” may have been providing England with oil. Goodpaster noted, “The President said that when the British and the French had withdrawn their troops, the United States ‘would talk to the Arabs to obtain the removal of any objections they may have regarding the provision of oil to Western Europe’.”<sup>141</sup> But in the context of Aldrich and Macmillan’s previous messages Eisenhower may have agreed to give massive financial aid to Great Britain on the condition that the British cabinet agree to an immediate withdrawal of troops from Suez and that Eden resign. Unfortunately for Eisenhower, Macmillan’s prediction of Eden’s resignation, because of poor health, proved to be wrong.

Just before going on his long vacation to Ian Fleming’s home, Goldeneye, in Jamaica, Prime Minister Eden renewed his orders on or about November 23, 1956 for

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<sup>140</sup> Phone Conversation between Dwight D. Eisenhower and Ambassador Winthrop Aldrich on November 20, 1956, File November 56 Phone Calls, DDE Diary Box 19, Ann Whitman File, Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953-61.

<sup>141</sup> Goodpaster Memorandum of Conference, November 21, 1956, Ann Whitman File, The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower, The Presidency: The Middle Way XVII, p. 2403. Footnote 1: “As soon as things happen that we anticipate, we can furnish ‘a lot of fig leaves’.”

MI6 to kill Nasser. British historian Stephen Dorril has written, “One of those games was Prime Minister Eden’s order to MI6 on or about November 23 to proceed with renewed assassination attempts. It was Eden’s last act before he left for Jamaica to recuperate at the home of James Bond’s creator, Ian Fleming. The MI6 station chief in Beirut, Donald Prater, packed up immediately and left for London: ‘Thuggery was on the agenda’.”<sup>142</sup> Unfortunately for the prime minister, thuggery would not be perpetrated on Nasser, but on himself.

Eden did not go off on a vacation; rather he went into permanent political exile on a distant island, not unlike Napoleon.<sup>143</sup> Eisenhower and Dulles unequivocally refused to work with him. Behind Eden’s back and in concert with Eisenhower, a new pro-American, British political triumvirate had been set up, with R.A. Butler, Harold Macmillan, and Lord Salisbury. The new British leadership owed nothing to Eden. They informed Eden of their decisions, and depended on Eisenhower for everything.

When Eden returned to England on December 14, he learned rather quickly that he had lost virtually all of his power. Eden was not consulted on but rather informed of British cabinet actions. Eden remained Prime Minister through Christmas before formally resigning on January 9, 1957, for health reasons. Through his hard line demand for a ceasefire and then the demand for immediate British withdrawal from Suez, Eisenhower had destroyed the political career of Sir Anthony Eden.

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<sup>142</sup> Dorril, *MI6*, 649.

<sup>143</sup> See also Gilbert, *Never Despair: Winston S. Churchill, 1945-1965*, 1224. Footnote 3: “Letter of 6 December 1956: Churchill Papers, 2/143 “Randolph Churchill earned Eden’s life-long opprobrium for writing to the *Manchester Guardian* that the disastrous position of Britain at Suez was like that of the Germans at Stalingrad. ‘But even Hitler did not winter in Jamaica’.”



Now through economic blackmail, Eisenhower continued to control the British government and the destiny of the British Empire. He demonstrated the wisdom of Sun Tzu: “An army is only the instrument which administers the coup de grace to an enemy already defeated by intelligence operations which separated the enemy from his allies, corrupted his officials, spread misleading information, and correctly assessed his strength and weaknesses—winning one hundred battles is not the acme of skill---to subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill.”<sup>144</sup> Eisenhower’s economic brinksmanship not only vanquished the wayward British, it severely undercut the transatlantic alliance.

The United States economic sanctions on Great Britain caused former Prime Minister Winston Churchill to intervene with his old American friend in order to try to reduce the pressure. Churchill wrote to Eisenhower on November 23, 1956:

There is not much left for me to do in this world and I have neither the wish nor the strength to involve myself in the present political stress and turmoil. But I do believe with unfaltering conviction that the theme of the Anglo-American alliance is more important today than at any time since the war. You and I had some part in raising it to the plane on which it has since stood. Whatever the arguments adduced here and in the United States for or against Anthony’s actions in Egypt, it will now be an act of folly, on which our whole civilization may founder, to let events in the Middle East come between us.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Ronald Reagan and Douglas Brinkley, *The Notes: Ronald Reagan’s Private Collection of Stories and Wisdom* (New York: HarperCollins, 2011), 69.

<sup>145</sup> Dayan, *Moshe Dayan*, 450-451. See also Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Waging Peace, 1956-1961; The White House Years* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1965). Eisenhower’s reply can be found in *Waging Peace*, Appendix H, 681: “Now I still believe that we must keep several facts clearly before us, the first one always being that the Soviets are the real enemy and all else must be viewed against the background of that truth. The second fact is that nothing would please this country more nor, in fact, could help us more, than to see British prestige and strength renewed and rejuvenated in the Mid-East. We want those countries to trust and lean toward the Western World, not Russia. A third fact is that we want to help Britain right now, particularly in its difficult fuel and financial situation, daily growing more serious. All we have asked in order to come out openly has been a British statement that it would conform to the resolutions of the United Nations.”

Churchill's argument was simple, that the United States and Great Britain must work together or face the real possibility of losing the Middle East and North Africa to the Soviet Union. Right or wrong, the Suez Crisis should be decided by historians in the future.

Repairing the transatlantic alliance remained a difficult task. On Tuesday, November 27, 1956, the president and Dulles had a phone conversation about their problems with the British:

Whereas, we are trying to time it properly so as to help them out permanently—which they don't seem to understand. Ismay says that the man who now seems kicked out will come back for sure; thinks they have done a terrible thing and that NATO might be broken up.... Mr. Dulles said of course that is bad—but it is awfully hard to see how we can begin to use that oil to meet their needs before they have indicated that they would comply with the UN resolution. The President said the public does not know this, and wondered if we shouldn't let it be known? Mr. Dulles thinks the public need not know, that a public statement might do more harm than good because it would look as though we were publicly subjecting them to pressure, which would be resented. He feels they would prefer to act under their own steam. The President's thought was to say that we understand they are going to comply..... The Secretary said it was they who double crossed us, and now are trying to put the blame on us. He said, 'Nothing has been stronger and clearer than your letters to Eden'.<sup>146</sup>

British historian Stephen Dorril has correctly concluded, "Harold Macmillan and Rab Butler had intrigued with US Ambassador, Winthrop Aldrich, 'to give assurances that Eden would not remain Prime Minister'. Indeed, the White House conspired to

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<sup>146</sup> Phone conversation between Dwight D. Eisenhower and John Foster Dulles on November 27, 1956, File November 56 Phone Calls, DDE Diary Box 19, Ann Whitman File, Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953-61.

ensure that Macmillan was the next PM as part of a plan to prevent the emergence of a Labour government as a consequence of the crisis.”<sup>147</sup> Eisenhower’s pressure on Great Britain had to be calibrated in order to be strong enough to remove Eden and overcome the anti-Americans in the cabinet, but not so strong as to diminish Macmillan, Butler, and Salisbury, which would have created a Labour Government.

This political pressure took the form of economic blackmail.<sup>148</sup> Secretary of the Treasury George Humphrey told Ambassador Harold Caccia, “You will not get a dime from the United States government if I can stop it, until you have gotten out of Suez! You are like burglars who have broken into somebody else’s house. So get out! When you do, and not until then, you’ll get help!”<sup>149</sup> Humphrey dutifully described Great Britain’s dire economic straits in a National Security Council meeting held on November 30, 1956:

Secretary Humphrey stated that in point of fact the financial aspects of Britain’s problems were even more serious than her physical situation. The British reserves were falling very rapidly. Even some slight indication of a run on currency could spell disaster for Great Britain. We are prepared to handle the situation and to help them get themselves back in shape. We are certainly going to see them through. Secretary Wilson said that he was glad to hear this, but believed that it would be wiser for

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<sup>147</sup> Dorril, *MI6*, 649. See also David Dutton, *Anthony Eden: A Life and Reputation* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997), 448. “The American aim seems to have been to keep a Conservative government in power, but one probably not headed by Eden. Not surprisingly, it was the Chancellor who took the lead. Despite the impression given in his memoirs, Macmillan now believed that Eden ‘could never return and remain Prime Minister for long’.”

<sup>148</sup> Dooley, “Great Britain’s ‘Last Battle’ in the Middle East,” 516. “On 20 November, at the same time oil rationing had to be introduced, the Cabinet was informed by Macmillan of the depth of the financial crisis. In the first of a series of reports recorded in confidential annexes to the Cabinet minutes, Macmillan reported that the loss of gold and dollars during the month could run as high as \$300 million and that ‘sterling might cease to be an international currency’.”

<sup>149</sup> Finer, *Dulles Over Suez*, 454.

our help to be extended to the British through the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, rather than directly. Secretary Humphrey assured Secretary Wilson that this was precisely what we were proposing to do.<sup>150</sup>

British historian Dorril has written, “The lesson of Suez, he [Eden] wrote, was that ‘If we are to play an independent part in the world... we must ensure our financial and economic independence’. This, he believed, could be achieved only by excelling in ‘technical knowledge’ and by cutting drastically the defense budget.”<sup>151</sup> Eden understood that he had lost power because the British could not stand up to the economic pressure coming from the Americans. Ironically, Eisenhower had pioneered the implementation of economic warfare against America’s closest and most important ally.

On December 3, 1956, British Ambassador Caccia negotiated with Treasury Secretary Humphrey and Robert Murphy at the State Department a financial aid deal to rescue Britain. Nonetheless, Caccia said he was unable to give a specific date for the British withdrawal from Suez Canal area. Humphrey and Murphy replied that this was unacceptable. British historian Dooley wrote, “Caccia protested that ‘an Englishman’s word was his bond’, but the Americans were unmoved. Caccia then conveyed Great Britain’s aim of ‘complete withdrawal in 14 repeat 14 days’. Dulles conferred with Eisenhower and they decided that the British had met U.S. requirements, and at the end

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<sup>150</sup> National Security Council Meeting, November 30, 1956, NSC Series Box No. 8, Ann Whitman File, Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953-61.

<sup>151</sup> Dorril, *MI6*, 649-650.

of the day London was informed that the needed financial support would be forthcoming.”<sup>152</sup> The British had been sufficiently humbled.

As promised, the United States ensured the delivery of \$1.3 billion in IMF funds to the British on December 10, 1956. Eleven days later the British also received an additional \$500 million loan from the Export-Import Bank. On December 20, 1956, Eden addressed the House of Commons for the last time, where he falsely claimed “that there was not foreknowledge that Israel would attack Egypt.”<sup>153</sup> This proved to be Eden’s sad farewell to the House of Commons.

Macmillan, already campaigning for the premiership, later stated, “I like both Butler and Eden. They both have great charm. But it has been cruelly said that in politics there are no friends at the top. I fear it is so.”<sup>154</sup> Macmillan, the first man in and the first man out of the Suez Crisis would become the Queen’s new First Minister.

Foreign Secretary Lloyd wrote in his memoirs, “My theme was that, after the serious difference of opinion with the United States, we must try to make Western Europe less dependent upon America. I did not get much sympathy from my colleagues. Most of them thought that the first priority must be the mending of our fences with the United States.”<sup>155</sup> Lloyd’s anti-American outlook failed to impress a British cabinet seeking reconciliation with Eisenhower.

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<sup>152</sup> Dooley, “Great Britain’s ‘Last Battle’ in the Middle East,” 517.

<sup>153</sup> Jonathan Pearson, *Sir Anthony Eden and the Suez Crisis: Reluctant Gamble* (Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 168.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>155</sup> Lloyd, *Suez 1956*, 236.

Lloyd remained loyal to Eden to the end: “Towards the end of the morning meeting Eden said that the discussion must continue in the afternoon without him. He had to go to Sandringham. There was some barrack-room language from one of my colleagues, who thought it was unreasonable and inconsiderate to break off the discussion in this way. Neither he nor I had any idea of the reasons for Eden’s visit to see the Queen.”<sup>156</sup> Macmillan, Eisenhower’s long-time friend, would become Prime Minister and lead Great Britain into a junior partnership with the United States, a role that Churchill and Eden had long dreaded.

Eisenhower’s skilled deviousness and hypocrisy knew no bounds when on January 10, 1957, he wrote Eden: “I cannot tell you how deeply I regret that the strains and stresses of these times finally wore you down physically until you felt it necessary to retire....The only reason for recalling those days is to assure you that my admiration and affection for you have never diminished; I am truly sorry that you had to quit the office of Her Majesty’s First Minister.”<sup>157</sup> None of Eisenhower’s statements were true. Eden responded a week later, “Thank you so much for your letter and the kind thoughts in it. I confess that it is a wrench to go just now, but the doctors really gave me no choice. Clarissa joins me in every wish for happiness to you both.”<sup>158</sup> Sadly, Eden lived on for another twenty years.

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<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Boyle, ed., *The Eden-Eisenhower Correspondence, 1955-1957*, 190.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

What Eden never understood was that when President Eisenhower was given the stark choice between his friends, the British and the French, and the Arab world, Eisenhower would pick the Arab world. Eisenhower's support of Arab nationalism over British and French colonialism derived from his extreme anti-communist view of the region. British political hegemony in the region gave way to anti-communist Arab nationalism. While Nasser may have been an assassin and a thug, he was no Hitler or Mussolini. Nasser had acted within his legal rights when he nationalized the Suez Canal. The British could not legally or morally justify direct military intervention in Egypt.

Prime Minister Eden had been warned numerous times by Eisenhower of the severe consequences of military intervention. He clearly did not believe those warnings. Eden and Lloyd blamed Eisenhower for their own diplomatic defeats and then deceived him about direct British military intervention in Egypt. After he had been safely re-elected, President Eisenhower's personal rage against Prime Minister Eden led to an American economic war against Great Britain. Eisenhower's extreme and drastic measures forced the resignation of Prime Minister Anthony Eden, ended the Suez Crisis, and vaulted the United States to the West's unquestioned power-broker.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION

Eisenhower's foreign policy represented a radical rejection of America's traditional European-based diplomacy and Great Britain's balance of power diplomacy. Rather than backing British colonial interests, the United States moved to a conservative foreign policy, anti-colonial and anti-communist that forced it to become the policeman of the world. The transatlantic alliance between the United States and Great Britain collapsed because the United States refused to be associated with British colonialism in the Far East and in the Middle East. Instead, Eisenhower, who had promised collective security through NATO and SEATO, practiced personal diplomacy based on brinksmanship, excessive unilateralism, and intense anti-communism. Eisenhower's excessive unilateralism meant that the United States, particularly after alienating its Western allies in the Suez Crisis, would be forced in the future to go it alone in wars in the Far East, the Middle East, and the Western Hemisphere. Ironically, Eisenhower had created an environment for future U.S. presidents in which the military-industrial complex could flourish, while completely undermining the American economy and what Eisenhower called "the American way of life."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Will Herberg, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), 79. "The American way of life is individualistic, dynamic, and pragmatic. It affirms the supreme value and dignity of the individual, it stresses incessant activity on his part, for he is never to rest but is always to be striving to 'get ahead', it defines an ethic of self-reliance,



On January 5, 1957, President Eisenhower delivered an address to a joint session of Congress on the importance of the Middle East to the United States. He unequivocally stated, “Our country supports without reservation the full sovereignty and independence of each and every nation of the Middle East.”<sup>2</sup> He unmistakably put the United States on the side of those nations seeking independence from Anglo-French colonialism and those resisting communist subversion. Eisenhower remained concerned that the Soviet Union, in keeping with its communist ideology, might try to occupy and control the Middle East. He knew that two-thirds of the known oil supply in the world lay in this region. Eisenhower had massively expanded the American commitment to the Middle East in order to curtail the grave danger of the Soviet Union trying to cut off the region’s oil supply to Europe, Africa, Asia, and the United States.

As a result of the Suez Crisis, the United States took on the responsibility of protecting the sovereign nations of the Middle East. Previous American commitments in the Middle East included the Tripartite Declaration of May 25, 1950 and presidential assurances to the King of Saudi Arabia on October 31, 1950. In his speech to the Congress, Eisenhower stated emphatically, “There is the presidential declaration of April 9, 1956, that the United States will within constitutional means oppose any aggression in the area. There is our declaration of November 29, 1956, that a threat to the territorial

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merit, and character, and judges by achievement: ‘deeds, not creeds’ are what count. The ‘American Way of Life’ is humanitarian, ‘forward looking’, optimistic. Americans are easily the most generous and philanthropic people in the world, in terms of their ready and unstinting response to suffering anywhere on the globe. The American believes in progress, in self-improvement, and quite fanatically in education. But above all, the American is idealistic.”

<sup>2</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, “Special Message to the Congress on the Situation in the Middle East” 5 January 1957, [www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=11007&st=&st1=](http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=11007&st=&st1=) (16 August 2011).

integrity of Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, or Turkey would be viewed by the United States with the utmost gravity.”<sup>3</sup> Eisenhower had come to Congress to have them support and ratify his foreign policy strategy in the Middle East-- the Eisenhower Doctrine. He had massively expanded the role of the United States as the protector of the Middle East and essentially replaced British political influence with American political influence.

For his part, Winston Churchill advocated “détente” between the Soviet Union and the West. He believed in colonialism and also that the British Empire had been a force for good, elevating and civilizing Third World countries. Yet it was Churchill rather than Eden who understood the growing economic weakness of Great Britain and its waning influence in the world. He also comprehended the limits of how far the British could influence American foreign policy. In Korea, Churchill accepted Eisenhower's bombing of military targets near the Yalu River, even if he did question the wisdom of such a policy. He vigorously supported Eisenhower’s threat to remove President Syngman Rhee of South Korea by a military coup, “Operation Everready,” if Rhee did not agree to an American negotiated armistice. Churchill and Eisenhower worked together to overthrow Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh of Iran. Churchill’s goal was a grand, global Anglo-American alliance. Ideological differences, however, would doom this transatlantic alliance.

Eisenhower’s ideology led him to completely distrust the communist leaders of the Soviet Union and China while Churchill, also distrustful of Soviet leadership, believed agreements of mutual interest were possible. Eisenhower's extreme anti-

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

communist ideology completely thwarted the efficacy of British diplomacy. The ideological war of Eisenhower and Dulles with the Soviet Union directly clashed with Churchill's and Eden's balance of power foreign policy. These ideological differences caused the first real break in the postwar Anglo-American relationship.

Many historians have wrongly praised Eisenhower for his restraint in the Far East.<sup>4</sup> One of many, David A. Nichols, has most recently written, "He ended the war in Korea in 1953, declined to intervene militarily in Indochina in 1954, and, above all, refused to support his World War II allies in their attack on Egypt in 1956. Eisenhower was the least interventionist of any modern president, although he approved covert operations in places like Iran and Guatemala."<sup>5</sup> Nichols and others seem to miss the point: to end the Korean War, Eisenhower threatened China and the Soviet Union with atomic weapons. He and other historians further ignore, or are unaware of, Eisenhower's dangerous threats against South Korea's Syngman Rhee. The threat of a military coup did not end in May 1953, as H.W. Brands has written, but continued until Rhee agreed to the armistice in July of that year.<sup>6</sup>

While his actions did lead to an armistice in July 1953, they did not lead to a peace agreement between the United States and North Korea at the Geneva Conference of 1954. Technically speaking, a state of war still exists between the two countries. North Korea has a one million man army on the border with South Korea, along with

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<sup>4</sup> See Roger Dingman, Edward Keefer, Michael Schaller, Barton J. Bernstein, Ernest R. May, Tom Wicker, and John Lewis Gaddis.

<sup>5</sup> Nichols, 278.

<sup>6</sup>See Brands, "The Dwight D. Eisenhower Administration, Syngman Rhee, and the 'Other Geneva' Conference of 1954," 59-85.

over eight million in the active reserves. By contrast, South Korea has an army of 650,000 and the United States currently has about 30,000 soldiers in South Korea and 47,000 in Japan.<sup>7</sup> A part of Eisenhower's legacy in the Far East is the failure to establish real peace on the Korean peninsula and the exorbitant taxpayer cost of maintaining 77,000 American troops in the region. In addition, the danger of a possible nuclear war in Korea has increased with the development of nuclear weapons by the North Koreans and the failure of U.S. diplomats to negotiate meaningful arms reductions.

In Indochina, historians should credit the U.S. Congress, Churchill, and Eden for Eisenhower's restraint. Instead, many historians wrongly praise Eisenhower for restraining the malevolent John Foster Dulles.<sup>8</sup> Churchill openly questioned Eisenhower's "domino theory" and doubted the effectiveness of any Western military intervention in Southeast Asia. Admiral Radford's "Operation Vulture" planned on using three atomic bombs to save Dien Bien Phu. Dulles offered the French two atomic bombs to save Dien Bien Phu. Eisenhower and Dulles saw Indochina as a military problem requiring a military solution. Churchill, Eden, the British Foreign Office, and even the British military argued against a military solution in deciding the fate of Indochina. They preferred peace negotiations in Geneva rather than fighting in the jungles of Vietnam. Nevertheless, Eisenhower promoted "United Action," a plan that would have included British military action in Indochina. Churchill explicitly denounced the idea to

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<sup>7</sup> "Global Firepower-2011 World Military Strength Ranking" <[www.globalfirepower.com](http://www.globalfirepower.com)> (11 September 2011).

<sup>8</sup> Historians in this category include, Chalmer Roberts, Townsend Hoopes, Arthur Krock, R. Gordon Hoxie, Donald Neff, Burton Kaufman, Warren I. Cohen, Elmo Richardson, Stephen E. Ambrose, Stephen G. Rabe, Fred I. Greenstein, Gregory J. Pemberton, Arthur Larson, Bernard B. Fall, Richard M. Saunders, David L. Anderson, Richard Immerman, Melanie Billings-Yun, and John Prados.

Eisenhower, Dulles, and Radford. The British would not join in any fight in Southeast Asia. Eisenhower then planned a possible atomic attack on China as well as the Soviet Union, while undermining British diplomatic efforts during the peace negotiations at Geneva. It was Winston Churchill who ordered Eden to override all American objections in order to obtain a peace agreement in Geneva. British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden, overcoming American objections, successfully brokered the peace agreement in which Vietnam was divided between North and South.

After the assassination of President Kennedy in 1963, the new president, Lyndon B. Johnson actively sought the advice of former President Eisenhower on the difficult question of whether or not he should increase the American troop presence in South Vietnam. Johnson fervently believed in Eisenhower's "domino theory." Eisenhower enthusiastically and continually endorsed Johnson's unilateral moves to escalate the number of U.S. troops during the Vietnam War. The governments of Britain and France, however, followed the advice of Churchill and Eden to stay out of jungle warfare. On August 3, 1965, Eisenhower told General Andrew Goodpaster, "We should not base our actions on minimum needs, but should swamp the enemy with overwhelming force."<sup>9</sup> In late 1967, Eisenhower rejected the "kooks and hippies and all the rest that are talking about surrender."<sup>10</sup> By 1968, the United States had 550,000 men in Vietnam.

Eisenhower's vice president, President Richard M. Nixon, dragged on the Vietnam War

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<sup>9</sup> Ambrose, *Eisenhower. Vol. 2, The President, 1952-1969*, 660.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 664.

for another four years only to leave a total of 58,000 Americans dead. In the end, the communists won, seized Saigon, and unified the country under communist rule.

In the Formosa crisis, Eisenhower and Churchill battled over the importance of Quemoy and Matsu to world peace. The official British position was that the two islands belonged to the communist Chinese. The Americans, for their part, believed in the necessity of the nationalist Chinese holding on to these tiny islands only a few miles off the coast of the Chinese mainland. Here again, Eisenhower publicly and dramatically threatened communist China with nuclear war. The British prudently counseled restraint and suggested that a negotiated deal could be made in which the islands would be given to the communists in exchange for communist promises not to invade Formosa. Eisenhower viewed this as appeasement. The British viewed Eisenhower's position as illegal and militarily untenable. Nevertheless, the communist Chinese did buckle under American pressure when Premier Chou En-lai stated at the Bandung Conference that the communist Chinese sought a peaceful resolution to the dispute.

Too many historians have mistakenly limited Eisenhower's covert activities to Iran and Guatemala. Eisenhower and Dulles engaged in numerous covert activities throughout the 1950s. The perceived success of "brinkmanship" and "Operation Everready," which threatened Syngman Rhee with a military coup in 1953, led to the CIA's "Operation Ajax" and the overthrow of Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh in Iran. Eisenhower and Churchill installed the Shah of Iran as the new leader. In 1979, the Shah was overthrown by the Ayatollah Khomeini in an Islamic revolution. The Shah and the Savak, Iran's secret police, had been tied to the American government since the

Eisenhower administration. The takeover of the American embassy in Iran, with fifty-three Americans held hostage, can be seen as political blowback originating in the Eisenhower era.

“Operation PBSuccess” overthrew the democratically elected President Jacobo Arbenz of Guatemala and installed Colonel Castillo Armas as the leader of Guatemala in 1954. Eisenhower instituted a naval quarantine against Guatemala, recognized in international law as an act of war. He then used the British to quash a UN investigation of the Guatemalan situation. Eisenhower and Dulles acted illegally and unilaterally in Guatemala, and they bristled at the superficial interference of the British.

In the Middle East, Eisenhower approved and supported a joint MI6-CIA planned military coup in 1956 against the Syrian government called “Operation Straggle.” In addition, he secretly approved of “Operation Omega,” a British-American covert operation to undermine President Gamel Abdel Nasser in Egypt in 1956. He wanted to eliminate these Soviet-backed governments quietly and clandestinely. Yet, Eisenhower did not limit U.S. undermining and intervening to Soviet-backed governments. He intervened in Europe as well. Through economic blackmail and brinksmanship, he forced the British cabinet to oust British Prime Minister Anthony Eden to end the Suez Crisis. He manipulated British currency by devaluing the sterling pound. He made a secret deal with the Saudi king to cut Great Britain’s oil supply from the Middle East. Eisenhower froze out the British diplomatic corps and made Anthony Eden *persona non grata*. He then choreographed Eden’s removal by the British cabinet. Historians who

claim that Eisenhower was the least interventionist of our modern presidents are not only wrong, they are dead wrong.

With the Eisenhower Doctrine for the Middle East in place, Eisenhower ordered U.S. Marines to invade Lebanon in 1958 in “Operation Blue Bat.” Twenty-five years later, President Ronald Reagan sent the Marines into Lebanon in 1983 only to have a suicide bomber kill 299 American and French servicemen in their barracks at the airport in Beirut. Reagan would later admit that the decision to put the Marines into Lebanon proved to be his biggest mistake as president. He completely withdrew them from Lebanon in early 1984. Nevertheless, his intervention was a legacy of another Republican president.

In the last year of his presidency, Eisenhower secretly authorized “Operation Pluto,” the CIA planning for the Bay of Pigs. Vice President Nixon “was a forceful advocate of bringing down Castro and urged the CIA to support ‘goon squads and other direct action groups’ operating inside and outside of Cuba.”<sup>11</sup> President Kennedy gave final authorization to Eisenhower’s plan in April 1961, leading to the Bay of Pigs fiasco, which turned out to be the greatest foreign policy disaster of the Kennedy administration.

Kennedy had refused to use the U.S. Air Force to back up the invasion of Cuba. As Nassir Ghaemi has written, “CIA and military leaders were appalled; they had expected him to take the next step when defeat was the only other option. Eisenhower would not have stopped, they told him. (‘When you commit the flag, you commit to

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<sup>11</sup> Robert Dallek, “The Untold Story of the Bay of Pigs,” *Newsweek*, 22 and 29, August 2011, 26-28.



win', Eisenhower had said during the 1954 overthrow of Guatemala's government.)"<sup>12</sup> Kennedy decided to cut his losses at the Bay of Pigs. He also refused to send 150,000 U.S. combat troops to Laos in 1961, which was another Eisenhower suggestion that Kennedy quietly discarded.

This study of Anglo-American relations and conservative ideology from 1953-1956 reveals and illuminates Eisenhower's foreign policy, in the context of transatlantic relations with Winston Churchill and Anthony Eden. It demonstrates that Eisenhower's prerogatives of zealous anti-communism, dangerous brinksmanship, and colossal unilateralism outweighed his commitment to the Anglo-American alliance. While Eisenhower and Dulles bragged about their risky brinksmanship, Churchill and Eden rightfully warned of the dangers and the consequences of unilateral policies and a "Fortress America" completely removed from its allies. In his Farewell Address, Eisenhower presciently warned his successors about the risk of the development of unwarranted power by the military-industrial complex. After all, he knew, better than anyone, the hazards and perils involved with covert military operations.

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<sup>12</sup> Nassir Ghaemi, *A First-Rate Madness: Uncovering the Links between Leadership and Mental Illness* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2011), 177.

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