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CHURCHILL'S THREE SPHERES AND THE ORIGIN OF BRITISH EURO-SKEPTICISM

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JCSP 45

Master of Defence Studies

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PCEMI 45

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CANADIAN FORCES COLLEGE – COLLÈGE DES FORCES CANADIENNES

JCSP 45 – PCEMI 45
2018-2019

MASTER OF DEFENCE STUDIES – MAÎTRISE EN ÉTUDES DE LA DÉFENSE

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Word Count: 18584

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ABSTRACT

The 2016 Brexit referendum ignited a renewed interest in how Great Britain has defined its relationship with European Community (EC). For now, it appears that, in the battle between British euro-skeptics and the British pro-Europeans, the skeptics have won. To some, their victory vindicates thinking that originated in the Thatcher era in British foreign policy. This paper disputes that view. It argues instead that modern British euro-skepticism took root after the end of the Second World War. Great Britain erred by not embracing closer ties with the EC in 1951 at the founding of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). Instead, it embarked on a foreign policy centred on what Winston Churchill termed Great Britain's Three Spheres of Influence: The Commonwealth, The United States (US) and Europe. To Churchill, Great Britain was best situated in the middle of these three spheres, acting as an intermediary or bridge. Ironically, by positioning itself at the proverbial centre, Great Britain became isolated, and struggled to form closer ties with its most significant allies. Had the country embraced the EC at its founding, euro-skepticism would never have become as entrenched as it did when Thatcher was Prime Minister.

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CHURCHILL'S THREE SPHERES AND THE ORIGIN OF BRITISH EURO-SKEPTICISM

INTRODUCTION

The 2016 Brexit referendum ignited a renewed interest in how Great Britain has defined its relationship with European Community (EC). What was the source of Great Britain's euro-skepticism, and how did it affect the development of a relationship that led to Great Britain joining the EC in 1973 and fully participating in the founding of the European Union (EU) in 1991?

This paper will argue that while Margaret Thatcher's brand of euro-skepticism has infused British politics since the 1980s, it is not the root source of modern British euro-skepticism. Rather, immediately following the end of the Second World War Great Britain erred by not embracing closer ties with the EC and it was at this point that modern euro-skepticism took root. This paper seeks to investigate what caused this muddled approach to foreign policy and proposes that it all comes back to Winston Churchill's Three Spheres of Influence, a speech that established a flawed approach to foreign policy that persisted for generations.

In 1951, Great Britain missed an opportunity to join the EC. Great Britain first applied unsuccessfully for community membership in 1961 and then failed again in 1967. When admitted in 1973, Great Britain had missed out on 22 crucial years with the other countries and joined an EC already moving toward greater integration. It was an EC built by others, not by Great Britain. To its credit, Britain adapted. The signing of the Maastricht Treaty was considered a resounding success, and a crowning testament to Great Britain's commitment to the EU. Ironically, that meant the only place for Great Britain's relationship with the EU to go was downward.

Prime Minister David Cameron's decision to call an in-out referendum in 2016 was shaped by domestic political demands but had significant foreign policy implications. He was elected as Conservative Party leader in 2005, partially on a platform of encouraging euro-skepticism and promising to re-examine Great Britain's relationship with the EU.¹ When he became Prime Minister in 2010, his coalition government with the pro-European Liberal Democrats made pursuing any type of euro-skeptic policy impossible. Re-elected in 2015, his party had run on a manifesto infused with euro-skeptic statements such as "The EU needs to change, Labour failed to give you the choice, [Labour] handed over major new powers to Brussels... and gave away £7 billion of the British rebate." Most importantly Cameron pledged to hold an in-out referendum by the end of 2017.² With a parliamentary majority, Cameron had little choice but to hold his promised referendum.³ On 23 June 2016, Great Britain voted 51.9% in favour of leaving the EU. Turnout was 71.8%.⁴ The close result was hardly a decisive victory for the Brexit (euro-skeptic) side. However, it was enough to give the British Government a mandate to chart a new course in foreign policy. Should Great Britain leave the EU, it will be the end of an era and a defining moment in British foreign policy. It will also leave the country in a similar position to the one that it found itself in 1961, when it first decided to apply to the EU.

¹Julie Smith, "Gambling on Europe: David Cameron and the 2016 referendum," *British Politics* 13, no. 1 (2018): 1-4, <https://search-proquest-com.cfc.idm.oclc.org/docview/2012329553?accountid=9867>.

²The Conservative Party and Unionist Party, "Strong Leadership, A Clear Economic Plan, A Brighter, More Secure Future," last accessed 27 April 2019, <https://www.conservatives.com/manifesto2015>.

³The Guardian, "Cameron did not think EU referendum would happen, says Tusk," last accessed 27 April 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jan/21/donald-tusk-warned-david-cameron-about-stupid-eu-referendum-bbc>.

⁴BBC, "Brexit: All you need to know about the UK leaving the EU," last accessed 18 March 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-32810887>.

Scholarship from the 1980s onwards has referred to Margaret Thatcher as the modern embodiment of Great Britain's euro-skepticism. Thatcher played a central role in its development and popularization. During her term as Prime Minister she did more to advance the euro-skeptic cause than any other person in the last 30 years. She espoused that constant vigilance was required to guard Great Britain's borders, its treasury and its sovereignty from the federalist pursuits of the EU.⁵ Beyond Thatcher's euro-skepticism Great Britain has been labeled an awkward partner, a stranger in Europe, and simply following a thousand years of history by pursuing a strategy meant to promote national prosperity.⁶ The consistent theme is that Great Britain has a role to play in the world that is larger than merely being a European nation, whether that is called euro-skepticism or not.

While Thatcher certainly played a large role in defining Great Britain's current relationship with the EC, her legacy it is not built solely on euro-skepticism. Her time as Prime Minister virtually transformed Great Britain's relationship with the EC. She appreciated the importance of the European Economic Community (EEC) to Great Britain and ensured that her country and government was immersed in all aspects of

⁵Cary Fontana and Craig Parsons, "'One Woman's Prejudice': Did Margaret Thatcher Cause Britain's Anti-Europeanism?" *Journal of Common Market Studies* 53, no. 1, (2015): 89-93, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12205>; Oliver Daddow, "Interpreting the Outsider Tradition in British European Policy Speeches from Thatcher to Cameron," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 53, no. 1 (2015): 72, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12204>; Oliver Daddow, "Margaret Thatcher, Tony Blair and the Eurosceptic Tradition in Britain," *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 15, no. 2 (May 2013): 212-214, <https://doi-org.cfc.idm.oclc.org/10.1111/j.1467-856X.2012.00534.x>; William Wallace, "Losing the narrative: The United Kingdom and the European Union as imagined communities," *International Relations* 31, no. 2 (June 2017): 197, <https://doi-org.cfc.idm.oclc.org/10.1177/0047117817707396>.

⁶Stephen George, *An Awkward Partner: Britain in the European Community*. 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 1; Stephen Wall, *A Stranger in Europe: Britain and the EU from Thatcher to Blair* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, Oxford Scholarship Online, 2011), 215, 220, www.oxfordscholarshiponline; Sir Peter Marshall, "Forty Years On: Britain in the EU," *The Round Table – The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs* 102, no. 1 (2013): 22, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00358533.2013.764091>.

stewarding the EEC's continued development. Thatcher oversaw a permanent solution to the issue of Great Britain's budget rebate and championed the completion of the Common Market, including signing the Single European Act (1986). Additionally, her government laid the groundwork that led to the signing of the Maastricht Treaty which for pro-Europeans was, at that moment, their pinnacle achievement. However, for all of the pro-European success, Great Britain's demand for opt-outs from certain parts of the Maastricht Treaty did show an underlying resistance.

What grew into Thatcher's euro-skepticism was cultivated as soon as the EC project started after the end of the Second World War. In 1945, according to what became known as Winston Churchill's Three Spheres of Influence vision, Europe did not hold the central position in Great Britain's foreign policy. It was just one of three main parts - the other two being the Commonwealth and the United States (US). Within this context, Churchill's three spheres of influence vision lacked prioritization.

Winston Churchill's Influence on British Foreign Policy

As Prime Minister from 1940 – 1945 and 1951 – 1955 and Leader of the Opposition in the intervening years, British politics was dominated by Winston Churchill in the 1940s and 1950s. His statements, opinions and vision for Great Britain and Europe would form the intellectual foundation that survived successive Conservative and Labour governments for generations. Churchill, a patriot and nationalist, thought highly of his home country. "We are with Europe, but not of it,"⁷ he once said. This short but powerful sentence reflected a view of Great Britain that ultimately shaped his three

⁷The International Churchill Society, "WSC's Three Majestic Circles," *Finest Hour* 104 (Autumn 1999): 11, <https://winstonchurchill.org/publications/finest-hour/finest-hour-104/wit-and-wisdom-12/>.

spheres of influence vision for British foreign policy.⁸ His country, he believed, had a role in the world that was greater than its individual connections with the US, the Commonwealth, or Europe. He viewed Great Britain as the head of an Empire and too important to tie itself into a regional alliance. Indeed, in 1948 he declared that Great Britain served as the agent that bound these three spheres of influence together.

Churchill introduced the three spheres of influence at a Conservative Party meeting while his party was in opposition, but his vision persisted when the Conservatives returned to power three years later. The three spheres of influence vision became more than just government policy; it shaped British foreign policy for generations.

The vision was not without its challenges. The more Great Britain worked to keep itself separate from any of the three spheres yet with a foothold in each one, the more London found itself locked in a tug of war of its own making. In spite of its increasing integration with Europe since the end the Second World War, Great Britain continued to consider itself apart from Europe and as a result hesitant to embrace fully the benefits of EC membership.

Great Britain's interaction with its three spheres of influence formed the basis for how it conducted its foreign policy and its attempt to have influence over each for its own benefit. Specifically, British foreign policy in the post Second World War period is interwoven with the path that led it to help create the EU in the first place. The period from the end of the Second World War to the signing of the Maastricht Treaty was the

⁸Winston Churchill's Speech to the Conservative Party Mass Meeting, Llandudno, Wales, 19 October 1948 quoted in The International Churchill Society, "WSC's Three Majestic Circles," *Finest Hour* 160 (Autumn 2013): 48, <https://winstonchurchill.org/publications/finest-hour/finest-hour-160/articles-wsc-s-three-majestic-circles/>; Marshall, *Forty Years On...*, 23.

twilight of the British Empire, a period of adjustment to a world where the US was the dominant western power, and a time of British hesitancy when it came to full participation in Europe's international structures. In short, it is a period when Great Britain needed to redefine itself and its place on the world stage.

Churchill's three spheres of influence vision provides a useful construct to understand Great Britain's tenuous relationship with Europe. From 1945 – 1961, the waning of Great Britain's premier relationship with the Commonwealth in some ways freed it from its past obligations and loyalty to its former colonies. This change allowed Great Britain to move forward and build a stronger relationship with Europe.

Meanwhile, Great Britain struggled with fostering and defining a special relationship with the US, a lingering hold-over from the war alliance, militarily and economically, and coming to terms that it might not be as equal a partnership as Great Britain would have liked. The onset of the Cold War and the founding of NATO would further affect Great Britain's relationship with the US as both countries acted, mostly in concert with each other, to contain the growing strength of the Soviet Union and provide European security. Finally, France, another colonial power adapting to new circumstances, also sought to restore greatness and reassert its position, under Charles de Gaulle. Over the course of his presidency, de Gaulle would prove to be a staunch opponent of Great Britain's entry into the EC on British terms.

Three competing visions for Europe emerged in the years from 1961 to 1973, with Great Britain, France, and the US competing and cooperating where convenient. Great Britain struggled to maintain a balance between its three spheres of influence with the decline in primacy of Great Britain's relationship with the Commonwealth, and Great

Britain's continued special relationship with the US complicating its relationship with Europe. Great Britain's preference to maintain economic ties with the Commonwealth and its special relationship with the US ultimately led to France opposing Great Britain's entry into the EC for selfish reasons and veto both its first and second application.

Finally, the 1968 shift in foreign policy saw Great Britain withdraw the majority of its military forces from East of the Suez Canal and the Persian Gulf as it sought to address its balance of payments deficit and build an economy that would be considered acceptable for EC entry.

Great Britain's actions from joining the EC in 1973 till the founding of the EU in 1991 represented its implicit acceptance that Europe was the most important sphere of influence. By the time the Maastricht Treaty was signed in 1991, Great Britain had been a fully engaged and integrated partner with the EC for almost 20 years. In the evolution of the EC that became the EU, Great Britain was intimately involved in all aspects of the Maastricht Treaty negotiations and was triumphant on all its major bargaining points. The latecomer enjoyed success in building a close relationship with Europe and the continental states accommodating its unique wishes. By participating in the negotiations for the Maastricht Treaty, Great Britain was able to update and redefine its relationship with the EU. Unfortunately, despite success working with the EC from the inside, the British identity continued to see itself as distinct and apart from Europe. The decision to join the EC and remain had been an economically driven decision. The more time that Great Britain remained part of the EC, the more political considerations took precedence allowing euro-skepticism to infect the debate. The more that Great Britain strived to be considered with Europe but not of it, the more strained its relationship with the other EC

members became. By resisting further integration with the EC, Great Britain continued to risk isolation from the region that provided it the greatest amount of empowerment economically, politically and militarily.

CHAPTER 1: 1945 – 1961

FAILURE TO ACHIEVE BALANCE BETWEEN THE THREE SPHERES

Great Britain - Not an equal partner with the United States and the Soviet Union

The initial years immediately after the Second World War were defined by Great Britain trying to establish its peacetime relationships with the US, the Commonwealth and Europe. Its initial efforts strove to achieve balance and influence over all three spheres in order to secure its position as a world leader.

Great Britain emerged from the Potsdam conference and the Second World War as the least powerful of three great powers alongside the US and the Soviet Union. As a fourth, subordinate partner, France was not invited to the conference though it was admitted to the Allied Control Council of Germany and assigned an occupation zone in Germany. The US was the dominant Western capitalist country. It possessed the strongest economy, the largest military industrial complex, and it had built and used atomic bombs.⁹ In the ensuing years, the US' ability to dominate its allies economically and militarily would be the source of ongoing friction between the US, Great Britain, and Europe. Additionally, by the early 1960s, the American resistance to share nuclear technology equally with its European allies would become a central friction point between the US, Great Britain, and France.

Great Britain relied on its close relationship with the US to strengthen its position relative to continental Europe. London coveted its perceived position as the US' closest ally in Europe and looked upon itself as a crucial Atlantic bridge between continental Europe and the US. However, the very idea of the special relationship was predicated on a belief that the US was looking for foreign policy advice and support from Great Britain

⁹George, *An Awkward Partner...*, 6.

acting as a senior mentor.¹⁰ Although both Great Britain and the US saw great need and value in their relationship, each country had divergent goals. While there had been a peaceful transfer of dominant state within the West from the British Empire to the US, Great Britain soon found that its level of influence over the US was not as strong as it would have liked.

The US, alone, was the West's principal counter balance to the Soviet Union. The US had its own plans for Europe and looked to Great Britain to be part of its solution. The US was tired of expending its own blood and treasure to solve what it viewed as problems rooted in the system of independent and unconnected sovereign states of Europe. While global warfare can be traced back to The Seven Years War, advances of technology over the 20th century, particularly the invention of nuclear weapons, had allowed the scale and lethal efficiency to grow such that mass worldwide destruction was possible. If history was any indication, any further European wars would eventually draw in and consume the rest of the world.¹¹ Therefore, the US was keenly interested in pushing forward an agenda of European integration in the hopes that integration would bind European countries together such that it would be impossible for a Third World War to start in continental Europe, and act as a bulwark against the Soviet Union.

Great Britain needed to keep the US involved in European affairs for two primary reasons. First, Great Britain needed a successor country to assume responsibility for the maintenance of the world order as the two world wars had depleted Great Britain economically, and it no longer had the resources to be that country. Second, Great

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 15.

¹¹Victor Gavin, "Power Through Europe? The Case of the European Defence Community in France (1950 – 1954)," *French History* 23, no. 1 (March 2009): 71-73. <https://doi.org/10.1093/fh/crn065>.

Britain's own security was at risk, as it could no longer maintain a balance of power in Europe, should the US not remain engaged in Europe as a counter balance to the growing threat of the Soviet Union.¹² With the transition to peace, the US, Great Britain and France underwent a leadership change. Having died in office in April 1945, Roosevelt was the first leader to be replaced. Churchill was next losing the 1945 general election to Clement Attlee in July 1945. Having objected to the draft constitution for France's Fourth Republic, de Gaulle was last to depart resigning in January 1946. Of the three great powers plus France, only Stalin remained, and he set about consolidating the Soviet grip over Eastern Europe as the US did the same in the West. Security was critical not just to Great Britain but to all of Europe. The relationship between the wartime allies quickly deteriorated in peace and transformed into the Cold War.

Great Britain – Outward, not inward looking and the effect on its relationship with Europe

While geographically next to continental Europe, Great Britain has typically preferred to look outward to the world. By 1946, Churchill's vision of Great Britain's ties with the Commonwealth was strong, supported by the bonds forged during the Second World War. Perpetuated by Churchill, it was accepted in British politics that Great Britain's leadership of the Commonwealth added strength to its global position and any states that questioned the abiding power of Great Britain and the Commonwealth would do so at their own peril.¹³ Great Britain was a country that preferred to only involve itself in continental affairs when its own national interests were threatened. As Churchill's replacement, Clement Attlee did not alter significantly Great Britain's foreign

¹²George, *An Awkward Partner*..., 14.

¹³Winston Churchill, "Iron Curtain," Westminster College Green Lecturer, Fulton Missouri, 5 March 1946. <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1946-03-05.pdf>.

policy. Rather, Attlee's time in office was dominated by early actions between the two principal powers of the Cold War, demonstrated by the US announcement of the Truman Doctrine to contain the spread of Communism and Soviet aggression causing the Berlin Blockade. Overall, Attlee subscribed to what could become Churchill's three spheres of influence.

To address continental affairs, Churchill held true to his vision that Great Britain remain in the middle of the three spheres. Building upon Franco-German reconciliation, Churchill's vision extended to greater European integration and suggested a "Council of Europe" be formed to address issues of common interest. He demonstrated his support for Franco-German reconciliation and made a united Europe a principal foreign policy objective.¹⁴ In short, Churchill's Great Britain saw itself as a potential architect of Europe's future but not necessarily part of some sort of European federation made up of non-Communist Western European states. In this stance, his vision did not account for the divergent needs of each of the three spheres, should Great Britain need to make a choice, which sphere was ultimately more important and worthy of Great Britain's time and resources.

Great Britain and the Commonwealth

Great Britain experienced the twilight of its Empire after the Second World War. However, it was not alone. The twentieth century was a period of decolonization, even if the British experience was different from those of its European allies. Postwar Great Britain was a country that had been not been defeated (Italy) or invaded (France, The

¹⁴University of Luxembourg - Centre Virtuel de la Connaissance sur l'Europe, "The Zurich Speech," last accessed 3 March 2019, https://www.cvce.eu/obj/the_zurich_speech-en-4665d9b1-1459-446f-aaa8-549630b2759a.html; European Union, "The Founding Fathers of the European Union – Partial transcript of Prime Minister Winston Churchill speaking on 19 September 1946 in Zurich," last accessed 19 December 2018, https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/history/founding-fathers_en.

Netherlands and Belgium), and it did not undergo a political system change.¹⁵ As a result, Great Britain's relationship with its former colonies and dependencies possessed a different dynamic than continental European countries. In its relationship with the largest dominions of Australia, Canada, New Zealand and its colonies, Great Britain strived to be the first amongst equals. It was a way of reinventing the British Empire by which other countries would look to Great Britain for leadership and direction but Great Britain would not be saddled with all of the costs that came with having an Empire. As for Great Britain's parliamentary system, it had remained uninterrupted throughout the Second World War, a matter of personal pride to Great Britain as the Parliament embodied British sovereignty. The supremacy of the British Parliament rose as a major issue in joining the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and the EEC and Great Britain was skeptical of any association that looked to transfer sovereign powers to a supranational institution which was not answerable to the British Parliament. To the British, this development encroached on its sovereignty and was something they initially were unwilling to entertain.

Unfortunately, the Commonwealth proved to be an investment with diminishing returns for Great Britain. The loss of the Empire was a blow to British ego and resulted in a period in the 1940s and 1950s when British policy-makers believed that the Commonwealth should demand the first position in Great Britain's foreign policy hierarchy. From its leadership role of the Commonwealth, Great Britain would be able to speak with a more powerful voice on the world stage than any of the continental

¹⁵Laurent Warlouzet, "Britain at the Centre of European Co-operation (1948-2016)," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 56, no. 4 (May 2018): 957, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12701>.

European states.¹⁶ That proved to be entirely at odds with the principle that Commonwealth membership was among self-governing, sovereign states. The outlook that the Commonwealth would increase Great Britain's global influence diminished throughout the late 1940s and 1950s marked by a series of events that saw the bonds between Great Britain and the Commonwealth members loosen. Some former colonies, such as India, had leaders who challenged Great Britain's leadership and questioned staying in the Commonwealth. On the other side of the scale, the Dominion of Canada was not contemplating leaving the Commonwealth; however, it passed the Canadian Citizenship Act in 1946. The act established Canadian citizenship as separate and distinct from being classified as a British subject, and served as an example of Great Britain's dominions expressing their emerging sense of independent national identity.¹⁷ Great Britain's loosening of influence over the affairs of the Commonwealth and its colonies continued with the realization that it did not have the resources or the world support to continue a foreign policy that included colonialism as a main pillar.

In particular, the US was not supportive of continued colonial aspirations of any European country. The US was a champion amongst countries wanting greater independence and distance from colonial roots. American policy toward India and China underscored the differences with Great Britain on this issue.

With the independence of India and Pakistan in 1947 and Ceylon in 1948, Great Britain oversaw the transition of these former colonies into independent members of the

¹⁶George, *An Awkward Partner...*, 15; Alex May, "The Commonwealth and Britain's Turn to Europe, 1945 – 1973," *The Round Table* 102, no. 1 (January 2013): 30, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00358533.2013.764082>.

¹⁷Government of Canada, "History of Citizenship Legislation," last accessed 23 March 2019, <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/canadian-citizenship/overview/history-legislation.html>; Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, "Canadian Citizenship Act, 1947," last accessed 23 March 2019, <https://pier21.ca/research/immigration-history/canadian-citizenship-act-1947>.

Commonwealth. While the transfer of power should be considered a success, it inspired individualistic expression within the Commonwealth membership. Leaders such as Prime Minister Nehru of India needed no encouragement for promoting an independent course for his country. These expressions of individualism amongst Commonwealth countries continued to chip away at the idea that Great Britain could exert influence over the Commonwealth and was highlighted, in 1949, by a fundamental shift in what it meant to be a Commonwealth member. The Commonwealth membership decided to allow India to remain a member, despite declaring itself a republic. With that, the common allegiance to the Crown was broken.¹⁸ The Commonwealth did not possess any of the cohesiveness of a functional alliance, with each member executing its own foreign and defence policies according to its own objectives, and was not an organization from which Great Britain could draw strength. Great Britain's diminishing influence over the Commonwealth continued as members no longer looked to Great Britain to take the lead in defence. Instead, members looked to ensure their own security and entered into regional agreements, such as Canada becoming a founding member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949, Australia, and New Zealand signing the ANZUS Treaty in 1951 with the US to protect the security of the Pacific, Pakistan moving towards China, and India accepting military aid from the Soviet Union.

As Great Britain's two most distant dominions, Australia and New Zealand's felt increasingly isolated with the signing of the Washington Treaty (1949) and the founding of NATO. Given the geographic scope of the Washington Treaty, Australia and New Zealand were left out of the mutual defence pact that Canada and Great Britain enjoyed as signatories. As a result, Australia and New Zealand looked to form their own security

¹⁸May, *The Commonwealth and Britain's Turn...*, 30.

alliance, and turned to the US as a prime partner in Pacific region defence. Though Great Britain did have a moral obligation to come to the defence of Australia and New Zealand as members of the Commonwealth, in reality, British military forces were already engaged in continental Europe to meet the rise of the Soviet threat and the Middle East for control access to petroleum products, in addition to its Far East military bases, such as in Malaysia and Singapore.¹⁹ Concurrently, Great Britain continued to strengthen its defence ties to continental Europe. Postwar Europe was gripped with the fear of German rearmament, and the threat of invasion from the Soviet Union into continental Europe. Additionally, no single Western European state possessed military strength capable of being an effective counter balance to the Soviet Union.²⁰ For Great Britain, fostering collective defence was imperative and British security was more than ever intertwined with continental Europe, for it could not afford to allow the Soviet Union to have the ability to sweep across continental Europe to the shores of the English Channel. As well, Western continental Europe did not possess the military strength to act as a counter balance to the Soviet Union. Great Britain, therefore, viewed keeping the US engaged in European defence as critical to the long term stability and security of the continent and itself. As a result, Great Britain was faced with the need, more than ever, to build strong alliances, and the US and Europe had more to offer than the Commonwealth.

Starting with the Treaty of Dunkirk (1947) that provided for French-British mutual defence should Germany not honour the terms of its disarmament and de-

¹⁹United States – Office of the Historian, “The Australia, New Zealand and United States Security Treaty ANZUS Treaty), 1951,” last accessed 23 March 2019, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/anzus>.

²⁰John Baylis, “Britain and the Dunkirk Treaty: The origins of NATO,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 5, no. 2 (January 2008): 236-238, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01402398208437111>.

militarization, Great Britain worked to expand rapidly its security alliances with continental Europe. In 1948, the Treaty of Brussels added Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. The new agreement not only provided for collaboration on economic, social, and cultural issues, it also provided for the mutual defence of its signatories. The agreement led to the founding of the Western European Union.²¹ The necessity of security drove Great Britain towards further integration with Europe, and that gave the members of the Commonwealth cause for concern about Great Britain's commitment and ability to lead on matters of defence. Great Britain's standing military commitments made it unlikely that it would be able to expeditiously mount a credible military force to come to the aid of Commonwealth members without sacrificing another commitment. As Great Britain moved closer towards Europe, its Commonwealth partners were pushed to explore alternative security arrangements. Australia and New Zealand signed the ANZUS Treaty for mutual defence with the US and did not invite Great Britain to join, further demonstrating Great Britain's diminishing influence over Commonwealth affairs and eroding its leadership position over the Commonwealth.

The economics of Great Britain's ties to the Commonwealth were more solid, at least in the early 1950s. In 1950, the Commonwealth accounted for 40% of British imports and 38% of its exports, with the dominions of Australia, Canada, and New Zealand heavily dependent on guaranteed access to the British domestic market for their exports whereas Europe accounted for 13% of imports and 11% of exports. The US

²¹University of Luxembourg - Centre Virtuel de la Connaissance sur l'Europe, "The Brussels Treaty (17 March 1948)," last accessed 7 February 2019, https://www.cvce.eu/en/obj/the_brussels_treaty_17_march_1948-en-3467de5e-9802-4b65-8076-778bc7d164d3.html.

accounted for 8% of imports and 5% of exports respectively.²² This connection between Great Britain and the Commonwealth members was partially the result of the Ottawa Agreements (1932) that created the Commonwealth Preference Scheme. The scheme provided for import of raw materials and food into Great Britain duty free or at preferential tariff rates and in return Great Britain was granted protected access to the domestic markets of the Commonwealth countries for its manufactured goods. In 1950, Great Britain was by far the dominant industrial power within the Commonwealth so the symbiotic relationship of the scheme worked well. Great Britain, therefore, was not keen to cut preferential trade ties with the Commonwealth. This relationship, however, was soon thrown out of alignment as Commonwealth countries built their own industrial complexes, diversified their industries, and pursued trade agreements independent of Great Britain, a process that sped up after the end of the Second World War.²³ Great Britain slowly lost another avenue of influence over the Commonwealth.

For sentimental reasons, the Commonwealth had strong presence in British domestic politics that pulled British attention away from Europe. The Commonwealth was the successor to the Empire and therefore benefited from some of the unifying spirit that had been so strong during the Victorian era and was perpetuated in the 20th century through the British school system. Moreover, British citizens could trace family trees that branched out throughout the Commonwealth.²⁴ Until 1948, all persons born within the Commonwealth were considered British subjects. With Canada's Citizenship Act of 1946 as a partial catalyst, Great Britain was pushed to update its citizenship law to

²²Lynden Moore, *Britain's Trade and Economic Structure: The Impact of the European Union*, (n.p: Routledge, 2002), 65-66.

²³Moore, *Britain's Trade and Economic Structure...*, 65-67.

²⁴George, *An Awkward Partner...*, 15.

recognize that members of the Commonwealth were passing their own respective citizenship laws. At the time, however, that was a new and fresh idea, not one rooted and accepted in British society. The links to the Commonwealth that Great Britain possessed were very personal to some and, therefore, any move by the British government to relegate the Commonwealth to secondary status was domestically problematic. The government of the day was challenged to explain to the voting public that the Commonwealth was not the source of diplomatic, economic, and military power that Great Britain had hoped it would be, and that Great Britain's future might come at the expense of its relationship with the Commonwealth. Meanwhile, as Great Britain's relationship with the Commonwealth was deteriorating; it continued to attempt to exercise global influence through other means, such as military force.

Great Britain's diminishing global military power and its effect on foreign policy

Churchill's three spheres vision was accepted by other politicians and misleadingly instilled a belief that Great Britain represented something bigger than any one of the spheres. This view was perpetuated by Anthony Eden, Great Britain's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and later Prime Minister as Churchill's successor, when he stated that a European federation was something that "...we know in our bones we cannot do.... For Britain's story and her interests lie far beyond the continent of Europe."²⁵ Unfortunately such a view also gave the impression that Great Britain still possessed the resources to take military action independent of its strongest ally, the US. As Prime Minister in 1956, Anthony Eden led Great Britain as it undertook what is considered its last independent military action until the Falklands War of 1982. In

²⁵Anthony Eden, *Full Circle: The Memoirs of Anthony Eden* (London: Cassell, 1960), 36, quoted in Fontana and Parsons, *One Woman's Prejudice...*, 90.

concert with France and Israel, the British attempted to take back the Suez Canal. However, Great Britain's will to carry on this action strained the special relationship with the US, and it soon crumbled under pressure from the US and the rest of the international community. The US action to block emergency International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans to Great Britain during the Suez Canal invasion highlighted Great Britain's dependence on the US for support of at least some of its foreign policy actions. Also, support from the Commonwealth was far from universal. Only Australia and New Zealand openly supported Great Britain's right to take back the canal back. India supported Egypt and turned to the US and the UN in its attempt to mediate a cessation of conflict. This action served as a demonstration that Great Britain needed its special relationship with the US more than the US needed Great Britain, that the Commonwealth was not an influence-multiplier for Great Britain in its time of need, and within Europe, France viewed Great Britain's bowing to US pressure so quickly as a betrayal, and it had a negative effect on their relationship and therefore Great Britain's relationship with Europe.

European Integration Progresses without Great Britain

While Great Britain looked outwards, integration went forward on the European continent. The EU traces its roots to the signing of the Treaty of Paris (1951), which created the ECSC, and the Treaty of Rome (1957) which created the EEC. The intent behind the Treaty of Paris (1951) was, economically, to pool coal and steel resources under the management of a supranational body and, politically, to strengthen ties between France and Germany.²⁶ The rationale was to prevent future conflict by integrating

²⁶Edmonds, Michael, "Britain, A Demanding Partner in Europe," (Joint Command and Staff Programme Course Paper, Canadian Forces College, 2019), 7. The Treaty of Rome (1957), in addition to

German industry with the rest of Europe to contain Germany's ability to rearm against Western Europe.²⁷ The intent behind the Treaty of Rome (1957) expanded on the success of the ECSC by providing the framework to enhance trade, industrial growth, and manufacturing and was the next step in further European integration between the signatories.²⁸ While creation of both treaties was led by European states, they had the support of the US. Great Britain did participate in the treaty negotiations on both occasions, and it ultimately declined to participate as in both the ECSC and EEC. Great Britain's vision of its perceived economic and strategic interests conflicted with the founding members.²⁹ Great Britain found itself at odds with both the US and Europe over the direction of European integration.

At the time, Great Britain did not support participating in a European trading bloc that would come at the expense of the Commonwealth. It viewed the ECSC and EEC as organizations that demanded the unnecessary transfer of power from member states to supranational institutions to manage what should be exclusively an intergovernmental trading bloc. Great Britain feared that integration with Europe would cause it to lose its special relationship status with the US because it would further perpetuate the US view that Great Britain was not distinct from Europe but part of it and, therefore, could not function as an effective Atlantic bridge.

creating the European Economic Community also created the European Atomic Energy Community, which is outside the scope of this essay. The original six members of the EEC were Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and West Germany.

²⁷Moore, *Britain's Trade and Economic Structure...*, 65; Parliament of the United Kingdom, "From the Second World War to the Treaty of Rome," last accessed 6 January 2019, <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/evolutionofparliament/legislativescrutiny/parliament-and-europe/overview/post-ww2-to-treaty-of-rome/>. Germany refers to West Germany until German reunification on 3 October 1990 and thereafter to a unified Germany.

²⁸UK, *From the Second World War to the Treaty of Rome...*

²⁹Warlouzet, *Britain at the Centre of European Co-operation...*, 957; W. Kaiser, *Using Europe, Abusing the Europeans, Britain and European Integration, 1945-63* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1996) and A. Milward, *The Rise and Fall of a National Strategy, 1945-1963* (London: Whitehall History Publishing, 2002) quoted in Warlouzet, *Britain at the Centre of European Co-operation...*, 957.

Great Britain went on to found the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) in 1960 as a counterweight to the EEC, which only served to frustrate the US further. The EFTA was strictly an intergovernmental organization with the mandate of promoting free trade and economic integration among its members.³⁰ The EFTA had no vision of fostering further European integration, and was made up of a collection of lesser European powers and over time the British economy stagnated relative to the prosperity and growth rates of the six EEC members.³¹ Great Britain's participation in the EFTA instead of the EEC was a disappointment for the US. The Americans viewed the split of Western Europe into two distinct economic zones to be counterproductive to their vision of a more unified Europe and a serious weakening of solidarity.

Of further concern to the US and Great Britain was France attempting to further its own agenda on Europe as an independent power. Led by France, there was some opinion that European integration should not rise to be complementary to the US but rather a unified Europe should be a third power, complete with its own political, economic and military policies that would be free of both US and Soviet influence.³² The vision of a united and integrated Europe is embodied in Charles de Gaulle's return to power in 1958. He spent the next ten years as France's President working towards that goal. He envisioned a united Europe as an equal to the US and Soviet Union, not divided

³⁰The European Free Trade Association, "About," last accessed 24 March 2019, <https://www.efta.int/about-efta/european-free-trade-association>. The founding members of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) were Austria, Denmark, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, and Britain. Of the founding members Denmark, Portugal, Sweden and Britain have gone on to join the EEC/EU on upon doing so left the EFTA.

³¹May, *The Commonwealth and Britain's Turn...*, 30; Robert Skidelsky, "The UK was never truly part of the European Union," Financial News, 17 July 2018, <https://www.fnlonon.com/articles/britain-was-never-truly-part-of-the-eu-20180717>.

³²John Major, "President Kennedy's Grand Design: The United States and a United Europe," *World Today* 18, no.9 (September 1962): 384, <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1294461954?accountid=9867>.

and associated with either's respective spheres of influence. De Gaulle's vision caused concern for both Great Britain and the US. The US had not participated in the rebuilding of Europe only for Europe, led by France, to exercise independence from Washington in international relations.³³ Great Britain found itself on the outside of the EEC and as a result the US considered it a less effective advocate and partner. Great Britain's ability to act as an Atlantic bridge was further weakened.

Great Britain's position relative to the three spheres by the early 1960s

By the early 1960s, the value of the Commonwealth had diminished. Having finished the Second World War in debt, the loss of the Empire had the positive effect of allowing Great Britain to re-direct its resources inward. The loosening of the relationship actually allowed Great Britain, unencumbered by its former empire, to refocus its efforts inward and reinvest its resources and relationships that would best enhance its national prosperity. Politically, Great Britain's lack of influence over the Commonwealth continued to dwindle, with its diminished standing highlighted at the 1961 Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference. Despite Great Britain's support for South Africa's continuation as a member of Commonwealth, the majority of the membership opposed South Africa's remaining due to its policy of apartheid.³⁴ This was a humiliating event for Great Britain and its occurrence cemented the reality that Great Britain exercised minimal political influence over the Commonwealth.

Economically, the value of the Commonwealth to Great Britain was falling. By 1960, imports from the Commonwealth had fallen 23% and exports had fallen 10% over

³³*Ibid.*

³⁴The Commonwealth, "Our History," last visited 28 February 2019.
<http://thecommonwealth.org/our-history#>.

the preceding decade showing a downward trend in trade that never rebounded.³⁵ This percentage compared with an import growth of 50% and an export growth of 80% from the US; and an import growth of 15% and export growth of 36% from continental Europe in the same decade. Overall, the economic value of Europe and the US was quickly taking precedence over the Commonwealth.³⁶ Despite the downward trend, in terms of overall value of imports and exports, the Commonwealth was still Great Britain's largest trading bloc. Economic integration between Great Britain and the Commonwealth was still strong enough that before announcing its intent to apply for EEC membership, British Prime Minister Macmillan dispatched his ministers to visit Commonwealth countries in order to extoll the positive aspects of Great Britain's admittance to the EEC and the concessions it hoped to win to protect its existing Commonwealth trade. Great Britain, however, also delivered the message that it would not sacrifice EEC membership for the Commonwealth.³⁷ Any assumption that the Commonwealth held preeminence in British foreign policy was gone.

Overall, the problem for Great Britain was threefold. First, it found itself outside of the economically more successful EEC and as a result its ability to influence the direction of continental Europe was weakened. Second, as a result of diminished ability to influence continental European decisions, Great Britain's usefulness to the US was weakened. Lastly, as a consequence of the first two, its ability to be the Commonwealth's representative to both the US and Europe was diminished.

³⁵Moore, *Britain's Trade and Economic Structure...*, 65.

³⁶*Ibid.*

³⁷The National Archives, *European Economic Association Committee: Meetings 1-5; Papers 1-28 – Line to be taken in consultations with the Commonwealth*, 16 June 1961, CAB 134/1821, TNA quoted in Paul Robertson and John Singleton, "The Old Commonwealth and Britain's First Application to Join the EEC, 1961-3," *Australian Economic History Review* 40, no. 2 (July 2000): 156, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/cfc.idm.oclc.org/journal/10.1111/%28ISSN%291467-8446/issues>.

Understanding France's Position

Like Great Britain, France had also actively engaged in rebuilding itself from 1945 to 1961. It had emerged from the Second World War as a country that had lost a colonial empire, and possessed an uncompetitive economy and destroyed industrial base. Having been invaded by Germany three times in the preceding eighty years, France was weary of Germany and reemergence of German aggression.³⁸ As a result, France had the early goals of ensuring security from Germany, rebuilding its economy and industrial complex, and rehabilitating a Europe of its own vision, with France in the leadership position. France, therefore, was a strong proponent of early integration, and reconciliation with Germany as a means of achieving both economic security and containment of Germany's industrial power.

As part of the rebuilding process, like Great Britain, France had been a recipient of aid from the US under the Marshall Plan. The country having received approximately 20% of the approximately \$13 Billion (USD) in total aid, making it the second largest recipient of US aid after Great Britain.³⁹ By 1958, despite being a founding member of the ECSC and EEC, France was faltering on its implementation of the trade liberalization reforms called for by the Treaty of Rome. France was under high inflation, and running a balance of payments deficit, partially due to a stoppage of US financial assistance and an increased military budget due to its involvement in the Algerian War of Independence.⁴⁰ On the world stage, the Algerian War took a toll on France's international reputation,

³⁸Gavin, *Power Through Europe...*, 69-70.

³⁹The George C. Marshall Foundation, "Marshall Plan Payments in Millions to European Economic Cooperation Countries," last accessed 31 March 2019, <https://www.marshallfoundation.org/library/documents/marshall-plan-payments-millions-european-economic-cooperation-countries/>.

⁴⁰The value of US financial assistance to France was approximately \$1.08 Billion (USD) in 1956-1968 alone.

particularly with the US and the UN. The US had a long standing policy against colonialism but did not want to involve itself directly in the hopes that France would find a suitable solution. At the UN, against France's wishes, the General Assembly addressed the Algerian War in as many as seventeen meetings at the behest of a bloc of Afro-Asian countries calling upon France to recognize the right of Algerian self-determination.⁴¹ The culmination of these events led to the fall of France's Fourth Republic, and Charles de Gaulle's return as the first President of France's Fifth Republic.

Charles de Gaulle held a stature in France equal to that of Winston Churchill in Great Britain and, upon his return to power, he focused singularly on building his vision of a "European Europe." He assumed the leadership of France at a low point in its post Second World War existence as the Algerian War of Independence had imposed a huge financial toll and brought France to the brink of civil war.

In order to rebuild France in his vision, de Gaulle turned to the EEC. De Gaulle viewed the EEC as the institution that gave France its economic security, provided an avenue to continue to contain Germany, and had the potential to be the source of its power to create a "European Europe" free of US influence and control.⁴² Almost immediately upon assuming the Presidency, de Gaulle adopted strong measures to stabilize the French economy by cutting public expenditures, increasing taxes, devaluing the franc and its convertibility into US dollars, and adopting trade liberalization measures

⁴¹Miloud Barkaoui, "Managing the colonial status Quo: Eisenhower's Cold War and the Algerian War of Independence," *The Journal of North African Studies* 17, no. 1, (2012): 125-133, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13629387.2011.586402>; Frances Lynch, "De Gaulle's First Veto: France, the Rueff Plan and the Free Trade Area," *Contemporary European History* 9, no. 1 (March 2000): 111-115, <https://www-cambridge-org.cfc.idm.oclc.org/core/journals/contemporary-european-history/article/de-gaulles-first-veto-france-the-rueff-plan-and-the-free-trade-area/CD5E4AE760D940D1D43FD85893C58FEB>.

⁴²James Ellison, "Separated by the Atlantic: The British and de Gaulle, 1958 – 1967," *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 17, no. 4 (2006): 853-856, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09592290600943619>.

in order to bring France into compliance with its commitments to both the EEC and Organization for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC).⁴³ By late 1958, France achieved compliance with the EEC's trade liberalization requirements and achieved one of the highest growth rates in Europe.⁴⁴ For de Gaulle, the EEC became the institution of preeminent importance, as opposed to the US and Great Britain, who viewed the EEC as an important institution but not necessarily the most important.

The basis of de Gaulle's vision for France and by extension a "European Europe" was built upon his experiences during the Second World War. He detested the fact that he had been dependent on Great Britain's goodwill in hosting the Free France Government in exile from 1940 – 1944, viewing it only as a necessary means to the end of one day restoring France's grandeur. For de Gaulle, France could only reclaim its previous grandeur through its independence from reliance on others and the pursuit of an independent foreign policy.⁴⁵ As the EEC was the foundation for de Gaulle's vision, he needed to ensure France's leadership position was guarded, enabling France to dominate the EEC's policy development and implementation. As a consequence, de Gaulle protected the EEC's membership integrity. Any country joining the EEC had to put the needs of Europe ahead of everything else, which was a thinly veiled assertion of needing to accept French leadership in the EEC. In Europe, the US sought a reliable, cooperative and like-minded partner to assist in containment of Communism and stable trading partner willing to accept US leadership in foreign policy. The US was not interested in

⁴³OCED, "History," last accessed 14 April 2019, <http://www.oecd.org/about/history/>. The OEEC was founded in 1948 to administer the Marshall Plan in Europe and foster European economic interdependence. It was replaced by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (ECED) in 1961, with a similar but global mandate.

⁴⁴Lynch, *De Gaulle's First Veto...*, 111.

⁴⁵Ellison, *Separated by the Atlantic...*, 854; Helen Parr, "Saving the Community: The French Response to Britain's Second EEC Application in 1967," *Cold War History* 6, no. 4 (2006): 425-426, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14682740600979287>.

an independent Europe led by France. For de Gaulle, the US-Britain relationship was a direct threat to France's leadership of Europe. The US needed to stop trying to turn Europe into a compliant and not necessarily equal partner.

Buoyed by the economic success of his reforms within France and its renewed ability to implement the EEC's trade liberalization schemes, de Gaulle proposed accelerating the timeline of EEC integration. De Gaulle wanted to accelerate the implementation of the common tariff, accelerate the reduction of internal tariffs, and to further insulate the EEC common market from competition, suggested the EEC impose a higher common tariff than previous agreed.⁴⁶ De Gaulle attempted to unify the EEC into a bloc that could withstand any political and economic pressure the US tried to exert, and would isolate Great Britain such that it would have to choose between the US, the Commonwealth, and Europe.

Overall, De Gaulle feared British entry into the EC for three reasons. First, France would lose its dominant position within the EC. Second, Great Britain advocated stronger Atlantic ties between Europe and the US, and the close British-American relationship could lead to increased US influence in Europe. Third, the combination of British admittance to the EEC and increased American influence on the continent would strengthen, rather than break down, the existing Cold War blocs.⁴⁷ De Gaulle envisioned French leadership in establishing the conditions for favourable relations between states of

⁴⁶Mathieu Segers, "De Gaulle's Race to the Bottom: The Netherlands, France and the Interwoven Problems of British EEC Membership and European Political Union, 1958 – 1963," *Contemporary European History* 19, no. 2 (May 2010): 117, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777310000044>; University of Luxembourg - Centre Virtuel de la Connaissance sur l'Europe, "The British Proposal for a Single Free Trade Area," last accessed 13 April 2019, <https://www.cvce.eu/en/recherche/unit-content/-/unit/02bb76df-d066-4c08-a58a-d4686a3e68ff/e719ad54-d9d9-4996-bf91-60aa489d5f29>.

⁴⁷Parr, *Saving the Community*..., 426, 432, 433, 443.

East and West Europe and the Soviet Union. A Europe free of US influence was a necessary precondition to doing do.

By the close of 1960, Great Britain and France differed over the direction of a united Europe. Prime Minister Macmillan described the crux of the issue: “Britain wants to join the European concern. France wants to join the Anglo-American concern. Can terms be arranged?”⁴⁸ Macmillan had come to terms with Great Britain’s predicament. He understood that Great Britain’s best chance of future economic prosperity rested with the EEC and he needed France’s support for entry.

By February 1961, Great Britain openly signaled it was willing to consider forming closer ties with the EEC. Great Britain announced its application to join the EEC in July 1961 and negotiations were set to start in October 1961. For de Gaulle, the timeline was short to further solidify France’s leadership of the EEC, strengthen the French-German partner, and implement the CAP policy, with terms favourable to France. Only then could British membership be entertained. If this sequence changed in any way, admittance of Great Britain to the EEC had the potential to dilute France’s dominance and thereby erode the French-German partnership, endanger the implementation of the CAP, and allow Great Britain to act as a US proxy from with the EEC. In seeking to regain France’s grandeur, De Gaulle had no intention of letting that state of affairs happen.

The first application

In July 1961, Great Britain submitted its first application to join the EEC. The crux of its membership bid pinned on the hope that equal access to the EEC’s common

⁴⁸Memorandum by the Prime Minister, written between 29 December 1960 and 3 January 1961, ‘The Grand Design,’ PREM 11/3325, TNA quoted in Gill Bennett, *Six Moments of Crisis: Inside British Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 75.

market would provide enough competitive stimuli to accelerate the modernization of Great Britain's industrial complex and, politically, that membership would allow Great Britain to find a new leadership role within Europe.⁴⁹ The events of the past 16 years served as testament that the three spheres had consistently pulled Great Britain in divergent directions. As a result of continuing to try and maintain a balanced relationship with its three spheres, Great Britain lost influence with all three.

Specifically, the reciprocal importance between the Commonwealth and Great Britain had declined to the point that the Commonwealth no longer possessed all of the qualities that Great Britain needed in a strategic partner. With the Commonwealth removed as a viable strategic option, the US and Europe was remained. Great Britain's perpetuation of the idea that it was the Atlantic bridge caused further difficulties throughout its twelve-year application process to join the EEC. Great Britain, having snubbed the ECSC and the EEC at their respective inceptions, found itself at the mercy of France for EEC entry. Little did Great Britain realize that divergent views on NATO, nuclear power, and de Gaulle's need to restore France's grandeur would contribute to his veto of Great Britain's first application to the EEC in January 1963. French objections proved to be Great Britain's largest obstacle.

⁴⁹May, *The Commonwealth and Britain's Turn to Europe...*, 30.

CHAPTER 2: 1961 – 1973
ACCEPTING THE EEC AND THE LONG ROAD TO ACCESSION

Great Britain’s view on the EEC’s first decade of success

By 1961, the British Government had reached the conclusion that its global interests included a sound and growing economy, a sustainable armed forces, influence over countries with similar or aligned interests, and alliances, most importantly with the US.⁵⁰ It took another decade, however, for Great Britain to accept the enduring nature of the EEC and seriously contemplate membership to achieve its objectives. During this period, London also set aside the assumption that the Commonwealth could be a major source of national power, though economic and sentimental links still existed.

From 1961 – 1973, France played a pivotal role in Great Britain’s relationship with Europe. At the time, that relationship was shaped by three competing visions: Great Britain’s vision, French President Charles de Gaulle’s vision, and the US’s vision. Great Britain’s vision was outward looking. Its European ties would be complemented by close ties to the US as part of an Atlantic Community. Closer integration with Europe was part of a process that would help maintain the Atlantic Community, with Great Britain and the US taking leading positions.⁵¹ De Gaulle’s vision was a “European Europe” free from outside influence and dependence. The American vision, popularly titled President John F. Kennedy’s “Grand Design,” strived to foster economic, political, and military integration in Europe in the hopes of creating a partnership with a united Europe. In the US’ vision, Great Britain would fully immerse itself in Europe and serve as a reliable ally inside the EEC. To resolve the conceptual conflict between the three visions there were

⁵⁰G.C. Peden, “Suez and Britain’s Decline as a World Power,” *The Historical Journal* 55, no. 4 (2012): 1095, <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1152017064?accountid=9867>.

⁵¹Ellison, *Separated by the Atlantic...*, 856-858; May, *The Commonwealth and Britain’s Turn...*, 33-34.

several factors and events that featured prominently throughout the 1960s and they all centred around Great Britain's three spheres.

US economic and political considerations

At the start of the 1960s, continental Europe's economic dependence on the US had all but disappeared. Western European economies were growing at twice the rate of America's and the US had a balance of payments deficit with Western Europe.

Washington hoped that British entry into the EEC would evolve the organization into an outward looking community with more liberal trade rules. Otherwise, without British influence as a member the EEC, Washington was concerned the EEC would become a high-tariff trading bloc closed off to trade from the US and its Latin American partners.⁵²

The value of trade between the EEC and the US and its Latin American partners had both economic and political consequences. First, US exporters faced the possibility of a high European tariff discriminating against their goods. Second, the US was heavily invested politically in Latin America, whereas European states had more trade ties with African states, many of them being former colonies. The combined result was that if the EEC developed economic regulations that favoured imports from African states over Latin American states that the US would find no relief for its balance of payment deficit and the loss of trade for Latin America would threaten regional political stability.⁵³ US concern for Latin American stability was part of its global effort to contain Communism. The US was worried that if the Latin American economies failed, the sitting governments would be replaced by alternatives more favourable to the Soviet Union. For the US, the containment of Communism was a worldwide operation and as the EEC's economic

⁵²George, *An Awkward Partner...*, 31; Major, *President Kennedy's Grand Design...*, 386.

⁵³Major, *President Kennedy's Grand Design...*, 383; Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *A Thousand Days – John F. Kennedy in the White House* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965), 844.

strength grew, its policy actions were having effects beyond the borders of continental Europe.

The US considered a stable and united Europe as the best approach for containing Communism on the European continent. The US accepted that while it wanted a strong and integrated European alliance as a unified bloc against the Soviet Union, the second order effect would be the creation of a unified trading bloc that was growing economically faster than the US.⁵⁴ To achieve the stability it sought within Europe, the US actively supported Great Britain's application to join the EEC. By doing so the US was prioritizing political stability or economic advantage.

As the US explored all avenues to advance its national objectives, it looked to Europe to be a stable, outward looking partner in an Atlantic alliance. It was meant to be a partnership of equals between the US and a united Europe.⁵⁵ Fundamentally, the US did not see the need for Great Britain to distinguish itself from Europe and as a trusted ally Great Britain was most useful as a member of the EEC and not as an outsider. Great Britain's decision to apply for EEC entry was certainly taken under pressure from the US.

In the lead up to Great Britain's application to the EEC in 1961 Macmillan based a great deal of Great Britain's foreign policy and world standing on its special relationship with the US. It was a lopsided relationship and what Great Britain considered interdependence looked more and more like dependence.⁵⁶ Economically, the US was pursuing a trade relationship with the EEC in order to create an Atlantic-wide trading area. Without entry into the EEC, Great Britain risked being isolated

⁵⁴Segers, *De Gaulle's Race to the Bottom...*, 127.

⁵⁵Major, *President Kennedy's Grand Design...*, 389; Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days...*, 844.

⁵⁶Frank Costigliola, "The Failed Design: Kennedy, de Gaulle, and the Struggle for Europe," *Diplomatic History* 8, no. 3, (June 2007); 234, <https://doi-org.cfc.idm.oclc.org/10.1111/j.1467-7709.1984.tb00410.x>.

economically. Its importance to the US would therefore be diminished. Overall, the 1960s would prove to be a challenging decade for both the US and Great Britain as both countries vision for the future butted against de Gaulle's European vision. In the end, the division proved to be irreconcilable so long as de Gaulle was in power.

The American and British nuclear deal and France's desire to be treated as an equal

De Gaulle desired France to be considered an equal to Great Britain. He also sought to free Europe of US dependence. Beginning in 1958, he championed a foreign policy that saw France possessing a credible nuclear deterrent capability, the Cold War status quo broken, the withdrawal of both the US and Soviet Union from Europe, and a united Europe (East and West) under French leadership.

In the early 1960s, the Soviet Union possessed the ability to directly attack the US with nuclear weapons. The issue of an independent nuclear weapons capability had become central for many European countries as possessing such destructive weapons was seen as an expression of sovereignty. As a consequence, both France and Great Britain were pursuing nuclear deterrence programs apart from the US. However, France was also jealous of the US-Britain special relationship, especially with respect to leadership role that each held within NATO and the exclusive mutual sharing of nuclear technology.⁵⁷ In 1958 and again in 1961, de Gaulle, approached the US and Great Britain about forging a tri-party association, outside of NATO, where the three countries would discuss global policies of common interest and conduct meaningful consultations before actions were taken. His suggestion was not welcomed by either the US or Great Britain,

⁵⁷Bennett, *Six Moments of Crisis...*, 75; Costigliola, "*The Failed Design...*", 227-228; Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days...*, 844; TNA, Memorandum by the Lord Privy Seal – Record of Remarks Made by the Lord Privy Seal at the Meeting of the Council of The Western European Union on 27 February 1961, 3 March 1961, 2-5, CAB 129/104, TNA, <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/D7659228>.

with the US stating a preference for full consultations with any other European states taking place within NATO. Even though Europe relied on the US for its nuclear deterrent capability, the US was unwilling to share the decision making with its NATO allies on an equal basis. The lack of its own nuclear deterrent capability and an equal share of the decision-making power was unacceptable to de Gaulle.⁵⁸ Although the US was faced with both Great Britain and France pursuing independent nuclear weapon programs, the US had demonstrated a willingness to cooperate on nuclear weapon technology with Great Britain only by signing the 1958 US-UK Mutual Defence Agreement on Nuclear Weapons Cooperation, which allowed for the sharing of nuclear materials, technology and research.⁵⁹ In reality, the treaty provided Great Britain with access to materials, technology, and research that it could otherwise not have duplicated. In regards to Europe, the US focused on limiting the proliferation of independent nuclear forces, and was therefore unwilling to provide France with the same level of access. America's unwillingness to share its nuclear technology resulted in French resistance to more general US overtures and entrenched de Gaulle's distrust of the US and its proxy, Great Britain.

The Commonwealth – Its economic and sentimental effect on the first application

By 1961, the Commonwealth's value as a full strategic partner had disappeared. However, sentimentality towards the Commonwealth was still strong in Great Britain. Two months after announcing its application to the EEC and the month before formal negotiations were set to begin, a September 1961 Gallup poll asked: "Which of these

⁵⁸Costigliola, *The Failed Design...*, 234, 236, 243.

⁵⁹The full name of the US-UK Mutual Defence Agreement is Agreement between The Government of the United States of America and The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for Cooperation on the uses of Atomic Energy for Mutual Defense Purposes.

three – Europe, the Commonwealth or America – is the most important to Britain?,” 48% favoured the Commonwealth while 19% favoured the US, 18% favoured Europe and 15% didn’t know. In another series of monthly Gallup polls, respondents were asked about their willingness to join the EEC. Support for the Government’s decision always scored highest, though between July 1961 and January 1963, positive support only rose above 50% six times and never rose above 58%.⁶⁰ Faced with strong sentimental ties to the Commonwealth, and a lukewarm affection for joining the EEC, the Macmillan Government endeavoured to sell the positive aspects for the Commonwealth that Great Britain’s entry to the EEC would produce.

Economically, the Commonwealth remained Great Britain’s largest trading bloc. But, the value of that trade had been declining steadily for a decade. By 1961-1962, Great Britain was running a trade deficit with the Commonwealth and there was no immediate support for Great Britain maintaining protectionist trade policies with the Commonwealth at the expense of EEC trade.⁶¹ Most Commonwealth countries understood the necessity of Great Britain joining the EEC. The alternative was continued decline of Great Britain’s economic strength, relative to the EEC, which would affect its Commonwealth trading partners.⁶² Great Britain understood that the EEC was unlikely to entertain an indefinite exemption of the common tariff on any Commonwealth products. Great Britain, therefore, set about informing Commonwealth members that it

⁶⁰Social Surveys (Gallup Poll) Ltd, “British Attitudes to the EEC 1960-63,” *Journal of Common Market Studies* 5, no. 1 (March 1966): 49-50, 53, <https://doi-org.cfc.idm.oclc.org/10.1111/j.1468-5965.1966.tb01137.x>; May, *The Commonwealth and Britain’s Turn...*, 35.

⁶¹John Singleton, “New Zealand, Britain and the Survival of the Ottawa Agreement, 1945-77,” *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 43, no. 2 (April 1997): 175, <https://doi-org.cfc.idm.oclc.org/10.1111/j.1467-8497.1997.tb01386.x>; Robertson and Singleton, *The Old Commonwealth...*, 158-159.

⁶²Bennett, *Six Moments of Crisis...*, 78, 80.

would seek the best deal that it could. However, the final decision on what were acceptable terms was Great Britain's alone.

By late 1962 it became clear that the EEC was unwilling to agree to any sort of comprehensive agreement to protect Commonwealth agricultural products. This sort of accommodation would run counter to the purpose of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Great Britain instead focused on negotiating in which it thought it would win concessions, gaining some for New Zealand butter, cheese and sheep meat for the duration of the membership transition phase.⁶³ While Great Britain's gained concessions for New Zealand agricultural products, it made no effort to protect duty free entry of manufactured goods from the Commonwealth, a concession that would largely affect only Canada as the only developed Commonwealth nation with substantial exports of manufactured goods to Great Britain.⁶⁴ Additionally, there were wider economic trade interests to be taken into consideration. Great Britain's request that Commonwealth goods receive preferential trade conditions worried the US that the EEC would adopt trade policies that would end up favouring the Commonwealth at the expense of US and

⁶³Paul Robertson and John Singleton, "Britain, Butter, and European Integration, 1957-1964," *The Economic History Review* 50, no. 2 (May 1997): 327, 328, 333-334, 338, <http://www.wiley.com.cfc.idm.oclc.org/bw/journal.asp?ref=0013-0117&site=1>; Robertson and Singleton, *The Old Commonwealth...*, 154-159.

In addition to a lack of diversity in trading partners, New Zealand was further disadvantaged by the fact that most of its exports to Great Britain were dairy and livestock products. These commodities had few other markets due to the heavy protectionist policies of North America, continental Europe, and Japan. As the smallest and least diversified of the three old dominions, New Zealand was the most dependent on preferential access to the Great Britain market and had the most to lose. While the EEC was willing to accommodate Great Britain's request for an exception on New Zealand butter, cheese, and sheep meat for the duration of the membership transition phase, this fell far short of New Zealand's desire for permanent duty free access to the Common Market.

⁶⁴Robertson and Singleton, *The Old Commonwealth...*, 164-165.

While the EEC was willing to agree to accommodate certain New Zealand exports during the accession transition phase, it rejected any discussion of a permanent association with New Zealand or any other part of the Commonwealth on agricultural products as it viewed those markets being in direct competition with EEC farmers, not complementary in the foodstuffs they produced.

Latin American exports.⁶⁵ In an effort to gain concessions from the EEC, negotiations dragged on for over a year, with Great Britain demanding analysis of tariff exemptions commodity by commodity. In the end, however, Great Britain demonstrated that it was willing to sacrifice its declining Commonwealth trade to gain access to the EEC common market.

Great Britain's initial negotiating position fought against two of the principle tenets of the EEC, its Common Market and the CAP. In seeking a series of exemptions for the Commonwealth, Great Britain prolonged the negotiation process and gave the impression that it was trying to leverage the Commonwealth against the EEC in an effort to secure more favourable entry terms.⁶⁶ From a national perspective this made economic sense as it would have given Great Britain preferential trade access to both Commonwealth and EEC markets. However, it caused frustration amongst the EEC members and supported de Gaulle's assertion that Great Britain wasn't ready to embrace EEC principals yet. However, De Gaulle suspected that Great Britain would be welcome to join the EEC so long as preferential trade ties with the Commonwealth were cut.

Great Britain's economic overtures to France

Great Britain's application to the EEC was not its first overture to France to cooperate on trade. In 1956 Great Britain had proposed a free trade area between it and France, separate from the EEC's common market. The proposal was to have two effects. The first was the removal of trade barriers between Great Britain and France. The second was the isolation of the West German economy from free access to two of the three

⁶⁵Costigliola, *"The Failed Design..."*, 234.

⁶⁶The overarching premise of the Common Market was member states would benefit from trade access across the common market free of tariffs and those outside would be subjected to a common tariff that ensured preferential treatment to member state manufactures and producers. The CAP was designed to favour member state farmers and promote the EEC domestic agricultural industry.

largest economies in Europe. Any effort to stifle West Germany's growing economic power was appealing to France, but Paris ultimately rejected the overture as none of the safeguards available to France in the Treaty of Rome were present in Great Britain's proposal.⁶⁷

For both Great Britain and France, containment of the growing West German economic power was of the upmost importance. Both countries considered it necessary to reduce challenges to the European leadership they desired. Additionally, Great Britain was mindful that the US wanted West Germany firmly integrated into Western Europe as a guard against any type of Soviet influence. While proposing a bilateral agreement with France would disadvantage West Germany economically, it ran the political risk of potentially angering the Germans and pushing them towards the Soviet Union.

The Nassau Agreement and de Gaulle's veto

As 1962 closed, the US-Britain special relationship suffered another setback. Dean Acheson, former US Secretary of State and an advisor to President Kennedy, proposed that the US strengthen economic, political, and military ties with Europe using NATO as the backbone of a strengthened Atlantic Community. He went on to pointedly attack the notion of a special US-Britain relationship.⁶⁸ Acheson's speech reinforced the US view that Great Britain was just another European country, albeit a close ally. Great Britain did not have the political, economic, or military strength to position itself as a separate participant, distinct from Europe. Therefore, it could not position itself as a

⁶⁷The missing safeguards included Great Britain not wanting a common agricultural protection policy between the two countries as Great Britain preferred to maintain its preferential trade treatment of the Commonwealth. Additionally, Great Britain wanted no harmonization of social legislation, no safeguards to protect the exchange rate and no setting of a common external tariff.

⁶⁸Douglas Brinkley, "Dean Acheson and the Special Relationship: The West Point Speech of December 1962," *The Historical Journal* 33, no. 3 (1990): 600-601, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X00013546>.

power broker between the US and the Soviet Union, in much the same way that France was attempting to do with its vision of a European Europe.⁶⁹ The Acheson speech was quickly followed by the unilateral cancellation of the SkyBolt program.⁷⁰ The SkyBolt program would have delivered Great Britain a new generation of air launched missiles capable of delivering nuclear warheads. The loss of the SkyBolt program, without a replacement, meant Great Britain's current nuclear strike capability would be obsolete within a decade. As a result, the program's cancellation had the potential to significantly affect Great Britain's standing within NATO, its ability to exert influence over Europe, and more widely be an effective representative and security supporter of the Commonwealth.

From the US point of view there was merit to the US continuing its virtual nuclear monopoly within NATO, for at the time it controlled 97% of the nuclear weapons in NATO. Within the Kennedy Administration there was discussion that there was little need for Great Britain to possess a separate nuclear capability as it would be nothing more than a duplication of a capability already available to Europe. Great Britain would be better served devoting its resources towards programs that could complement US defence capabilities in Europe, rather than simply duplicate.⁷¹ In the end, as a compromise, and in what became known as the Nassau Agreement of December 1962 the US agreed to provide US submarine launched Polaris missiles to Great Britain, thereby preserving Great Britain's status as a nuclear power. Great Britain did have to commit to

⁶⁹Acheson, Dean. "Our Atlantic Alliance – The Political and Economic Strands." *Vital Speeches of the Day* 29, no. 6 (January 1963): 162-166.

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mth&AN=9875975&site=ehost-live&scope=site;> Brinkley, *Dean Acheson and the Special Relationship*..., 608.

⁷⁰The SkyBolt program would have provided air launched ballistic missiles to the Great Britain as the delivery system for British built nuclear warheads. This combination of a US built ballistic missile and British warhead was the basis for Great Britain's entire 1960s next generation nuclear deterrent program.

⁷¹Brinkley, *Dean Acheson and the Special Relationship*..., 606.

only use them unilaterally if its “supreme national interests” were at stake. Otherwise the nuclear capability’s primary purpose was for the defence of its Western allies.⁷² While the sale of the Polaris missile allowed Great Britain to maintain a credible nuclear deterrent force, and was presented by the Macmillan government as a sign of the strength in the US-Britain special relationship, it made Great Britain wholly dependent on the US for the development and production of nuclear delivery systems.⁷³ The net result was Great Britain fell short of its desire to be a credible nuclear power with complete control over all aspects of its own nuclear weapons program.

In France’s eyes, Great Britain was diminished by accepting dependence on the US for nuclear technology and beholden to US benevolence if it was to remain a nuclear power. Great Britain was susceptible to US manipulation, and therefore had no place in a united, independent Europe.⁷⁴ The agreement demonstrated that when left with no other choice, Great Britain, in certain circumstances, was willing to trade some of its

⁷²United Kingdom and United States, Note from the United States to the United Kingdom Regarding the Polaris Sales Agreement, *International Law Materials* 2, no. 3 (May 1963): 607, <https://heinonline-org.cfc.idm.oclc.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/intlm2&id=623&collection=journals&index=#>. The Nassau Agreement provided the basis for the Polaris Sales Agreement, a US-Britain bilateral treaty, signed 6 April 1963, which governed the sale of US Polaris missiles (less warheads), equipment, and supporting services from the US to Britain.

⁷³Ken Young, “The Skybolt Crisis of 1962: Muddle or Mischief?” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 27, no. 4 (2004): 631, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1362369042000314538>; Anthony Verrier, “Defence and Politics After Nassau,” *The Political Quarterly* 34, no. 3 (1963), 269-271, <https://doi-org.cfc.idm.oclc.org/10.1111/j.1467-923X.1963.tb01947.x>; Ken Young, “The Royal Navy’s Polaris lobby, 1955 -62,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 25, no. 3 (2002): 58, 67-68, <https://doi-org.cfc.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/01402390412331302775>; United States Navy – Naval History and Heritage Command, “Admiral Arleigh A. Burke,” last accessed 27 April 2019, <https://www.history.navy.mil/browse-by-topic/people/chiefs-of-naval-operations/admiral-arleigh-a--burke.html>. Despite the strain that the SkyBolt cancellation put on the special relationship at the political level, there remained a strong military bond, specifically between the two naval services. The sale of Polaris missiles was significantly aided because of the close relationship between Admiral of the Fleet Earl Mountbatten, First Sea Lord (1954 – 1959) and Admiral Arleigh Burke, Chief of Naval Operations (1955-1961). Their close personal relationship played a significant part in Admiral Burke authorizing early support and collaboration between the Royal Navy and US Navy on the development of the Polaris missile and development of nuclear powered submarines to carry the missiles. While not at the political level, this relationship did demonstrate an enduring special relationship at other important levels.

⁷⁴Costigliola, “*The Failed Design...*”, 246; Verrier, *Defence and Politics After Nassau...*, 269-271.

sovereignty. But the price of its close relationship with the US proved catastrophic for its application to join the EEC and the demise of US' vision for Europe one month later.

As Great Britain heralded the benefits of the Nassau Agreement, the unintended consequence was that the very same agreement spurred de Gaulle to use it as an example that the US was using Great Britain as a proxy within Europe to expand its global influence.⁷⁵ The difficult relationship between France, Great Britain and the US and their competing visions of Europe reached a crucial turning point on 14 January 1963, the day of both President Kennedy's State of the Union Speech, where he espoused the virtues of the US' relationship with Europe and de Gaulle's press conference announcing his veto of Great Britain's application.

In his 1963 State of the Union Speech, President Kennedy made clear the US vision for Europe was one of interdependence with the European nations acting with a unity of purpose, power and policy in every sphere of activity.⁷⁶ In an effort of outreach to Europe, he highlighted that the US looked to Europe as a partner, not a rival, and that Europe would play a crucial role in common defence, increased world trade, balance of payment correction (for the US), aiding emergent nations, and the further alignment of economic and political policies. He framed the Nassau Agreement as a show of strength of the bond between the US and Europe, not just Great Britain. European defence could only be accomplished through the strength of the continued alliance between the proud and sovereign nations of Europe and the US.⁷⁷ He specifically addressed France's concern about being a nuclear power by stating "...France will be [a nuclear power] in

⁷⁵Segers, *De Gaulle's Race to the Bottom...*, 112-113, 130-131.

⁷⁶Papers of John F. Kennedy. Presidential Papers. President's Office Files. Speech Files. State of the Union Message, Reading Copy, 14 January 1963, <https://www.jfklibrary.org/asset-viewer/archives/JFKPOF/042/JFKPOF-042-021>.

⁷⁷*Ibid.*

the future and that ways must be found... to increase the role of our other partners in planning, manning and directing a truly multilateral nuclear force within an increasingly intimate NATO alliance.”⁷⁸ The caveat at the end of the statement was important to both Great Britain and France. Both countries desired an independent nuclear force, not one subservient to NATO, and therefore, US control. For Great Britain, it partially accepted these terms with the Nassau Agreement. For France, it would not accept any subservience of its nuclear force to the US or NATO.

For the US, de Gaulle’s veto of Great Britain’s application was a profound disappointment. A united Europe, without Great Britain, was a less stable and reliable partner. For de Gaulle, the veto was his only option. In addition to the nuclear force issues, de Gaulle was concerned that once admitted Great Britain would act as a counter balance to its own national power and challenge France’s dominant position within the EC. Having Great Britain inside the EEC acting as a strong advocate for stronger Atlantic ties between Europe and the US, with Great Britain as the indispensable bridge, was incompatible with France’s vision of the Community’s future.

De Gaulle continued on consolidating France’s leadership of the EEC. Eight days after his press conference, President de Gaulle signed the Élysée Treaty, a culmination of his rapprochement efforts with West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer. The purpose of Élysée Treaty was to foster bilateral cooperation and support for European integration by binding France and Germany closer together.⁷⁹ With France’s leadership in Europe getting stronger, Great Britain’s continued to be marginalized. British ties with the US won it no favours with France, and thereby prevented London from playing the part of an

⁷⁸*Ibid.*

⁷⁹France, “Élysée Treaty,” last accessed 4 March 2019, <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/germany/france-and-germany/elysee-treaty>.

honest broker or Atlantic Bridge. With the French veto in place, the EEC moved forward with its own agenda of integration without British influence.

The intervening years between applications

In the intervening years between Great Britain's first and second application to the EEC, the organization continued to evolve. First it overcame the crisis in which de Gaulle effectively brought the Community decision-making to a standstill in the latter half of 1965. Known as the "empty chair" policy, de Gaulle challenged the idea that the Community should shift towards a greater use of majority voting to speed up decision making. De Gaulle considered it unacceptable that France could be overruled by a majority of the member states. In de Gaulle's mind, majority voting was a step towards further federated integration, expansion of powers for the Commission and European Parliament, in effect a transfer of sovereignty to supranational institutions.⁸⁰ On that, Great Britain and France shared a common concern.

The outcome of France's "empty chair" policy was the Luxembourg Compromise in January 1966, when the Council accepted that in areas where majority voting was allowed under Treaty of Rome, the Council would postpone taking a decision until unanimous agreement could be reached.⁸¹ The Community's creation of the Luxembourg Compromise to appease France's concerns, which was in effect a national veto on

⁸⁰Anthony Teasdale, "The Life and Death of the Luxembourg Compromise" *Journal of Common Market Studies* 31, no. 4 (December 1993): 567-568, <https://doi-org.cfc.idm.oclc.org/10.1111/j.1468-5965.1993.tb00481.x>.

⁸¹W. Nicoll, "The Luxembourg Compromise," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 23, no. 1 (September 1984): 36, <https://doi-org.cfc.idm.oclc.org/10.1111/j.1468-5965.1984.tb00058.x>; Teasdale, *The Life and Death...*, 569-570; United Kingdom, *The United Kingdom and the European Communities*, Cmnd. 4715 (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1971): 8-9, 18, https://www.cvce.eu/en/obj/white_paper_presented_by_the_uk_government_to_the_uk_parliament_july_1_1971-en-8cf072cb-5a31-46f6-b04f-cb866be92f72.html. The Luxembourg Compromise was a political statement that specified that each member state was entitled to request a postponement of any vote if the issue at hand was of a vital national interest, the object of the vote delay being to allow the Council additional time to find a solution that could be adopted unanimously.

Community decision making, had a positive second order effect for Great Britain. The ability of a member state to veto Council decisions was often touted as an effective mechanism that Great Britain could use to protect its sovereignty when it finally became a member of the EEC. Interestingly, it was Great Britain's attempt to use the Luxembourg Compromise in 1982 that caused the Community to reassess the Compromise's value as it was never law, only a political statement.

Great Britain's second application

Great Britain learned from its first failed application. Unlike its first application, when Great Britain entered negotiations with numerous pre-conditions and exemptions, it kept its second application as simple as possible. Great Britain intended to accept the terms of the Treaty of Rome, as written, and the only advance request was for safeguards for New Zealand's butter and Commonwealth sugar exports. Otherwise, it requested no other special conditions for the Commonwealth. While Great Britain expressed some concerns about the funding formula for the CAP, and other issues such as investment capital movement, British Prime Minister Wilson stated that the majority of concerns could best be addressed after Great Britain had joined the Community.⁸² As de Gaulle's distrust of Great Britain and the US had prevailed in the intervening years, one of Great Britain's objectives with the simplicity of its second application was to reduce the reasons available for de Gaulle to issue a credible veto.

After the first French veto, the CAP remained an issue of concern for Great Britain. Unlike the six members' states of the EEC, Great Britain had relatively liberal agriculture import rules. While it did provide subsidies for its domestic farmers, it was a

⁸²Parr, *Saving the Community...*, 438; Helen Parr, *Britain's Policy Towards the European Community: Harold Wilson and Britain's World Role, 1964-1967* (London: Routledge Ltd, 2006; 2005), 135, <https://doi:10.4324/9780203310298>.

huge importer of agricultural products, primarily from the Commonwealth, but also from states such as Denmark. As a result, Great Britain had concerns about the funding formula for the CAP. Great Britain's concern centred on a state's contribution was calculated based upon the value of its agriculture imports. The result was that Great Britain would face a large "bill" upon accession to the EEC. In 1967, the estimate was that CAP payments would add £200 - £250 million yearly to Great Britain's balance of payments deficit.

France argued that even as Great Britain was demonstrating signs of accepting the CAP, Great Britain's economic weakness during the 1960s, including the accumulation of £900 million in new debt since 1964, would make it impossible to afford entry.⁸³ France was concerned that Great Britain's balance of payments deficit would become a problem for the EC because Article 108 of the Treaty of Rome stated that any country experiencing a balance of payment problem was entitled to ask for help from the Community.⁸⁴ France did not want the EEC prosperity endangered by Great Britain's economic weakness as the cost would have to be shared by all other member states. As France was the second largest economy in the EEC, its proportion of the "bill" would have been second only to Germany's.

More encompassing, for France, the economic issues were threefold. First, as a net exporter of agricultural products, the CAP proved to be highly profitable for France and it was not interested in reopening discussions that could cause it to lose this advantage. Second, it questioned Great Britain's sincerity in accepting the CAP given

⁸³TNA, *Figures to O'Neill*, 17 March 1966, EW24/53, TNA quoted Parr, *Britain's Policy Towards...*, 135.

⁸⁴CAC, 900639/78, Financial Counsellor, *Conséquences économiques et financières de l'application à la Grande-Bretagne de la PAC*, 5 January 1967 quoted in Parr, *Saving the Community...*, 430; European Union, *Treaty of Rome* (Rome: European Union, 25 March 1957), Article 108.

the cost. Third, France's economic integration with the EEC continued to rise rapidly with 43% of its exports going to EEC members by 1963. De Gaulle worried that the admittance of Great Britain to the EEC could one day lead to it becoming too powerful an economic competitor to France.⁸⁵ In the same fashion of his first veto, de Gaulle called a press conference on 27 November 1967 and stated his opposition to Great Britain's entry into the EEC. With the second veto in place, Great Britain's foreign policy was left in limbo and it remained relegated to the periphery of Europe. Overall, France's position on Great Britain joining the EEC remained the same throughout the 1960s. By seeking to maintain its dominant position in the Community, France kept Great Britain on the sidelines of European integration. Not until de Gaulle left office in 1969 did Great Britain entertain any serious hope of entry into the EEC.

**A redefining moment for Great Britain –
The decision to withdraw military forces from East of the Suez Canal**

Having assumed office in 1964, Prime Minister Harold Wilson inherited a deficit of £800 million. In the ensuing two years, Great Britain's financial situation did not improve. By 1967, Great Britain had suffered through the seaman and dock workers strikes, both of which hurt the movement of British goods and negatively affected the country's balance of payments. This interruption, coupled with the spike of petroleum product prices as a result of the 1967 Six-Day War, and the subsequent closure of the Suez Canal, led Wilson's Cabinet deciding to devalue the pound by just under 15% on 18

⁸⁵Parr, *Saving the Community*..., 430-431; N. Piers Ludlow, "Challenging French Leadership in Europe: Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and the Outbreak of the Empty Chair Crisis of 1965-1966," *Contemporary European History* 8, no. 2, 236-238, [https://www.cambridge-org.cfc.idm.oclc.org/core/journals/contemporary-european-history/article/challenging-french-leadership-in-europe-germany-italy-the-netherlands-and-the-outbreak-of-the-empty-chair-crisis-of-19651966/0EADFE25A92AAC624228879CC73F2E063](https://www.cambridge.org/cfc.idm.oclc.org/core/journals/contemporary-european-history/article/challenging-french-leadership-in-europe-germany-italy-the-netherlands-and-the-outbreak-of-the-empty-chair-crisis-of-19651966/0EADFE25A92AAC624228879CC73F2E063).

November 1967.⁸⁶ The devaluation would be quickly followed by a series of tax increases, government spending reductions, and the withdrawal of a significant portion of Great Britain's military forces east of the Suez Canal in an effort to reduce the British deficit.

By 1968, Great Britain was spending more of its national income on defence than any other Western European country. Great Britain continued to try to burden share with the US in the responsibility of world peace by maintaining deployed military forces in East and Central Africa, the Middle East, Malaysia, Hong Kong in addition to its commitments to NATO, Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) and Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO).⁸⁷ Additionally, demands for both financial and military support from NATO and the Western European Union were increasingly hard to maintain and causing Great Britain to run successive financial deficits causing its national debt to steadily increase. The combination of yearly deficits added to its wartime debt made Great Britain's financial situation unsustainable.

Aside from the cost of maintaining these commitments, British forces had undergone a steady decrease in size as a result of Great Britain's 1957 Defence White Paper. The reduction in size coupled with the diffusion of Great Britain's forces created

⁸⁶TNA, Conclusions of a Meeting of the Cabinet, 16 November 1967, CAB 128-42-66, TNA, <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/D7664622>; TNA, "The 1967 devaluation of the pound," last accessed 21 April 2019, <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/cabinet-office-100/the-1967-devaluation-of-the-pound/>; For a more complete description of the Government of Harold Wilson's movement towards the second application to join the EEC and the aftermath of de Gaulle's second veto, see Hugo Young, *The Blessed Plot: Britain and Europe from Churchill to Blair*, (Woodstock: The Overlook Press, 1999), 181-208.

⁸⁷United States. Department of State, "The Baghdad Pack (1955) and the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO)," last accessed 11 April 2019, <https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/lw/98683.htm>. Formed in 1955 by Britain, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan and Turkey and dissolved in 1979; United States – Office of the Historian, "Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO)," last accessed 11 April 2019, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/seato>. Formed in 1954 by Australia, Britain, France, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand and the US and dissolved in 1977.

concerns of how effectively Great Britain could respond if a crisis erupted.⁸⁸ The idea of Great Britain reducing or completely withdrawing its military forces east of the Suez Canal had been first proposed by the British Treasury in 1960 but no action was taken as Great Britain did not want it seen like it was retreating from its global responsibilities. Economic factors would end up forcing a decision, though it was not until 1965 that Great Britain decided to withdraw from the Persian Gulf and Aden, followed up in 1967-1968 by the decision to withdraw from Singapore and Malaysia. It was in January 1968 that Great Britain accelerated the withdrawal plan and notified its allies of a complete drawdown east of the Suez Canal by late 1971.

Given the size of the balance of payments deficit that Great Britain was trying to correct, savings from other parts of defence were investigated. As another cost saving measure, Great Britain decided to cancel its purchase of F-111 medium bomber aircraft from the US.⁸⁹ Both of these decisions directly affected the US. First, with the military withdrawal, the US was militarily losing one of its principal allies in regions of strategic importance. Second, the cancellation of the aircraft purchase worsened the US' balance of payments with Europe. Politically, Great Britain acknowledged that it was no longer able to maintain the footprint of a global empire. The cost had proven beyond its resource capabilities.

⁸⁸Verrier, *Defence and Politics After Nassau...*, 275; G.C. Peden, *Arms, Economics and British Strategy From Dreadnoughts to Hydrogen Bombs*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 304-306; Michael Middeke, "Britain's global military role, conventional defence and Anglo-American interdependence after Nassau," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 24, no. 1 (2001), 144, <https://doi-org.cfc.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/01402390108437825>.

⁸⁹Bennett, *Six Moments of Crisis...*, 95-97; Peden, *Arms, Economics and British Strategy...*, 306, 331-332, 341-342; United Kingdom. Office of National Statistics, "BoP Current Account Balance," last accessed 3 April 2019, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/nationalaccounts/balanceofpayments/timeseries/hbop/pnbp>.

Great Britain's global responsibilities were intertwined with the US. The placement of its military forces throughout the Middle East, Indian Ocean, and Far East was designed to protect British commercial and political interests against the spread of Communism being supported by the Soviet Union and China.⁹⁰ The void created by Great Britain's withdrawal left the US with a greater strategic burden for defence. Crucial areas, such as the Middle East (oil supply), Indian Ocean (trade routes) and South East Asia (spread of Communism) needed a strong Western presence for both economic and political reasons. The US, already engaged in conflict in Vietnam unilaterally since 1954, was now witnessing the withdrawal of another strategic ally. While politically, economically and militarily necessary, the withdrawal strained Great Britain's relationship with the US. More positively, the decision to maintain its European military forces at the expense of others demonstrated Great Britain's commitment and prioritization of Europe.

In Europe the Iron Curtain was firmly in place. While Great Britain and the US were at odds over Great Britain's military withdrawal east of the Suez Canal, they were united in trying to get continental European countries to shoulder a greater proportion of the cost of defence. The US was very much focused on containing the spread of Communism throughout Latin America, Africa, and Asia. While the US did not support colonialism, the collapse of the colonial empires of Great Britain, France, Belgium and the Netherlands had littered the world with newly independent countries that were all trying to establish themselves politically and economically. Some of these countries turned to the Soviet Union for assistance as the void created by the withdrawal of the

⁹⁰Bennett, *Six Moments of Crisis...*, 97-98; Peden, *Arms, Economics and British Strategy...*, 332-333, 337.

colonial powers provided opportunity for the spread of Communism or at least a political alliance with the Soviet Union. For some countries, the Soviet Union was a willing economic partner either through trade or financial subsidization.⁹¹ Great Britain had cracked under the pressure of the US to share the burden of maintaining worldwide security. The decisions taken by Great Britain in January 1968 had significant foreign policy implications that saw Great Britain continue its retreat from the Commonwealth and to a lesser extent step back from its relationship with the US. Despite Great Britain's desire to do more, economics forced it to make the hard choice that between global security and European security, Great Britain's priority was Europe.

De Gaulle's Post Script

The weakness of the British economy added credence to de Gaulle's argument that Great Britain was not yet ready to join the EEC. Additionally, de Gaulle still believed that Europe needed to be free from outside influence, specifically the US. As he stated at his press conference announcing his second veto, de Gaulle believed that for the EEC to be an effective counterbalance to "...the immense power of the United States, it is necessary... to strengthen the Community's ties and rules."⁹² By the close of 1969, France had successfully stewarded the completion of the EEC's customs union and completed the CAP implementation, something, de Gaulle considered virtually impossible to have done had Great Britain been allowed to join the EEC earlier. Therefore to belong to the EC, Great Britain needed to embrace the idea that its relationship with Europe would take priority over all others. In short, Great Britain

⁹¹Bennett, *Six Moments of Crisis...*, 98-100.

⁹²University of Luxembourg - Centre Virtuel de la Connaissance sur l'Europe, "Press conference held by General de Gaulle at the Élysée (27 November 1967)," last accessed 21 April 2019, https://www.cvce.eu/en/obj/press_conference_held_by_general_de_gaulle_at_the_elysee_27_november_1967-en-fe79955c-ef62-4b76-9677-dce44151be53.html.

needed to let go of any pretext of a special relationship with the US and, given its already diminished role in British foreign policy, the Commonwealth.

The status of Great Britain and its three spheres of influence by the end of the 1960s

By the end of the 1960s, the previous 25 years of political, military and economic factors had all coalesced to confirm that Great Britain was no longer a world power.

Through no lack of trying events had proven that Great Britain did not have the resources to maintain parity with all three spheres alone. Great Britain had lost the Commonwealth as viable full strategic partner a decade ago and while it did not sever ties, Great Britain did not make the Commonwealth a political, economic or military priority again.

The choice of a strategic partner was between the US and Europe. With dogged determination, Great Britain tried to make the US its priority but political and economic factors denied that path. While there were signs of the special US-Britain relationship, it was never as binding or equal as Great Britain needed it to be. The US was a superpower and was operating politically, economically and militarily on a global scale. At the same time, Great Britain was unable to unseat France for European leadership. Economically Great Britain was trying to correct an unsustainable balance of payment deficit and possessed a stagnant economy that had a below average growth rate when compared to the EEC. Economics pushed Great Britain towards integration with the EEC, and by the end of the 1960s the EEC was the only path left open for rejuvenating Great Britain's economic prosperity. Militarily, Great Britain scaled back and withdrew its global forces as a cost saving measure, against US' wishes. Great Britain was retreating towards Europe, not its first choice for a strategic partner but its only remaining choice.

While France had done its share to keep Great Britain isolated from Europe, Great Britain had done itself no favours in developing into a true European power. Its own inability to embrace the idea that its future rested with Europe had caused a foreign policy that continued to lack focus and produced dismal results. Through no desire of its own, Great Britain was finally shifting towards Europe.

CHAPTER 3: 1973 – 1991

ACCESSION TO THE MAASTRICHT TREATY

The 1950s and 1960s had proven that neither the Commonwealth nor the US lived up to the expectations of Great Britain in terms of strategic partnership. The Commonwealth had become a loose collection of former colonies, each conducting their own foreign policies and working towards their own national goals. The US had moved beyond Europe and was forming relationships globally. The preceding decades had shown that while a strong and reliable partner, the US would make decisions that first and foremost served their own national interest. From Churchill's three spheres of influence, this left Europe. Much like France, Great Britain had turned to the EEC to rejuvenate its economy, and looked to take its place as a leading European nation. De Gaulle's resignation as the French President in April 1969 offered a new opportunity for Great Britain.

Accession

De Gaulle's successor, Georges Pompidou, was more conciliatory towards Great Britain. Pompidou accepted somewhat that EEC enlargement was inevitable; however, he remained committed to the EEC as the foundation of France's leadership within Europe, and the power base for France's global influence.⁹³ Even if enlargement meant dilution of de Gaulle's vision for Europe, France was not yet ready to capitulate and automatically accept Great Britain's vision with its accession. During 1969, relations with the EEC ended well. The Community agreed to reopen accession negotiations scheduled to start in June 1970. In the interim, Great Britain also underwent a leadership change and governing party when Edward Heath became Prime Minister in June 1970.

⁹³Parr, *Saving the Community...*, 443-444; Young, *The Blessed Plot...*, 208.

The work, started by the Conservatives, under Macmillan and continued by Labour, under Wilson came full circle and was completed by the Conservatives under Heath. With Heath's election, Great Britain, for the first time, had a Prime Minister who wholeheartedly embraced the idea that Great Britain's future was with Europe.⁹⁴ Additionally, though far from unanimous, there was cross party support for Great Britain's accession to the EEC.

British foreign policy, built upon Churchill's three spheres of influence with Great Britain in the middle, had finally shifted towards Europe and as a result Heath approached negotiations differently than his predecessors. Unlike in 1961, when Macmillan went to great lengths to consult with the Commonwealth, Heath did not engage the Commonwealth in extensive consultations, ultimately only pursuing special provisions for New Zealand dairy products and Commonwealth sugar.⁹⁵ While defending his Government's negotiated agreement on accession to the EEC, Heath summarized his feelings about the Commonwealth in the House of Commons stating that

⁹⁴Bennett, *Six Moments of Crisis...*, 87-88; TNA, "Edward Heath – European Citizen," last accessed 21 April 2019, http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/citizenship/brave_new_world/heath.htm; Richard Davis, "The 'Problem of de Gaulle:' British Reactions to General de Gaulle's Veto of the UK's Application to Join the Common Market," *Journal of Contemporary History* 32, no. 4, (October 1997): 453-458, <https://doi-org.cfc.idm.oclc.org/10.1177/002200949703200403> TNA, Conclusions of a Meeting of the Cabinet, 22 January 1963, CAB 128-37-5, TNA, <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/D7664230>. Prime Minister Edward Heath was pro-European and supporter of European integration on certain levels, having been an early supporter of the idea of the Schuman Plan which led to the founding of the ECSC. By 1961, as a member of Macmillan's Cabinet as Lord Privy Seal, he was convinced for both political and economic reasons that Britain's future lay with closer association with Europe and was tasked with overseeing Great Britain's first application to join the EEC. In the weeks following de Gaulle's first veto, Heath continued to forward the British position it was still very much committed to Europe and, while immediately temping, Great Britain should not turn its attention to strengthening ties with the Commonwealth and the EFTA at the expense of its burgeoning relationship with the EEC. In the same vain, Great Britain should not lose sight of the ultimate goal of joining the EEC. Time had not diminished his pro-European stance and with his election as Prime Minister he was posed to finally see Great Britain join the EEC.

⁹⁵TNA, Conclusions of a Meeting of the Cabinet, 30 May 1961, CAB 128-35-29, TNA, <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/D7664230>; May, *The Commonwealth and Britain's Turn...*, 36.

“...it is a unique association which we value, but the idea that it would become an effective economic or political, let alone military, bloc has never materialized.”⁹⁶ Heath reinforced the reality of that had matured for over the preceding decade. The political benefits of Commonwealth leadership never came to fruition; the economic ties had been in steady decline; and Great Britain had finally moved beyond the sentimental ties.

This shift in foreign policy affected the US as well. In addressing concerns that Great Britain’s accession would change its relationship with the US, he stated “[o]ur relationship with the [US] is close, friendly and natural, but it is not unique [and the US] ...is bound to find itself involved more and more with the large economic powers, Japan and the European Community.”⁹⁷ The US had moved beyond Europe being the focus of its foreign policy. As the US forged political, economic and military alliances beyond Great Britain and NATO, the US had demonstrated that it would always put national interests first, no matter how strong the alliance or friendship. Great Britain needed to adapt. Parity with the US was going to come in the EEC-US relationship, not the British-US relationship. Great Britain’s turn to the EEC was a necessary decision to move forward from the isolating tactics that maintaining parity between the three spheres of influence called for.

The need to make a choice between the three spheres was not new for the British Government. The *Future Policy Report 1960-70*, discussed in Cabinet on 24 February 1960, predicted that by 1970, Great Britain would “face difficult choices” and have to

⁹⁶The Parliament of the United Kingdom (Hansard), “European Communities, 28 October 1971, Series 5, Volume 823, Column 2204,” <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/1971-10-28/debates/f7b49d76-2531-4c3e-9af3-bf15653b73f7/EuropeanCommunities#2204>.

⁹⁷*Ibid.*

prioritize its relationships with the US, the Commonwealth and Europe.⁹⁸ For the sake of national prosperity and growth, Great Britain had made its choice, placing the EEC ahead of both the Commonwealth and the US. Heath signed the Treaty of Accession with EEC members in January 1972. Great Britain's Parliament passed the European Communities Act the same year in October 1972. Great Britain joined the EC on 1 January 1973.

The success was short lived. The new battle ground was not between the three spheres of influence but instead domestically between those who wanted Great Britain to remain in the Community and those who wanted it to leave. Churchill's vision had become so infused in both British politics and general public vernacular that the idea that Great Britain was something more than a European country had been modernized and become part of the British identity.

The first six years of membership

By 1973, Great Britain joined a Community whose development had been stewarded by France, with its anti-US, anti-Atlantic Bridge sentiment, and the other five, who except for the Dutch, all favoured the EEC moving towards greater federalism, something Great Britain continued to shun.⁹⁹ The friction points between Great Britain and the EEC were apparent from the beginning and became the target of Harold Wilson and the Labour Party in the first general election since accession. Euro-skepticism was starting to define the political debate of Great Britain's membership in the EEC, developing the political message that it was Great Britain versus the EEC.

⁹⁸TNA, Future Policy Study 1960-70, 24 February 1960, CAB 129/100, TNA, <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/cabinetpapers/cabinet-gov/cab129-post-war-memoranda.htm#Cabinet%20Memoranda%201957%20to%201963>.

⁹⁹Davis, *The Problem of de Gaulle...*, 462-464.

Wilson had always been a lukewarm supporter of accession, having agreed to it out of economic necessity rather than believing in the idea of the EC. As Leader of the Opposition from 1970 – 1974, he had become critical of the terms of accession and had voted against the European Communities Act (1972).¹⁰⁰ Directly attacking the concept of joining the EEC was difficult because Wilson had earlier started the application process. Rather during his time in opposition he predominately challenged the Conservative's negotiated terms as being less than what Great Britain deserved.¹⁰¹ In 1974 Harold Wilson returned as Prime Minister. He campaigned on the promise that his Government would renegotiate the terms of Great Britain's participation in the EEC and let the public decide in a referendum. As Great Britain was now a member of the EEC, Wilson understood the other EEC members felt little need or desire to change the foundational policies enacted by the Community since the Treaty of Rome was signed, to address Great Britain's demands. To achieve anything, Great Britain had to work within the Community's rules. During renegotiations, Great Britain did not demand fundamental changes to the fabric of the Community. Rather, Great Britain's points of concern were much the same as from its first application to the EEC. Lack of preferential treatment for Commonwealth goods, the CAP, and the supposedly high cost of belonging to the EEC were all issues that resonated with the British public.¹⁰² Having been hemmed in by his initial support for accession, Wilson's government was successful enough to gain small

¹⁰⁰Hansard, *European Communities*, 28 October 1971, Series 5, Volume 823, Column 2082

¹⁰¹Derek Hearl, "Britain and Europe Since 1945," *Parliamentary Affairs* 47, no. 4 (1994): 519-521, <https://doi-org.cfc.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/oxfordjournals.pa.a052495>.

¹⁰²Robert Saunders, "A Tale of Two Referendums: 1975 and 2016," *The Political Quarterly* 87, no. 3 (July – September 2016): 318, <https://doi-org.cfc.idm.oclc.org/10.1111/1467-923X.12286>. Robert Saunders article breaks down the major negotiating points differently stating four major issues were that the EEC was a capitalist club, that it was a betrayal of the Commonwealth, that it was bad for poorer countries and that it was draining money from Britain. See his article for brief description on how he assessed that Wilson's Labour Government addressed these four negotiating points with the EEC.

changes to the terms of accessions. The changes were sufficient in size that Wilson could claim that he had gotten a better deal for Great Britain. The Wilson Government proceeded to schedule a referendum on whether Great Britain should remain in the EEC on these adjusted terms in June 1975.

The dividing line of the referendum debate was not along party lines. Official policy of both the Labour and Conservative Parties was support for Great Britain remaining in the EEC. Anything different would have been hypocritical considering both parties had governed Great Britain during its final application and accession to the EEC. However, both parties contained euro-skeptic factions that did not support Great Britain being a part of the EEC. Individual politicians were given the freedom to campaign, including the suspension of Cabinet solidarity, for the side of their choice. Party unity was shattered, especially within the Labour Party, which voted almost 2-1 to reject the renegotiated terms and leave the EEC.¹⁰³ The referendum pitted Labour and Conservative Party members against their own colleagues, and embedded a bitter divide that would plague both parties to varying degrees over the coming years. This animosity served to entrench the domestic battle between pro-Europeans and Euro-skeptics that influenced how Great Britain executed its foreign policy towards the EEC.

The Labour Government's approach to Wilson's main negotiating point reflected the direction of British foreign policy. Despite denouncing the initial terms of accession as betraying the Commonwealth, Wilson did not pursue any major additional concessions from the EEC. It was political rhetoric to gain votes, rather than a rational argument built on economic data. Gains were confined to slightly better terms for Commonwealth

¹⁰³BBC, "1975: Labour votes to leave the EEC," last accessed 25 April 2019, http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/april/26/newsid_2503000/2503155.stm; Hearl, *Britain and Europe...*, 521-522.

imports, primarily from New Zealand. Overall, though, the Commonwealth no longer held sufficient economic influence to justify such an investment of political capital. The CAP was the EEC's first major policy and a crowning achievement of French influence over the Community. France was unwilling to support amending the CAP, and the other members were unwilling to challenge this position during the renegotiations. As a result, the renegotiation did nothing to addressing the CAP's growing cost. Lastly, the amended financial terms that were agreed to in 1974 would prove to be inadequate to allay Great Britain's disproportionate contribution concerns.¹⁰⁴ Despite these facts, the EEC was looked upon favourably by the majority of British politicians and the general public. The result of the referendum was that the "Remain Vote" achieved a resounding victory with 67.2% in favour of remaining in the EEC.¹⁰⁵ The referendum was a political success but it changed little from the initial terms of accession. Both the EEC and Great Britain showed a lack of political courage to engage in difficult and time consuming negotiations to fundamentally address Great Britain's concerns. Great Britain's government was happy to accept the illusion that the question of whether Great Britain belonged in the EEC had been resolved. Wilson's renegotiations and referendum left addressing the hard issues for a later government.

The cost of EEC membership was known from before accession. The funding formula for the EEC budget clearly disadvantaged Great Britain and privileged France. The amended financial terms did not provide Great Britain with any rebate between 1976

¹⁰⁴James Spence, "A high price to pay? Britain and the European budget," *International Affairs* 88, no. 6 (2012): 1242-1243, <https://doi-org.cfc.idm.oclc.org/10.1111/j.1468-2346.2012.01130.x>.

¹⁰⁵The Parliament of the United Kingdom, "The EEC and the Single European Act," last accessed 22 April 2019, <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/evolutionofparliament/legislativescrutiny/parliament-and-europe/overview/britain-and-eec-to-single-european-act/>.

and 1982. The issue of the CAP's cost and Great Britain's rebate slowly grew as a point of friction between Great Britain and the rest of the EEC. The perceived lack of movement by the EEC to resolve Great Britain's grievances became major friction points by 1979 for two reasons. It was final transition year of Great Britain's accession into the EEC and the first time the full cost of membership came due. It was also the year that Margaret Thatcher was elected Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and her brand of euro-skepticism

Margaret Thatcher's opinion of the EEC was honed as a member of Heath's Cabinet during the accession treaty negotiations. She reflects in her Autobiography, *The Path to Power*, that she supported Great Britain's entry into the EEC, and while there were concerns within Heath's Cabinet about the cost of membership and Great Britain's contribution; they were pushed aside by the enthusiasm of Heath.¹⁰⁶ When she was elected as Conservative Party leader in February 1975 she took over the leadership of her party as a supporter, though not necessarily a true believer, of the EEC.¹⁰⁷ She eloquently summed up her initial position on the EEC at the launch of the Conservative Party's 1975 referendum campaign by stating that Great Britain was "inextricably part of Europe... for Europe is where we are and where we have always been."¹⁰⁸ She went on to extol the virtues of the Community that had provided Great Britain with peace, security, secure sources of food, more trade, provided aid, and given Great Britain the opportunity to represent the Commonwealth in Europe.¹⁰⁹ Her assessment was founded on the positive

¹⁰⁶Margaret Thatcher, *The Path to Power*, (New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 1995), 345 – 351, 543.

¹⁰⁷Young, *The Blessed Plot...*, 311.

¹⁰⁸Margaret Thatcher Foundation, "Margaret Thatcher's Speech to Conservative Group for Europe (opening Conservative referendum campaign), 16 April 1975," <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/102675>.

¹⁰⁹*Ibid.*

effects that membership had brought Great Britain and the overall Community. She was in favour of continued membership, but made no mention that political union or federalism was a necessary component to achieve future success.

Thatcher's euro-skepticism was not built upon a hatred of Europe or a desire for Great Britain to return to the days of its empire. Nor was it a desire to return Great Britain to the isolated centre of Churchill's three spheres of influence. Rather her brand of euro-skepticism developed from a collision of views between those in the EC who wanted more political union, and her view that that the EC was a mechanism to establish a single European market, as called for in the Treaty of Rome. Her time in opposition had allowed her to witness that growth of the cost of the CAP, the continued increase in Great Britain's contribution to the EEC's budget, and no rebate to Great Britain. Unlike her predecessors, Thatcher was determined to bring closure to the issues that had plagued the British-EC relationship in one form or another since the first application of 1961. The failure of both the EC and Great Britain to address these concerns when they had first been identified allowed British euro-skepticism to grow in strength as it added validity that it was the EC versus Great Britain.

The Rebate

As the newly elected Prime Minister in 1979, Thatcher faced growing discontent between Great Britain and the EEC. The first major issue was a carryover from the 1974 Labour Government's renegotiation of the funding formula for the EEC budget. Since 1970, the EEC's budget was funded from revenues that flowed irrevocably and

unimpeded by member states, directly to the Community.¹¹⁰ Upon accession Great Britain automatically accepted the EEC funding formula. From the start, the funding formula and the EEC's associated expenditures naturally disadvantaged Great Britain. The EEC's own resources were drawn from custom duties and agricultural levies on imports from outside the EEC, and a percentage of each nation's VAT revenue. Relative to the rest of the EEC, Great Britain imported a greater amount of goods, including significant amounts of agricultural products, from outside the EEC making its contribution to the EEC's own resources disproportionately large. Exacerbating the funding issue was that, at the time of accession, Great Britain had a per capita GDP well below the Community average, making it one of the poorer member states. Yet, the funding formula resulted in Great Britain being the second largest net contributor.¹¹¹ The net effect led Great Britain to demand a contribution rebate.

Linked to the budget funding issue was the growing cost of the CAP. The original six members had adopted the CAP as a way of promoting their own national agricultural industry accompanied by implementing tariffs and other trade barriers on agricultural product imports. By contrast, Great Britain had a small and efficient agricultural industry stemming back to its repeal of the Corn Law in 1846, which removed tariffs and trade barriers on agricultural imports. Great Britain had grown reliant on agricultural imports to satisfy its national needs. By 1970, the CAP accounted for 86.9% of the EEC's expenditures, and given the relative size of Great Britain's agricultural sector received very little benefit from CAP expenditures. De Gaulle's

¹¹⁰European Commission, *Public Finance* – 5th Edition, (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2014), 128, <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/8bc08dd0-f1ed-4f45-bab4-75ac2a63d048>.

¹¹¹*Ibid.*, 29; Spence, *A high price to pay...*, 1240.

legacy over the EEC was present as both the funding formula and CAP were working exactly as he had designed.

For all of the reasons de Gaulle publically stated for keeping Great Britain out of the EC for the good of Community, nationally France benefited more than any other EC member from delaying Great Britain's accession. The CAP was perfectly built to support France's large agricultural industry and the budget funding formula secured to necessary revenue to support the growing cost of the CAP. De Gaulle correctly assessed that had Great Britain joined the EC prior to 1969 it would most likely have objected to both 1969 CAP revision, and the 1970 budget funding formula. Unfortunately, the 1975 amended financial terms returned few funds to Great Britain and it became a defining issue between Thatcher and the EC, a diplomatic battle that stretched from 1979 to 1984.

The EC was built upon diplomatic maneuvering and compromise. As an organization built upon unanimous agreement, all parties were expected to be flexible, participate in the give and take of negotiations, and above all else, put Europe first. In her first European Council meeting, Thatcher's approach to the EEC was blunt; she demanded a return of "our money" and a permanent fix to the budget imbalance. Thatcher attacked the core tenant that all countries were supposed to act for the benefit of the community. However, her frustration was justified. She shed light on an uncomfortable fact that the EEC had raced to create policy that was known to disadvantage Great Britain during the 1960s, and after six years of membership the issue had not been properly addressed. To put it in perspective six years was longer than it took to negotiate the entire Treaty of Rome. The others members, led by France and Germany, wanted to continue shorter term solutions as this provided maximum flexibility

to amend the rebate value. For whatever altruistic arguments put forward defending the current funding formula and the offers of short term solutions, each leader was fundamentally driven by national needs. France, as the greatest beneficiary of the CAP did not support any proposal that could diminish its share. Germany, as the wealthiest country, understood that any rebate to Great Britain would have to be made up by the other countries, of which Germany would shoulder the greatest share. A series of short term agreements covering 1980 – 1984 addressed some of Great Britain's suffering but in the end the negotiations took until 1984 for Great Britain to gain a permanent rebate solution. The prolonged period to achieve a long term rebate solution served to feed the animosity of British euro-skepticism towards the EEC.

Over that same period, Great Britain continued to challenge the EEC's status quo. In 1982, Great Britain unsuccessfully tried to invoke the Luxembourg Compromise and impose a veto over the setting of the CAP's annual agricultural price settlement as leverage to get a permanent rebate deal. Over Great Britain's objection a vote was called and the price settlement was agreed to by majority voting. Even though Great Britain had garnered initial support from Denmark and Greece for invocation of the Compromise, it quickly found itself isolated again. Within the EEC this event perpetuated the building sentiment that Great Britain was a difficult partner to work with. For British euro-skeptics it perpetuated the sentiment that Great Britain was not welcome in the EEC.

The Single European Act

At the June 1984 European Council meeting Thatcher distributed the British Government position paper, *Europe – The Future*, to contribute to the meeting's discussion and further Great Britain's vision for the EC. In an effort to leave the negative

rhetoric of the rebate negotiations behind, the primary objective of the paper was to articulate the Great Britain was committed to the EC and believed in the terms of the Treaty of Rome, especially the creation of a true common market.¹¹² Thatcher believed in economic integration because only an integrated common market would be able to withstand completion from the US and Japan.¹¹³ For Thatcher, future British and EC success would be grounded in economic security and prosperity.

As momentum built around completing the common market, other member states used the opportunity to add action points. A divide began to form. Great Britain took the position that the EC could complete the single market without the need for another treaty and that EC's future success would be stunted if its resources were diluted over too many lines of effort. Others members, led by France and Germany, looked upon this as an opportunity, alongside addressing single market completion, to expand of the areas of EC competence, expand qualified majority voting, and move towards greater political union.

While registering Great Britain's concerns, the European Council majority voted to proceed with the drafting of a new treaty. This incensed Thatcher and deepened her distrust of the growing desires of France and Germany to move towards greater integration. However, the British negotiating team adapted. While not supporting the drafting of a new treaty, Great Britain had immersed itself in the negotiations in order to be seen as a dedicated partner. By remaining engaged it was able contribute to the debate to ensure that its national interests were protected.

¹¹²Wall, *A Stranger in Europe*..., 41.

¹¹³United Kingdom, "Europe – The Future," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 23, no. 1 (September 1984): 74; <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=6276662&site=ehost-live&scope=site>; EU, *Treaty of Rome* ..., Article II.

The conclusion of the treaty was a success for Great Britain. Great Britain achieved its main objectives, including a definitive implementation deadline for the common market, and acquiesced on lesser issues, such as the expansion of qualified majority voting. This contrasted with Thatcher's view that the treaty included undesirable concessions towards integration that ran counter to her vision on that the EC's future direction.¹¹⁴ The conclusion of the Single European Act negotiations was the point where Thatcher's vision for the EC significantly started to diverge from the direction it was actually taking.

The ensuing years saw the divide between widen between Thatcher and pro-Europeans. The divide reached its apex in September 1988 after Thatcher spoke at the College of Bruges. In her speech, Thatcher reiterated that the EC should engage in "...willing and active cooperation between independent sovereign states [as this was] the best way to build a successful European Community." She reinforced the view that Great Britain very much considered itself a member of the Community and more political union was not required. For Thatcher, the speech outlined a detailed future for the EC and offered a principled opposition to federalism.¹¹⁵ At no point in the speech did Thatcher argue that Great Britain's should leave the EC, rather she argued for a future with Great Britain as a member. Unfortunately, the speech became the manifesto for British euro-skepticism and fuelled the desire that Great Britain should separate itself from the EC. By the late 1980s Thatcher's vision for the EC had been sufficiently corrupted that all her writing and speeches on Europe were viewed through the lens of being tainted with euro-

¹¹⁴Fontana and Parsons, *One Woman's Prejudice...*, 94-95.

¹¹⁵Margaret Thatcher Foundation. "Speech to the College of Europe ("The Bruges Speech") 20 September 1988." Last accessed 30 April 2019. <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/107332>; Margaret Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1993), 746.

skepticism. Her brand of euro-skepticism had been consumed by those who truly wanted to separate Great Britain from Europe.

The Maastricht Treaty

John Major succeeded Thatcher as Prime Minister in November 1990 with just over 12 months remaining until the final negotiations of the Maastricht Treaty. While he held a parliamentary majority, the result of Thatcher's third consecutive general election victory, the Conservative Party was deeply divided. Thatcher supporters had rallied to continue on her resistance to any sort of European integration, and Major, therefore, could not count on unified party support for the Maastricht Treaty if it contained any further movement towards federalism.

Major considered the dominant policy-makers in the EC to be Great Britain, Germany and France. All were driven by national interests; however, all were in favour of an EU of some kind.¹¹⁶ In his opinion, Great Britain was "at the heart of Europe" and it was crucial for Great Britain to remain part of the debate in order exert influence over the outcome.¹¹⁷ To be seen as a partner in Europe was crucial to Great Britain negotiation strategy. Otherwise, to resist the momentum of the negotiations too hard risked Great Britain becoming isolated, and force the other EC members to form a separate alliance over which Great Britain would have no influence. Major made it clear from the beginning of his premiership that he wanted Great Britain's EU membership to be a success.¹¹⁸ He carefully cultivated the conditions for success and achieved all of

¹¹⁶Major, *The Autobiography...*, 266; Edmonds, *Britain, A Demanding Partner...*, 9.

¹¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹¹⁸*Ibid.*, 272; Wall, *A Stranger in Europe...*, 109; Edmonds, *Britain, A Demanding Partner...*, 16.

Great Britain's treaty objectives.¹¹⁹ Just as in the Single European Act negotiations, Great Britain had proven itself to be a fully engaged European partner.

Meanwhile, Thatcher, still a Member of Parliament during the Maastricht Treaty negotiations, became more critical of the treaty negotiations. Having accepted the chairmanship's of the Bruges Group and the Conservative No Turning Back Group, both groups hostile to integration, she became a figurehead and rallying point for the euro-skeptic cause.¹²⁰ In her memoir, *The Downing Street Years*, Thatcher stated that with hindsight she can see the point in her second term

...in which the European Community subtly but surely shifted its direction away from being a Community of open trade, light regulation and freely co-operating sovereign nation-states towards statism and centralism. I can only say that it did not seem like that at the time. For it was during this period that I not only managed to secure a durable financial settlement of Britain's Community budget imbalance and began to get Europe to take financial discipline more seriously, but also launched the drive for a real common market free of hidden protectionism. It is now clear to me from the start that there were two competing visions of Europe.¹²¹

Thatcher was unapologetic about conducting Great Britain's affairs in such a manner that privileged British's interest above all else. Thatcher championed her country's objectives with the EC. Yet she understood the importance that sometimes Great Britain needed to show some good faith and commitment to the Community. Thatcher's brand of euro-skepticism was never about isolating Great Britain from the EC.

¹¹⁹Edmonds, *Britain, A Demanding Partner...*, 16.

¹²⁰Major, *The Autobiography...*, 265.

¹²¹Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years...*, 536.

It was always about full engagement so that Great Britain could mold the Community to meet its own needs, which is no more than every member state had attempted to do.

Churchill's Three Spheres of Influence was the antithesis of Community membership. To achieve the balance envisioned by Churchill, Great Britain would have had to remain isolated in the middle. Modern euro-skepticism diverged from Thatcher in that they sought to separate Great Britain from Europe. Thatcher never wanted Great Britain to leave the EC for she thought membership could add to Great Britain's prosperity.

An area for future study

In of itself, the Brexit referendum was the culminating event in series that led Britain to its present day situation. In outlining her vision for a Great Britain, post Brexit, Prime Minister Theresa May envisions "... a truly Global Britain – the best friend and neighbour to our European partners, but a country that reaches beyond the borders of Europe too. A country that gets out into the world to build relationships with old friends and new allies alike."¹²² Great Britain's departure from the EU will be a defining moment in its history for it will cause a seismic shift in its foreign policy toward continental Europe. With Great Britain soon to be on the outside of the EU "looking in," hopefully its neighbours will be as willing to accommodate Great Britain's unique needs as they were in the past. As Brexit will also leave Great Britain in a similar position to the one that it found itself in 1961, when it first decided to apply to the EC, it will be fascinating to compare and contrast Great Britain's future fortunes. As the Brexit chapter

¹²²Time, "Read Theresa May's Speech Laying Out the U.K's Plan for Brexit," last accessed 18 March 2019, <http://time.com/4636141/theresa-may-brex-it-speech-transcript/>.

of Great Britain's history is still being written this essay will leave the study of Brexit to future scholars.

CONCLUSION

This paper argued that Margaret Thatcher's brand of euro-skepticism is not the root source of modern British euro-skepticism but it took root after the end of the Second World War and was derived from Churchill's three spheres of influence. As a political speech, Churchill's three spheres was meant to be a postwar rallying cry for British greatness to reinvigorate and galvanize a population made weary by the hardship of war. Above all else, his three spheres was a political masterpiece conceived to bring the voters back to the Conservative Party, which restored Churchill as Prime Minister in 1951. It raised British identity to a level that placed it above being a European. However, Churchill was so successful infusing his vision upon British politics, and the British public that they became blind to the flaws of his vision. The three spheres transformed British foreign policy to the point that no subsequent Prime Minister, until Harold Heath, directly challenged the futility of it.

Euro-skeptics embraced the vision that Great Britain was a global leader, powered by its leadership of the Commonwealth and its special bond with the US. This was a political dream not founded in reality. Early euro-skepticism kept Great Britain away from Europe as both Conservative and Labour Prime Ministers attempted to implement a foreign policy built upon the three spheres. The ensuing years showed the Commonwealth to be no more than a loose association of former colonies and the US, as a superpower operating worldwide, that its special relationship with Great Britain went only as far as it satisfied US national interests.

It took the loss of both the Commonwealth and the US as viable strategic allies before Great Britain accepted that it needed to forge a closer relationship with the EC.

The result was Great Britain moved towards Europe out of necessity, not by choice or a shift in belief that Great Britain was one with Europe. The undertone of euro-skepticism is visible in Great Britain's failure to join the ECSC and ECC at inspection, and at its subsequent failure to join in 1961 and 1967. While De Gaulle was most certainly Great Britain's chief opponent to gaining EEC entry in the 1960s, his argument was empowered by Great Britain's own refusal to embrace Europe, as all of other EEC members had done.

Great Britain accession in 1973 might have been looked upon as the death of British euro-skepticism but unfortunately it was not, it just redefined the parameters of the debate. The long and painful road that Great Britain took to join the EC had entrenched a level of bitterness and distrust within Great Britain that was not easily overcome. Rather the fissures that divided Great Britain from its continental partners were identified early, and yet the lack of political will and self-serving nationalism by all Community members created a working atmosphere that pitted Great Britain against other Community members.

This was the landscape that Margaret Thatcher inherited in 1979 upon her election as Prime Minister. Her brand of euro-skepticism grew not out of a dislike of the EC but from her commitment to making the EC work for Great Britain. At no point in her term as Prime Minister did she opine that Great Britain should leave the EC. Rather she unapologetically committed herself to working within the EC to make it better. Along with France and Germany, Great Britain was a dominant force within the EC and helped shape policy. From the low point of the 5-year discussion to solve the British rebate issue, to the successful compromise of the Single European Act and its completion of the

common market, Thatcher held true to her interpretation of the Treaty of Rome. The EC was a union of individual states that had first come together to secure Europe with peace and then economic prosperity through the common market. While she did consider the EC an appropriate forum for limited political union, it could only be an association for individual states to find commonality of purpose and coordinate efforts for increased achievement of effect. Thatcher strongly believed that the EC was only meant to operate in areas where the pooling of resources could achieve a better result than any one nation could operating alone.

In doing so, it was inevitable that her brand of euro-skepticism put her at odds with federalists who considered the economic union of the common market was merely the next step on a road to inevitable political union. A true political union where the EC operated across a full spectrum of competencies and individual nations were subordinate to the will of the EC's majority. While British pro-Europeans hail the Maastricht Treaty as a success, the end result for Great Britain was that the treaty was infused with euro-skepticism. For what Great Britain did accept of the union, British euro-skepticism ensured the government of the day secured the opt-outs necessary to reserve Great Britain's right to be different. After all, Great Britain could not be seen to be stepping too far towards integration.

True British euro-skepticism positioned Great Britain as an isolated island conducting its world affairs on a level above Europe. Its maturation had been completed long before Thatcher became Great Britain's Prime Minister. She didn't invent euro-skepticism, rather no Prime Minister since accession was as forceful or committed to making Great Britain's membership in the EC work as she was, but it had to be on her

terms. Unfortunately her resolve to see the EC mature in a fashion suitable to Great Britain became corrupted. Her resistance to certain ideas of European integration was coopted by euro-skeptics and she became the figurehead of the British euro-skeptic movement that viewed any sort of integration with Europe as a poor choice for Great Britain.

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