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## **Integrated Relationships: The Impact of European Integration on the Special Relationship, 1969-1973**

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Integrated Relationships: The Impact of European Integration on the Special Relationship, 1969–  
1973

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1973

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
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by

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This thesis is approved for recommendation to the Graduate Council.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The special relationship has long been a topic of interest to historians of US foreign relations. The general consensus has been that the years 1969–1973 were a low point for Anglo-American relations, and have therefore been dismissed as largely insignificant. Rejecting this interpretation, this thesis contends that while certainly one of the lowest moments in the history of the special relationship, the Heath-Nixon relationship reveals much about the nature of the special relationship and America's relations with its allies more broadly. Focusing on the question of European integration (and the corresponding British entry into the European Community in 1973) and its impact on the special relationship, this thesis contends that when European integration brought geopolitics and personality together in a totalizing question of the future of each state in the global Cold War, Anglo-American relations rapidly deteriorated. Yet, despite reaching a troubled state, the special relationship survived and now serves to illustrate a fundamental paradigm in American management of relations with its allies.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## Introduction

In his famous Iron Curtain speech delivered in Fulton, Missouri on March 5, 1946, former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill proposed a “special relationship between the British Commonwealth and Empire and the United States of America.”<sup>1</sup> Further explaining the scope of what he was suggesting, Churchill continued:

Fraternal association requires not only the growing friendship and mutual understanding between our two vast but kindred systems of society, but the continuance of the intimate relations between our military advisers, leading to common study of potential dangers, the similarity of weapons and manuals of instructions, and to the interchange of officers and cadets at technical colleges. It should carry with it the continuance of the present facilities for mutual security by the joint use of all Naval and Air Force bases in the possession of either country all over the world. . . . There is however an important question we must ask ourselves. Would a special relationship between the United States and the British Commonwealth be inconsistent with our over-riding loyalties to the World Organization? I reply that, on the contrary, it is probably the only means by which that organization will achieve its full stature and strength.<sup>2</sup>

Churchill’s words were well calculated and targeted at a people who were, for the first time, experiencing a newfound status as a global superpower. The mantle of leadership had fallen upon the United States, and Churchill’s call for a special relationship based upon a common heritage and shared goals for the post-war world resonated within them. Yet Churchill’s influence extended beyond the American people; he had caught the attention of the nation’s highest political figures and presented them with an opportunity to gain an essential ally in the coming struggle against communism. With such challenges ahead, Churchill’s vision for a world led by a strong Anglo-American force would soon become reality.

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<sup>1</sup> Winston Churchill, speech, Fulton, MO, March 5, 1946, [www.historyguide.org/europe/churchill.html](http://www.historyguide.org/europe/churchill.html) (accessed October 31, 2013).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

Before World War II, and, to an even greater extent, before World War I, relations between the United States and Great Britain had been notably cool. Considering the American rebellion against British colonialism, the War of 1812, the territorial disputes between the two powers over the Oregon territory and other boundaries, and the British aid to the Confederate States of America during the Civil War, it is no wonder that relations between the two nations were initially less than amicable. Yet, the challenges posed to the entire democratic world by the fascist, authoritarian regimes of Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, and Emperor Hirohito united the Western powers around a common cause. Recognizing their interdependence upon one another, the United States and Great Britain developed a close relationship through the personal diplomacy of Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill. Having put the past behind them, the special relationship was born during World War II, and then solidified during the early days of the Cold War.<sup>3</sup> Realizing the utility of a relationship such as Churchill described in the Iron Curtain speech, presidents from Franklin Roosevelt to George W. Bush have made the special relationship a pivotal instrument in the execution of foreign policy.

For this very reason, the special relationship has attracted the interest of many historians seeking to understand why the relationship started, how it has evolved over the years, and what the long-term effectiveness of such a relationship is in a changing society. Since its emergence as an important tool of American foreign policy, historians have devoted time and effort to writing books and articles focused on these and other questions. Yet within the academic and historical discussions of the special relationship, there remains a noticeable gap. Great attention has been given to the special relationship as experienced between John F. Kennedy and Harold MacMillan

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<sup>3</sup> For more on the diplomacy between Roosevelt and Churchill, see David Reynolds, *From Munich to Pearl Harbor: Roosevelt's America and the Origins of the Second World War* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2001).



from 1961–63 and between Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher from 1981–89. Despite the abundance of material written on these years, the intervening years have largely been overlooked, particularly in regard to the administrations of Richard Nixon (1969–1974) and his British equivalent Edward Heath (1970–74).

For many years, the traditional view of Anglo-American relations during the Nixon-Heath era has been that this time period represented the lowest and most insignificant point of the special relationship. Larger studies of the special relationship on the whole—such as Roger Louis and Headley Bull’s book *The ‘Special Relationship:’ Anglo-American Relations since 1945* (1986) and John Dumbrell’s *A Special Relationship: Anglo-American Relations from the Cold War to Iraq* (2006)—have regarded the Nixon years (1969–74) as the most difficult ones of the special relationship. Arguing that while Heath’s focus turned ever more European, Nixon’s focus (and more significantly, Kissinger’s focus) turned against European integration, many conclude that the two leaders reached what could be considered a personal and diplomatic impasse leading to an insignificant period.

Recently, several European historians have attempted to reevaluate the Nixon-Heath years in the special relationship. This effort at new scholarship is most noticeable in three books written on the topic: Niklas Roszbach’s *Heath, Nixon, and the Rebirth of the Special Relationship: Britain, the US, and the EC, 1969–74* (2009); Catherine Hynes’ *The Year That Never Was: Heath, the Nixon Administration, and the Year of Europe* (2009); and Andrew Scott’s *Allies Apart: Heath, Nixon, and the Anglo-American Relationship* (2011). Putting forth new arguments and analyzing recently available sources, Roszbach, Hynes, and Scott represent a positive trend in the study of this overlooked period. Their works remain the only published monographs on this time period, for the first time critically examining its significance and

relative importance to the special relationship on the whole. Yet despite the progress made in these three books, there remain notable interpretive and narrative gaps. None of the three authors ask the question about just how much impact European integration had upon the changing nature of the special relationship during this period, and for the largest part, the traditional assumption that the early 1970s marked a low point informs the dominant historical assessment.

With these foundational studies in mind, this thesis will argue that the question of European integration (and the corresponding British entry into the European Community in 1973) was a key issue in affecting a marked deterioration in the special relationship between the United States and Great Britain. This change in the relationship, however, was not merely the direct result of the Nixon administration's policies, nor was it solely an effect of the Heath government's priorities. The changes, which were already under way when each government came to power, partially resulted from the unique challenges faced by both sides as they tried to balance the special relationship with broader global and regional political aims. Despite this slight deterioration in close relations, however, the special relationship continued to exist; there was no fear of the special relationship ending, and regardless of setbacks and diminishing personal contact, a unique closeness between the two nations continued. Furthermore, I will demonstrate that this era in Anglo-American relations bears a profound significance as a paradigm for America's management of its closest allies, particularly in times of uncertainty for U.S. global leadership.

From this premise, I develop the argument as follows: the first chapter will discuss the background to the situation that Nixon and Heath found upon entering office. It will cover, broadly, 1945–1969, with an emphasis on the previous British attempts to enter the European Community and major moments in the development of the special relationship. Chapter two will

analyze the foreign policy goals outlined by Heath and Nixon, focusing on the challenges faced by each side in developing foreign policy priorities, with particular attention to their dialogue on the special relationship and its compatibility with European Integration. The next chapter will examine key events for American foreign relations during 1970–72. It will highlight the major foreign relations efforts undertaken by Nixon and Kissinger during this time period, paying special attention to their consideration of the special relationship and the impact of American actions on relations with Great Britain. The fourth chapter will cover the same years 1970–72 from the British perspective. It will outline the steps taken by Great Britain to move toward entry into the EC and the sentiments surrounding British entry, particularly as evidenced through parliamentary debates. I will also examine the American responses to British activity during this period, comparing it to the responses by the major European states to Britain’s entry into the EC. Key in this transatlantic debate was the Europeans’ still widespread concern about American influence through its special ally. Once Britain entered the EC in 1973, the question of transatlantic relations had moved to a broader context, prompted by the famous “Year of Europe” speech by Henry Kissinger. Those pivotal moments are the subject of chapter five. My conclusions test the importance of those changes for the significance of the special relationship as an American foreign policy tool. What will hopefully emerge from this study is a more nuanced presentation of the special relationship from 1969–73 and a deeper understanding of the impact European Integration had on America’s relationship with its closest ally.

## Chapter 1

### Setting the Stage for '69

From the onset of the Cold War, both the United States and Great Britain actively advocated grand strategies designed to promote the spread of democracy and stop the advance of communism. These grand strategies—most notably the American strategies of containment, massive retaliation, and flexible response—led to decisions that affected the perception of both states in the global cold war. Coordinated policy led many in Europe to view the British as an extension of American power, while American unilateralism often prompted many to view the United States as untrustworthy. Furthermore, the established precedents for action and existing system of policies placed limitations on a new leader each time the executive office changed hands. Before crafting new policies and charting a new course, a leader had to first be mindful of the current situation. Thus, the foreign policy environments that Richard Nixon and Edward Heath found themselves in upon entering office in 1969 and 1970, respectively, were not situations of their own choosing. Rather, they were the direct result of actions taken by their predecessors over the previous twenty years. These existing realities would have remarkable bearing on the future foreign policies of Heath and Nixon.

European integration emerged from the rubble of World War II's disastrous toll on the European continent. With their treasuries drained, their cities and towns devastated, and their people homeless and hungry, the Western European states appealed to the only viable source of aid—the United States. The American answer to this call for help was the Marshall Plan, first introduced by Secretary of State General George Marshall in a commencement address at Harvard University in the summer of 1947. In that address, Marshall noted that “Europe's

requirements for the next three or four years of foreign food and other essential products—principally from America—are so much greater than her present ability to pay that she must have substantial additional help or face economic, social, and political deterioration of a very grave character.”<sup>4</sup> Marshall’s plan for aid, however, was not to be one of American design and implementation. Rather, he went on to state, “It would be neither fitting nor efficacious for this Government to undertake to draw up unilaterally a program designed to place Europe on its feet economically. This is the business of the Europeans. The initiative, I think, must come from Europe.”<sup>5</sup> Thus for Marshall, the key to successful economic recovery was a concerted effort by Europe acting in an integrated, collective manner to coordinate the aid package. Marshall’s speech and subsequent suggestions in conversations with European leaders sparked immediate effort to set up the necessary framework for the proposed aid. Within six weeks, the European heads of government had gathered in Paris to establish the Conference for European Economic Cooperation. At that meeting, the European states organized a co-operation committee composed of each member state of the Conference and any other European state that wished to take part in the coordination of the economic aid coming from the United States.<sup>6</sup> A full report detailing the specifics of the coordination committee was drafted and signed in Paris on September 22, 1947.<sup>7</sup> Thus, the earliest form of European integration had emerged.

With the organizational structure in place in Europe, the Truman Administration

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<sup>4</sup> George Marshall, speech, Cambridge, MA, June 5, 1947, <http://www.oecd.org/general/themarshallplanspeechatharvarduniversity5june1947.htm> (accessed November 4, 2013).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Draft Plan for the Establishment of a Cooperation Committee, July 13, 1947, Historical Archives of the European Union-Florence, [http://www.cvce.eu/obj/draft\\_plan\\_for\\_the\\_establishment\\_of\\_a\\_cooperation\\_committee\\_paris\\_13\\_july\\_1947-en-62e5536c-db04-4842-87c7-483f7b0e3987.html](http://www.cvce.eu/obj/draft_plan_for_the_establishment_of_a_cooperation_committee_paris_13_july_1947-en-62e5536c-db04-4842-87c7-483f7b0e3987.html) (accessed November 4, 2013).

<sup>7</sup> Foreign Assistance Act of 1948, *Congressional Record*, 80th Congress, 2nd sess., 1948, 94.

successfully pushed through Congress the Foreign Assistance Act of 1948. The bill—whose stated purpose was to “promote world peace and the general welfare, national interest, and foreign policy of the United States through economic, financial, and other means necessary to the maintenance of conditions abroad in which free institutions may survive and consistent with the maintenance of the strength and stability of the United States”—authorized the disbursement of over \$6 billion of aid to the sixteen Western European states plus West Germany, China, Greece, and Turkey.<sup>8</sup> The bill did more than provide aid to Europe, however; it established a precedent for American policy toward European integration. Title I of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1948 stated, “it is declared to be the policy of the people of the United States to encourage these countries through a joint organization to exert sustained common efforts . . . which will speedily achieve the economic cooperation in Europe which is essential for lasting peace and prosperity.”<sup>9</sup> While Senators J. William Fulbright and Elbert D. Thomas had proposed a resolution calling for public support of a United States of Europe as early as March 1947, this simple declaration of policy in the Foreign Assistance Act was the first formal adoption of an American position concerning the question of European integration, since the Fulbright resolution was never brought to a vote.<sup>10</sup> Yet, one must ask what the United States had to gain from an integrated Europe. Why was it so important that the United States push for European unity?

The United States had several reasons for promoting a stronger Europe. As historian Geir Lundestad observes in his book *“Empire by Integration,”* the United States had five key motives for supporting an integrated Europe. First, the United States has long believed that “the American model” is a universally applicable pattern of state development that all other nations

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Geir Lundestad, *“Empire” by Integration: The United States and European Integration, 1945–1997* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 14.

should follow.<sup>11</sup> Second, American leaders felt that an integrated Europe was a “more rational and efficient Europe.”<sup>12</sup> This would make the continent more viable economically, and, by replacing old-world nationalism with a new unity-driven mentality, it would also make it more stable, less prone to war, and less difficult to work with. Third, a unified Europe meant a lesser American burden. Economically the United States would benefit from the European states cooperating with each other in the implementation of the Marshall Plan because it decreased the likelihood of Europe needing additional aid after the Marshall Plan had ended. From a defense perspective, Americans hoped that a stronger Europe would allow the United States to decrease its number of troops in Europe, relying instead on a European defense initiative. The final two motives for American support of European Integration informed the notion of double containment, i.e. the containment of both the Soviet Union and Germany. Lundestad notes that these two reasons are significantly more important motivations for American policy than the previous three. Operating under the tenets of George Kennan’s famous strategy of containment—albeit a much more global iteration of containment than Kennan ever intended—the United States was determined to contain the spread of communism and the Soviet Union. Yet, for American and Western European leaders, Germany was also in need of containment. The US viewed Germany as the key to economic revitalization in Europe, and top officials knew that the only path to that goal was to ensure that Germany remained solidly pro-Western. In sum, to Washington European integration seemed a necessary and important step in achieving its Cold War aims. This favorable approach to European unity would continue to prevail throughout the administrations of Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 13–28.

While American officials were largely optimistic about the earliest forms of European integration, the British had a very different mindset. Having firmly supported the Marshall Plan's Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC), the British soon began to see unwelcome advances in the name of European unity. In May 1950, the French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman, together with his colleague Jean Monnet, announced a plan for a supranational pool of industrial resources formed by the individual European states linking their coal and steel production and reserves. The supranational component of the plan was further intensified by Monnet's plan for a high authority that would regulate the actions of the industrial sectors of each participating state. This new organization, known as the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), was the first major effort toward integration initiated by the Europeans themselves without American involvement.<sup>14</sup>

The British viewed this plan quite differently from their counterparts in France, Germany, and even the United States. They welcomed the broader idea of coordinating the steel and coal industries of the various European states, especially since it would allow the rest of Europe to control the much needed industrial resources of Germany. Yet, as John Young observes, "feeling in London was now firmly opposed to any third force which might threaten the cohesion of the Atlantic alliance."<sup>15</sup> This prevailing sentiment should have come as no surprise, however. The previous year, British Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin had circulated a white paper entitled "A Third World Power or Western Consolidation," which expressly rejected the idea that Britain should focus its efforts on creating a Europe as a third force in the world equal to the United States and the Soviet Union. The white paper also noted that cooperation with the United States

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<sup>14</sup> John W. Young, *Britain and European Unity, 1945-1999*, 2nd ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 26–27.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, 29.



was essential to the interests of Great Britain and the Commonwealth.<sup>16</sup> Thus, it was in this context that Bevin and the Foreign Office recommended to His Majesty's government that the British not accept the Schuman Plan. The French were asking the British for a supranational commitment with indefinite potential, and that was too great of a sacrifice for a government still clinging to its empire.<sup>17</sup> Bevin further believed that nationalism would eventually undermine European unity, a belief that inevitably carried over in his approach to the Schuman Plan.<sup>18</sup> Yet, as Edmund Dell observes, government bureaucrats within the Foreign and Commonwealth Office rather than the cabinet-level ministers themselves crafted much of the opposition to British acceptance of the Schuman Plan with little regard for the true national interests of Britain. When Bevin accepted this policy formulation of his subordinates and the government publicly expressed opposition to the Schuman Plan, Britain abdicated its position of leadership in Europe, encouraging a Franco-German leadership within Europe that still has enormous control.<sup>19</sup> Having thus chosen to relinquish leadership of Europe, Bevin predicted the plan would eventually fail, leaving him with an opportunity to present a new alternative, independent of supranationalism. Bevin was mistaken in his calculations, though, and by the end of 1951 a new group of Conservative Members of Parliament (MPs) headed by Harold Macmillan were gaining popularity as a more pro-European alternative to Bevin's Labour government.<sup>20</sup>

The British turn toward Europe that began developing under conservative leaders in the

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<sup>16</sup> The National Archives, "The FCO: Policy, People, and Places—Some Officials, Policies, and Principles," October 3, 2008, <http://collections.europarchive.org/tna/20080205132101/www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front/TextOnly%3Fpagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029395888&to=true>.

<sup>17</sup> Young, 29.

<sup>18</sup> The National Archives, "The FCO: Policy, People, and Places."

<sup>19</sup> Edmund Dell, *The Schuman Plan and British Abdication of Leadership in Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 289–300.

<sup>20</sup> Young, 30–32.

aftermath of the Schuman Plan debate would have significant ramifications as the rest of the continent discussed further integration through a new European Economic Community (EEC). The EEC was born out of the final report of the Spaak Committee—a committee headed by former Belgian Prime Minister Paul Henri Spaak that was charged with the task of conducting a preliminary study on the creation of a European economic union. The committee’s findings were presented to the six members of the ECSC—France; West Germany; the three Benelux states of Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg; and Italy—at a conference in Venice in May 1956, at which time they voted to draw up a treaty formally creating Euratom and the EEC. The Rome Treaty was formally signed on March 25, 1957.<sup>21</sup> While “the Six” were busily dealing with the creation of the EEC, the British were focused on other initiatives. Favoring a free trade agreement over a supranational economic union and common market, the British government—headed by Anthony Eden with Harold Macmillan serving as Chancellor of the Exchequer—was diligently working to complete its FTA proposal before the establishment of the EEC. In July 1956, Macmillan submitted his Plan G, calling for a FTA within the OEEC that would be open to all OEEC members and allow “the Six” to enter the FTA as a collective unit. The British plan also exempted foodstuffs from the FTA and failed to extend the agreement to the European colonial spheres.<sup>22</sup> When Macmillan became Prime Minister in 1957, he continued his push for a FTA, even after the EEC went into effect. Yet despite his best efforts, the FTA failed to materialize. In March 1958, after the European Common Market entered into effect, the French government called on the EEC to implement a FTA within the EEC with greater urgency than the proposed British FTA. Such strong French opposition to the British plan inevitably hindered the British efforts; hopes for the British plan further deteriorated as Charles de Gaulle returned to

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 40–48.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 47–48.

power in France as the first president of the Fifth Republic in January 1958. By October, de Gaulle had persuaded the other six members of the EEC that any decision on the FTA should be unanimous, knowing that France would never accept the FTA. Having essentially exacted a veto power, de Gaulle had issued the death sentence to the British FTA, which was formally reported as a failure in December 1959.<sup>23</sup> With his plan for a non-EEC alternative rejected, Macmillan was forced to find a different way to move toward Europe.

In 1961, Macmillan took his pro-Europe outlook to a new level as Britain began its first serious consideration of joining the EEC. 1961 brought a peculiar change to the British economy; for the first time in history, Great Britain exported more to Europe than it did to the Commonwealth. This shifting trade balance and a several new political realities concerning the strength of the Six yielded a dynamic change in British foreign affairs, prompting Macmillan and his cabinet to vote in favor of applying for admission to the EC on July 24, 1961—a move Edward Heath called, “the end of a glorious era, that of the British empire, and the beginning of a whole new chapter of British history.”<sup>24</sup> After a heated August debate in Parliament that yielded support for the application, the Six agreed to formally begin talks on September 26.<sup>25</sup> The head of the British delegation in the talks was a young, Conservative minister and the sitting Lord Privy Seal, Edward Heath. When negotiations began in November, Heath made no qualms about Britain’s commitment to Europe. As he announced in his opening statement: “In saying that we wish to join the EEC, we mean that we desire to become full, whole-hearted, and active members of the European Community in its widest sense and to go forward with you in the

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 53–60.

<sup>24</sup> Edward Heath, *The Course of My Life: My Autobiography* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1998), 203.

<sup>25</sup> Young, 70–71.

building of a new Europe.”<sup>26</sup> The Six viewed Heath’s statement as a welcome overture, since most of the heads of state had suspected that Britain would hold to its past position of limited support. As negotiations continued over the following months, the main issues to be resolved between Great Britain and the EEC were concerning tariffs and the newly adopted Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), which was finalized by the EEC members in January 1962. The two sides set an initial deadline for the full adoption of the British policy changes needed for entry to be completed by August. The British worked to ensure the deadline was met, but setbacks continued as several Commonwealth states objected to changes to the tariff policy and the British government objected to CAP for its insistence upon converting the entire system of British agricultural support.<sup>27</sup>

The initial deadline for negotiations came and passed, however, as new issues emerged—most notably the nuclear question. When Prime Minister MacMillan and President Kennedy reached an agreement concerning the addition of American Polaris missiles and submarines to the British fleet (contingent upon NATO access to these weapons), French President Charles de Gaulle—the most influential leader of the EEC—heavily criticized the British action and rebuffed a similar offer from the United States. For de Gaulle, this episode was proof that the British were not serious about severing their close ties with the United States in order to move closer to Europe. On an issue of such significance as nuclear weapons, de Gaulle saw no room for compromise.<sup>28</sup> With de Gaulle now firmly against British entry into the EEC, the negotiation process seemed bound to fail. The final negotiations were set for a three-week session beginning on January 14, 1963, but after only three days, the French voted to suspend negotiations. At that

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<sup>26</sup> Heath, 214.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 216–20.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 226–28.

time, a meeting was set for January 28 to determine whether or not negotiations would be permanently ended. Despite strong support from Paul Henri-Spaak and the other four non-French leaders, the conclusion reached at the EEC Commission meeting was that negotiations were to be ended; General de Gaulle had vetoed British entry despite strong support from the other five member states.<sup>29</sup> Macmillan's plan to move toward Europe through EEC membership would have to wait.

Around the same time that Britain began considering entry into the EEC, the mantle of American leadership was passed to a new generation. The young, vibrant President Kennedy and the Ivy League intellectuals that comprised his cabinet—many of whom were outspoken proponents of European integration—saw this as a great opportunity for America.<sup>30</sup> Continuing the aforementioned American policy of supporting European Integration, Kennedy welcomed British entry into the EEC. For the Kennedy administration, this represented a new opportunity to strengthen the EEC. In a policy directive in April 1961, Kennedy stated that “The Six should be encouraged to welcome U.K. association with the community and not set the price too high for such association, providing that there is to be no weakening of essential ties among the Six.”<sup>31</sup> The Kennedy administration also saw it as a strategic move that would enhance American influence and reorient the EEC's focus more toward transatlantic cooperation.<sup>32</sup> Yet, such strong American support for British entry was a significant factor in the French veto of Britain's application. General de Gaulle's press conference on January 14 showed explicitly that he was opposed to Britain having “special political and military relations” with the United States while

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 228–37.

<sup>30</sup> Pascaline Winand, *Eisenhower, Kennedy, and the United States of Europe* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 139–160.

<sup>31</sup> John Kennedy, “Policy Directive: NATO and the Atlantic Nations,” April 20, 1961, quoted in Lundestad, *Empire By Integration*, 62.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

they were trying to join the rest of Europe out of fear of a “colossal Atlantic Community” being formed that would be “dependent upon America and directed by America.”<sup>33</sup> The great opportunity envisioned by Kennedy was de Gaulle’s great fear, and the two visions were not compatible.<sup>34</sup>

The failure of the Macmillan government to join the EEC was compounded by domestic policy failures that ultimately led to a change of government in 1964. The new Labour-led government, headed by Prime Minister Harold Wilson, took office in October 1964, and represented what many believed to be the death knell for the progress made toward European integration by Macmillan, Heath, and others. Despite his initial reluctance and past criticism of British entry into the EEC, Wilson soon found himself in an environment where another membership bid was the best political option. Two of Wilson’s most influential ministers by 1965 were Foreign Secretary Michael Stewart and Minister of the Department of Economic Affairs George Brown. Both Brown and Stewart were supporters of European integration. They both felt that Britain’s best chance to remain a relevant world power was in the new international community developing in Europe. Brown and Stewart used their influence in policy making to advance a “pro-market” agenda that favored British entry into the EEC for the good of the British economy.<sup>35</sup> For Wilson, however, there were other factors at play in his eventual decision to reapply for membership. As John Young points out, Wilson, unlike his predecessor, saw de Gaulle as a man that he could work with. As the EEC gradually attempted to gain more

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<sup>33</sup> Charles de Gaulle, Press Conference, January 14, 1963, quoted in Heath, 229.

<sup>34</sup> Frederic Bozo, *Two Strategies for Europe: De Gaulle, The United States, and the Atlantic Alliance*, Samson Emanuel, trans (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001), 88–94; Winand, 248–55; Jeffrey Giauque, *Grand Designs and Visions of Unity: The Atlantic Powers and the Reorganization of Western Europe, 1955–1963* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 124–125.

<sup>35</sup> Young, 82–83.

sovereignty over the individual members, de Gaulle had proven that he would be a champion of state sovereignty and was responsible for the passage of the Luxembourg Compromise that allowed individual states to have veto power on major issues. For Wilson, de Gaulle's international views offered a common bond that would allow the two nations to work together to prevent the rest of Europe from moving toward an overly supranational association. Furthermore, Wilson saw an opportunity to help shape the policy for the future of Europe, specifically in regard to CAP.<sup>36</sup> The final push to convince Wilson, however, was the Sterling crisis of July 1966. When a domestic strike—the final blow in a series of economic woes—caused a run on Sterling, the British economy found itself in a crisis that resulted in deflationary measures being taken to avoid devaluing the currency. The crisis affected both sides of the argument concerning European integration—to the EEC member states the crisis showed the weakness of the British economy and raised questions (particularly in the mind of the French) about Britain's ability to join the common market; on the other hand, it showed that Great Britain vitally needed to join the EEC to stabilize its economic problems.<sup>37</sup> All parties in Britain now agreed something must be done.

In November 1966, the cabinet officially launched a probe into a second British application for membership in the EEC. Knowing that their probe into membership was just as contingent upon France as it was previously, Wilson and Brown made a visit to Paris in January 1967. Despite their best efforts to convince him otherwise, de Gaulle reiterated his concerns that Britain was too close to the United States and expressed dogmatic adherence to the pro-French policies of CAP. De Gaulle, instead, suggested Britain join as an associate member, a slap in the face to Wilson and the British. When Wilson expressed his desire for full membership or no

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 84–85, 89.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 88.

association at all, de Gaulle agreed to consider it, a significant move from his previous outright refusal. With more confidence than he had when he arrived in France, Wilson left Paris and continued his probe by visiting each of the other five capitals by early March.<sup>38</sup> Having received what he believed to be a favorable response, Wilson was even more determined to move forward with Britain's application. For Wilson, the time was right to apply, and whether the British people accepted it or not, entry into the EEC was a matter of great necessity if Great Britain intended to keep its place as a major world player.<sup>39</sup> Feeling strongly about the importance of the application, Wilson acted with urgency and held a special ministerial meeting at the end of April 1967. The meeting yielded a consensus in favor of membership, which was finalized in a cabinet meeting on May 2.<sup>40</sup> The Labour government was determined to keep Britain relevant by joining the rest of Europe.

In July 1967, Britain formally submitted its application to the Six for full consideration. This move was again welcomed by the United States as a step in the right direction for the future of Great Britain, NATO, and Europe. Johnson—who Thomas Schwartz argues was keenly attuned to American relations with Europe—was fully aware of de Gaulle's objections to American interference in Europe, and informed Wilson that the US would be very low-key on the issue. While remaining relatively quiet, Johnson reiterated to Wilson that the United States viewed the decision most positively and was willing to help “smooth the path” if it could help in any way.<sup>41</sup> Having realized that his chances of persuading de Gaulle were nearly non-existent,

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 90–92.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 93.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 93–94.

<sup>41</sup> Johnson to Wilson, November 15, 1966, quoted in Lundestad, *Empire by Integration*, 81; Thomas Schwartz, *Lyndon Johnson and Europe: In the Shadow of Vietnam* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 147. (N.B. In this book, Schwartz' main argument is that Johnson was an astute foreign policy leader in regards to relations with Europe and that Vietnam



Wilson began working to build support from the remaining five in hopes that they would pressure France into approving the application. Yet, even with help from the other five nations, the British application hinged on de Gaulle's verdict. On November 22, General de Gaulle held a press conference in which he expressed his opposition to the British membership following a devaluation of the Pound. Five days later, he announced that Britain would have to make "very vast and deep changes" before it could be considered for membership in the EEC.<sup>42</sup> Ultimately, the EEC ministers reached a collective agreement on December 19 that all discussions concerning British membership should end.<sup>43</sup> Thus, de Gaulle and the French had twice rebuffed the British, leaving the Labour Government's prospects for future success diminished.

Yet the tide would soon change in the international scene. As the cultural revolution of 1968 swept across the globe, political changes took place in their wake. Beleaguered and concerned about his possibility for reelection following the aftermath of the Tet Offensive in Vietnam, on March 31, 1968, President Johnson announced that he would not seek re-election in the fall election.<sup>44</sup> With President Johnson no longer in the race and the political climate changing, the conservative realist Richard Nixon was poised for a return to executive leadership accompanied by his foreign policy expert Henry Kissinger. The political shakeup of 1968 also hit France, after General de Gaulle and his government had been completely caught off guard by the student protests of May. General de Gaulle finally resigned the French presidency in April

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did not affect transatlantic relations in any major way. While the extent to which Vietnam affected Johnson's foreign policy with Europe is arguable, the book does advance a significant argument concerning the foundation of relations with Europe laid by Johnson and its impact on future relations.)

<sup>42</sup> Young, 95; Lundestad, *Empire by Integration*, 81.

<sup>43</sup> Young, 95.

<sup>44</sup> Lyndon Johnson, speech, March 31, 1968, <http://millercenter.org/president/speeches/detail/3388> (accessed December 2, 2013).

1969, elevating Georges Pompidou to France's highest office.<sup>45</sup> Matters in Britain also continued to change, as domestic matters allowed the Conservatives to take power from the Labour Party in a general election of 1970. Leading the new government was the long-time champion of British entry into the EEC, Edward Heath, who replaced Harold Wilson as premier.<sup>46</sup> The future of the special relationship and British membership in the EEC was now in the hands of a different set of leaders. Truly the stage had been set for a period of change.

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<sup>45</sup> Young, 98.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 99.

## Chapter 2

### Foreign Policy for the 1970s

In his first foreign policy report to Congress, delivered February 18, 1970, President Richard Nixon announced:

When I took office, the most immediate problem facing our nation was the war in Vietnam. . . . Yet the fundamental task confronting us was more profound. We could see that the whole pattern of international politics was changing. Our challenge was to understand that change, to define America's goals for the next period, and to set in motion policies to achieve them. . . . This first annual report on U.S. foreign policy is more than a record of one year. It is this Administration's statement of a new approach to foreign policy to match a new era of international relations.<sup>47</sup>

Mr. Nixon was certainly correct; a “new era of international relations” required a new approach to foreign policy. Nixon was an astute foreign policy practitioner. His experience in Congress and the Vice Presidency had placed him in a unique position to manage this changing era of international politics. Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger were poised to change the foreign policy of the United States in profound ways. Meanwhile, a similar change was occurring across the pond. When Sir Alec Douglas-Home returned to once again lead the Foreign Office as Edward Heath’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, he noted that, “the international scenario seemed to be ‘the mixture as before,’ but there were in fact some subtle changes.”<sup>48</sup> These “subtle changes,” Douglas-Home went on to explain, were all related to the international environment: Soviet nuclear parity with the United States, the Sino-Soviet Split, and growing support for British entry into the EEC. These changes, however subtle the British minister may have felt

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<sup>47</sup> Richard M. Nixon, *United States Foreign Policy for the 1970's; A Report to the Congress, February 18, 1970*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=2835> (accessed September 17, 2013).

<sup>48</sup> Alec Douglas-Home, *The Way the Wind Blows: An Autobiography* (New York: Quadrangle, 1976), 246.

them to be, required Heath and his Conservative government, like that of President Nixon, to formulate a new foreign policy that would lead Britain forward.

Quickly setting a new, specific foreign policy designed to achieve set goals was a primary concern for Nixon and his foreign policy staff, led primarily by National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger. Crafting such a policy, however, was no easy task. As Henry Kissinger noted, “Simultaneously we had to end a war, manage a global rivalry with the Soviet Union in the shadow of nuclear weapons, reinvigorate our alliance with the industrial democracies, and integrate the new nations into a new world equilibrium that would last only if it was compatible with the aspiration of all nations.”<sup>49</sup> Realizing the gravity of their task, Nixon and Kissinger set to work from the moment Dr. Kissinger accepted the appointment as National Security Advisor (NSA) on November 30, 1968.<sup>50</sup> For the Nixon Administration, the key to this new era of international relations was to build “a durable framework of peace.”<sup>51</sup> To achieve this end, Nixon set forth seven key foreign policy goals: 1) improved relations with the Soviet Union; 2) the global inclusion of China; 3) strengthening relations with Europe; 4) Ending the Vietnam War; 5) developing a stronger, more powerful military and defense policy; 6) increased international cooperation; and 7) increased international participation in the peace process.<sup>52</sup> These foreign policy goals would set the agenda for everything President Nixon hoped to achieve on the world stage. Yet the global stage on which he was acting now included more players than it had previously.

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<sup>49</sup> Henry Kissinger, *White House Years* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2011), 69.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>51</sup> Richard M. Nixon, *United States Foreign Policy for the 1970's*, February 18, 1970.

<sup>52</sup> Richard M. Nixon, *U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1970's: Shaping a Durable Peace; A Report to the Congress by Richard Nixon, President of the United States*, May 3, 1973, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=3832&st=Foreign+Policy&st1=1970%27s> (accessed September 17, 2013).

As has been discussed, a new international environment had emerged by the time Nixon took office. Most notably in this changing global arena was the emergence of questions concerning the sustainability and desirability of the bipolar system. Nuclear parity with the Soviet Union made bipolar tension less desirable, while the increasing power of China and the Sino-Soviet split indicated that the United States and the rest of the Western alliance could no longer ignore China. The increasing pressure for European integration raised new questions about the role Western Europe would play on the world stage. All of these geopolitical changes led Nixon and Kissinger to increasingly view the world from a multipolar perspective, acknowledging “five great power centers (the US, Western Europe, Japan, Russia, and China).”<sup>53</sup> While acknowledging the dilution of the cold war bipolar structure into these five major centers, and even the relative decline of the United States, the administration saw both Western Europe and Japan as allies, not independent powers of the same magnitude. Thus, the Cold War became a tripolar competition where the United States, the Soviet Union, and China were the main players. The realities of international relations were such that the old order of bipolarism could no longer be sustained, according to Washington; changing the way America viewed the world and international politics was the only way Nixon and Kissinger could successfully navigate foreign policy in the 1970s. Thus, the United States’ major foreign policy goals were situated in a new light.

The obvious beginning point for achieving new foreign policy goals in a tripolar world was to make it truly tripolar by opening to China. Chinese power was growing in influence and military strength to the extent that it assumed a place as a third global player. Nixon had long

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<sup>53</sup> Richard Nixon, quoted in Geir Lundestad, *The Rise and Decline of the American Empire: Power and its Limits in Comparative Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 3.

acknowledged the need to harness China's increasing power and bring it into the realm of managed international politics. In an article written for *Foreign Affairs* in October 1967, he stated, "Taking the long view, we simply cannot afford to leave China forever outside the family of nations. . . . For the long run, it means pulling China back into the world community—but as a great and progressing nation, not as the epicenter of world revolution."<sup>54</sup> Nixon's desire for China's inclusion in the global community soon began influencing policy decisions. The new policy was a logical outgrowth of changing perceptions of global power. China as a global power would serve as a check upon Soviet power, while improved relations were key to ending the conflict in Southeast Asia.<sup>55</sup> As early as February 5, 1969 the administration had begun an interdepartmental study into current relations with China and strategies for improving Sino-American Relations. To achieve this goal, however, the administration opted to largely follow a path of secretive, personal diplomacy outside the public eye. The dialogue that would take place between the United States and China from 1969–73 would occur largely at the highest levels and with great attention to controlling the flow of information. Ultimately, it would be President Nixon and Dr. Kissinger that opened the door to China. In the search for a new foreign policy, the opening to China made it clear that America now saw the world differently. The bipolar struggle had been replaced by a new tripolar view.

Coupled with the opening to China and balancing of global power was bringing the contest between the US and USSR under control. That meant relaxing tensions between the two states—known more commonly as *détente*. By 1970, the Soviet Union was quickly approaching nuclear parity with the United States. The gap between the two superpowers was ever shrinking, and the Soviets largely appeared to be winning the battle "for the soul of mankind" in the Third

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<sup>54</sup> Richard M. Nixon, quoted in Kissinger, *White House Years*, 163–70.

<sup>55</sup> Kissinger, *White House Years*, 163–70.

World.<sup>56</sup> When viewing Soviet-American relations in the context of a tripolar world, it was clear that this increasing Soviet power was a threat to American interests and security. The best means of preserving American power was thus to relax tension and slow down the power change dynamic by stabilizing the global competition. “Peace could not depend solely on the uneasy equilibrium between two nuclear giants.”<sup>57</sup> Rather, the United States “had a responsibility to work for positive relations with the Soviet Union.”<sup>58</sup> To achieve this goal, the administration sought to conduct serious negotiations with the Soviet Union on specific issues with the hope of bringing about consensus. Possible negotiations included nonproliferation and arms reduction treaties between the US and USSR. Furthermore, these negotiations were designed to “create vested interests on both sides in restraint and the strengthening of peace.”<sup>59</sup> Such an aim, however, would require sacrifices on both sides, policies that no longer encouraged tactical maneuvering to undercut the other, and a certain amount of trust that the other party would abide by its treaty commitments.<sup>60</sup> To Kissinger the arch-realist, though, sacrifices such as limiting certain types of nuclear weapons were a small price to pay to maintain the existing international system and ensure peace for the rest of the world. Thus, détente would become the name of the game for much of the 1970s.

Yet détente was not necessarily a popular policy with America’s European allies,

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<sup>56</sup> For a more detailed discussion of the Soviet and American gains in the Third World during the Cold War, see Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Robert McMahon, ed., *The Cold War in the Third World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). For more on the discussion of the Cold War as a battle for the “soul of mankind,” see Melvyn Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind: The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2008).

<sup>57</sup> Richard M. Nixon, *U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1970’s*, May 3, 1973.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

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

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

including Great Britain. In a December 1970 NATO communiqué, the Atlantic alliance made it clear that “NATO’s approach to security in the 1970s will be based on the twin concepts of defence and détente.”<sup>61</sup> This combination of defense and détente—two concepts seemingly at odds with each other—had been a hallmark of NATO policy since the Harmel Report of 1967, which, at the request of the smaller NATO member states, placed détente (a policy contingent upon greater inter-alliance consultation) on an equal footing with defense as the goals of NATO.<sup>62</sup> Yet détente could not result in a reduction of tensions solely between the two superpowers. For Europe, a distinctly American relaxation of tension with the Soviet Union signaled a retreat from Europe. As early as January 1969, American foreign policy reports were indicating that, “despite the extensive consultations on the nonproliferation treaty, many Europeans remain suspicious that the treaty is an attempt to formalize the hegemonic position of the US and the USSR.”<sup>63</sup> The report went on to say, “A few of the member governments, notably West Germany, view the projected US-Soviet talks on strategic arms limitation as a potential threat to the US nuclear guarantee.”<sup>64</sup> Growing skepticism of American moves toward détente was typical of many European heads of state, who cited détente as an example of America’s self-centered foreign policy. Even those who accepted that the United States would inevitably deal directly with the Soviet Union became “determined to keep a close check on US initiatives

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<sup>61</sup> “Telegram From the Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to the Department of State,” December 3, 1970, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XLI, Western Europe; NATO, 1969-1972* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 236. (Hereafter abbreviated as *FRUS, 1969-1976: Western Europe; NATO*)

<sup>62</sup> Lawrence S. Kaplan, *NATO Divided, NATO United: The Evolution of an Alliance* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2004), 42-44.

<sup>63</sup> “Intelligence Memorandum Prepared by the Central Intelligence Agency,” January 21, 1969, in *FRUS, 1969-1976: Western Europe; NATO*, 4.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*



through expanded interallied consultation” because of their fears of American policy.<sup>65</sup> These fears of American self-centeredness would not soon abate. By the end of 1972, many Europeans continued to question “whether Washington’s interest in détente extend[ed] much beyond a desire to reduce the cost to the US of the present system of East-West relations in Europe.”<sup>66</sup> Despite desiring détente themselves, the Europeans continued to remain wary of the American-led initiative.

The British, America’s closest ally, were no exception. In the first weeks after taking office, President Nixon embarked on a European tour in an effort to strengthen and renew the NATO alliance and build relationships with his European counterparts. While in London from February 24-26, Nixon, Kissinger, Secretary of State William Rogers, and others met with then Prime Minister Harold Wilson and his cabinet. Wilson’s Labour government, just weeks into the new Nixon presidency, was already expressing concern over détente. Michael Stewart, the British Foreign Secretary, made it clear during that meeting that détente with the Soviets was essential, but an American only détente would undermine the entire Western alliance. The British expected consultation before any American actions were taken as a safeguard for their own security.<sup>67</sup> In the words of Henry Kissinger describing the British position, “he [Stewart] thereby revealed the ambivalence of our European allies. In times of rising tension, they feared American rigidity; in times of relaxing tension; they dreaded a US-Soviet condominium.”<sup>68</sup> The British clearly resisted America’s excessive reliance on détente from the beginning. Yet, the British position would change very little once Heath’s Conservative government took over in

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<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>66</sup> “National Intelligence Estimate 20-72,” December 14, 1972, in *FRUS, 1969–1976: Western Europe; NATO*, 350.

<sup>67</sup> Kissinger, *White House Years*, 93–94.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

1970. Heath and his government, like most of the NATO members, came to believe that “the Americans are now viewing the international scene increasingly in terms of their superpower relationship with the USSR, and that they may be prepared to subordinate the interests of their European allies.”<sup>69</sup> This growing concern of Heath that the United States was turning ever more inward would become a factor propelling the decision of his government to move closer to Europe. Thus, what emerges from the study of détente is far from a universally accepted policy seen as a means of achieving peace. While all parties acknowledged a need for relaxed tension with the Soviet Union, the British and most other European powers feared that the Nixon-Kissinger approach would leave them hanging out to dry.

The relationship between the United States and Europe occupied a unique place within the broader context of American foreign policy changes. The strengthening of relations with Europe was one of the major foreign policy goals of the Nixon administration. Nixon realized that transatlantic relations had begun to suffer during the mid-late 1960s. The unpopularity of Vietnam, the Gaullist challenge to America, the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and cool personal relations between President Johnson and many European leaders had certainly contributed to a growing spirit of anti-Americanism in Europe and less than preferable political relations. While it is important to note, like Thomas Schwartz and Piers Ludlow do, that these strains did not cause a major crisis in transatlantic relations in the 1960s, it is certain that the situation Nixon found himself in had the potential for dangerous results.<sup>70</sup> Furthermore, the deterioration of transatlantic relations had been a point of contention between Nixon and Humphrey during the 1968 campaign; Nixon in particular lambasted the Democratic candidate for the way Johnson

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<sup>69</sup> Heath, 488.

<sup>70</sup> N. Piers Ludlow, “Transatlantic Relations in the Johnson and Nixon Eras: The Crisis that Didn’t Happen—and What it Suggests About the One that Did,” *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 8, no. 1 (March 2010): 44-53; Schwartz, *Lyndon Johnson and Europe*.

and Humphrey had handled relations among the NATO alliance. Yet for all of the administration's emphasis on a changing geopolitical worldview and the need to restore relations with Europe, the possibility of an independent Europe as a fourth center of power was never viable. In a report prepared for the NSC in January 1970, Kissinger outlined three alternative structures for US-USSR-European relations. The first option called for maintaining the status quo—American dominance of Western Europe, Soviet dominance of Eastern Europe, and a loosely organized Western Europe that was largely dependent upon the US.<sup>71</sup> The second option was an enhanced Western Europe, in which a more highly organized Europe was “a significant, independent power complex still linked to the US in a defense treaty and relying, ultimately, on a US nuclear guarantee.”<sup>72</sup> The third option called for complete Soviet and American disengagement from Europe.<sup>73</sup> Upon further analysis, Kissinger concluded that option three—which would have come the closest to allowing a free, independent Europe to be a fourth center of power in a multipolar setting—was not practical. Instead, he recommended that the United States consider the first two options, both of which prevented Europe from becoming an independent center of power. The administration had made it clear that Europe was to be an affiliate of the United States—an extension of its power—and not an independent, unified actor. Thus, the new direction of America's European policy called for continued prominence of the transatlantic relationship, increased partnership, shared responsibility for defense matters, revitalization of NATO, consultation on security and defense measures, and expanded

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<sup>71</sup> “Paper prepared in the Department of State and in the National Security Council,” January 26, 1970, in *FRUS, 1969–1976: Western Europe; NATO*, 97.

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

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

cooperation to address the social and human challenges facing the world.<sup>74</sup> This new foreign policy approach to Europe will be the subject of the next chapter.

With its foreign policy goals outlined, there remained just one key component necessary for the Nixon administration—how to achieve these goals. The institutional structure of foreign policy had been somewhat in flux since the onset of the Cold War. While the State Department maintained the most control on foreign policy and its implementation, the creation of the National Security Council (NSC) changed how foreign policy was formulated and handled. Yet, even within the structure of the NSC, there had been differences. The Eisenhower NSC was largely run and controlled by the White House. Under Kennedy, the NSC added ExComm (the Executive Committee of the NSC) as a specialized group of close, important advisors to the President largely controlled by Attorney General Bobby Kennedy. Nixon criticized the Johnson administration's NSC for its ineffective and bureaucratic pandering that catered to the president's *amour propre*.<sup>75</sup> Having realized the limitations of the existing system, Nixon's first task for his newly appointed NSA was to restructure the national security mechanism.

As a member of the NSC while Vice President, Nixon had come to prefer the tightly controlled, diverse structure of Eisenhower's NSC. This should come as little surprise, though. As Henry Kissinger observed, an effective decision-making machinery "must be compatible with his [the President's] personality and style, . . . must lead to action, . . . [and] above all, it must be sensitive to the psychological relationship between the President and his close advisors."<sup>76</sup> Given the nature of Richard Nixon's personality and his relationship with Henry Kissinger, it is of little wonder that he would prefer the NSC to be tightly controlled within the White House.

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<sup>74</sup> Nixon, *U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1970s*, February 18, 1970.

<sup>75</sup> Kissinger, *White House Years*, 39–43.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, 40.

Furthermore, both Nixon and Kissinger held the firm belief that “a President should never leave the presentation of his option to one of the Cabinet departments or agencies.” With this in mind, the new structure presented to Nixon in January 1969 called for strong White House control and downplayed the role of the individual departments.<sup>77</sup> Having been tentatively approved by the president, the new NSC structure almost immediately proved unpopular with both Secretary of Defense Melvyn Laird and Secretary of State William Rogers. Rogers, who resented the State Department’s exclusion from much of the foreign policy decision-making process, spent the two weeks before the inauguration attempting to persuade the president of the importance of the State Department as the “executive agent for the President for the design and conduct of foreign policy,” but to no avail.<sup>78</sup> Nixon refused to back down, and finalized the new structure on January 19, 1969.<sup>79</sup> Problems would continue for the duration of the first term between the State Department and the White House. Records of the conversations between Henry Kissinger and Undersecretary of State John Irwin show that the State Department was often excluded from the foreign policy process. Some of Irwin’s chief complaints were that the White House did not distribute meeting records quickly, held meetings with foreign leaders without State Department officials present, and “conducted diplomatic discussions with foreign diplomats directly and without the knowledge of the department.”<sup>80</sup> Despite the State Department’s continued frustration, foreign policy was going to be decided upon and administered by the White House. The structure and control of the foreign policy mechanism would have significant implications on how policy was developed, whose input mattered most, and which suggestions and objections

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid, 43–44.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, 45.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, 46.

<sup>80</sup> Memo, from Office of the Executive Secretary, US State Department to Under Secretary John Irwin, II, December 10, 1970, Irwin/Kissinger Meetings, Summaries of the Undersecretary’s Meetings with the National Security Advisor, RG 59, National Archives.

the president would hear. All of these issues would emerge as the United States reevaluated its policy concerning European integration.

While President Nixon and his White-House-controlled team was busy implementing his foreign policy in early 1970, the new British Prime Minister Edward Heath was busy formulating another significant foreign policy in the early days of his premiership. With the Conservatives winning the June 1970 election, Edward Heath—Leader of the Conservative Party—found himself leading Her Majesty’s Government. As with the United States, foreign policy was of chief concern for the British in 1970, and the new prime minister acknowledged the importance of his task. On October 10, 1970, Edward Heath delivered his first speech as Prime Minister to the Conservative Party Conference. In that speech, Heath focused primarily on foreign affairs, stating, “This Government is now moving into a new era of British diplomacy. . . . We are leaving behind the years of retreat. We are determined to establish the reputation of Britain once again, a reputation as the firm defender of her own interests and the skilful and persistent partner of all those who are working for a lasting peace.”<sup>81</sup> His position was now clear—foreign policy would be returned to its rightful place as Britain sought to redefine its relationship to the rest of the world. Yet Heath’s global interests and ambitions of restored international prestige would soon clash with the centralizing, tripolarist tendencies of Richard Nixon.

First and foremost in Heath’s “new era of British diplomacy” was a continuation of an old theme—entry into Europe and the EEC. While this represented a decade-long cadence in British foreign affairs, the Heath government had a unique determination to diligently work with the rest of Europe to make the policy changes necessary for British entry. For Heath, there was no other option. As he observed, “Britain’s influence in Europe was never lower than it was

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<sup>81</sup> Edward Heath, Speech to Conservative Party, Blackpool, October 10, 1970, [www.britishpoliticalspeech.org/speech-archive.htm?speech=117](http://www.britishpoliticalspeech.org/speech-archive.htm?speech=117) (accessed February 13, 2014).

between 1964 and 1970, not least because Britain's relative economic position was deteriorating badly."<sup>82</sup> Yet for Heath, who criticized the Labour government of over emphasizing the economic cost of British entry into the EEC, membership was more than a question of economics; the issue got to the heart of Britain's place within the world. He genuinely believed "Britain's future would be dismal outside Europe."<sup>83</sup> As a result, Heath—the first British negotiator in the EEC application process—made Britain's role within Europe a key issue in the months leading up to the 1970 election. In a speech in the House of Commons on February 25, 1970, Heath challenged Prime Minister Harold Wilson to fight the election on "who should negotiate for Britain" in its EEC membership, calling for the victorious government to adopt policies that would allow Britain to "take its rightful place in the wider Europe which many people have worked so long to create."<sup>84</sup> Heath's insistence on membership within Europe came directly from his belief that a strong, unified Europe could represent a new center of independent power; Britain would be influential because Europe would be influential. It was clear that Europe would assume primacy in Britain's new foreign policy. Yet such positions were incompatible with the Nixon-Kissinger approach that subjected Europe to a minor role in world affairs. The extent to which Britain focused on Europe will be examined in greater detail in Chapter Four.

While Britain's most urgent foreign policy concern was toward Europe, The Heath government also pursued other key goals; one of them was to maintain good relations with the United States, while somewhat distancing the British from the Americans. Heath was well aware that the other European states had long been skeptical of Britain's European-ness, in light of its close relationship with the United States. When Heath was finally afforded an opportunity to

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<sup>82</sup> Heath, *Course of My Life*, 359.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 363.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 361.

meet with President Nixon in Washington shortly before Christmas 1970, he expressed his desire to replace the term “special relationship” with the term “natural relationship.” For Heath, the latter term was preferable in that it was not as easily broken as a special relationship and was much less likely to offend another ally.<sup>85</sup> While publicly Heath was speaking of not offending other American allies, one cannot help but think he also feared how the phrase “special relationship” was viewed by Britain’s European allies. Yet despite his desire to change the rhetoric and remove some of the overt closeness between the two nations, personal relations between Nixon and Heath remained warm. Gifts and genuine pleasantries were often exchanged when the two leaders met together, while American newspapers commented on the “personal friendliness” of the two statesmen.<sup>86</sup> From a policy perspective, both leaders undertook conscientious efforts to ensure that formal relations remained strong. Thus, Heath’s approach to the United States was one of political distance but personal closeness.

One final foreign policy goal of Edward Heath that garnered significant attention was the improving of relations with China. By 1970, the Sino-Soviet split was clear to all, as is observed through the previously cited remarks of Alec Douglas-Home upon returning to the Foreign Office. This noticeable split propelled Britain in its desire for peaceful relations with China. As Douglas-Home observed in October 1971, the British firmly believed, “As China gains in confidence Russia will reinsure with the West.”<sup>87</sup> This belief coincided with signs from the Chinese government that China was “ready for international relations.”<sup>88</sup> Beyond all of this, Heath saw China as an opportunity for bringing Great Britain out of its economic lag through

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 472.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 473.

<sup>87</sup> Alec Douglas-Home, *Great Britain in the 1970s* (London: Conservative Political Centre, 1971), 10.

<sup>88</sup> Douglas-Home, *The Way the Wind Blows*, 263.



trade with an ever-expanding market. This prompted Heath to actively pursue an opening to China.<sup>89</sup> Douglas-Home would make a visit to China while Foreign Secretary, and Great Britain would be the first Western European state to have full diplomatic exchange with the People's Republic, beginning in 1972.<sup>90</sup>

Yet such emphasis on China, while seemingly compatible with the American efforts to open to China, is another example of how Heath clashed with American policy. As with other European initiatives that threatened American policies of international stabilization, a Western European opening to China clashed with the tripolar worldview of Nixon and Kissinger. Yet for Heath, improved relations with China fit well into his broader foreign and domestic policy goals within a truly multipolar world. Unbeknownst to Heath, though, the United States was conducting secret diplomatic conversations with China at the same time as the British. As Niklas Rossbach observes, the British had even informed Washington of its intentions to open to China, which the US then asked the British to delay, all without ever mentioning its own initiatives toward Beijing. When the US announced the plan for President Nixon to go to China in 1972, the British were caught completely off guard.<sup>91</sup> Furthermore, Andrew Scott argues that in choosing not to consult the British but instead maintain secrecy, the US turned the issue of opening to China from a potential point of convergence to a point of contention, as the American shock had completely undercut the British efforts through Nixon and Kissinger's deceptive approach.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Heath, *The Course of My Life*, 494.

<sup>90</sup> Douglas-Home, *The Way the Wind Blows*, 263–64.

<sup>91</sup> Niklas Rossbach, *Heath, Nixon and the Rebirth of the Special Relationship Britain, the US and the EC, 1969-74* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: PalgraveMacmillan, 2009), eBook, 172.

<sup>92</sup> Andrew Scott, *Allies Apart: Heath, Nixon and the Anglo-American Relationship* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 51–62.

Thus, China, like other issues, shows just how divided the United States and Great Britain were in their foreign policy approaches.

To fully examine the role of the special relationship and the political and economic integration of Europe upon American and British foreign relations, one must understand where these components fit into the broader foreign policy objectives of each state. What emerges from this study of the foreign policy goals of both Richard Nixon and Edward Heath—including those goals both directly tied to the broader question of Europe and those in areas outside the transatlantic region—is that the 1970s required a new era of foreign policy. The international climate was changing and the domestic political situations of the Anglo-American world were demanding a new direction. The two heads of government, surrounded by able and brilliant foreign policy advisors, established clear goals, crafted new policies, and if necessary, altered the very structure of foreign policy making to adapt to the realities of the changing global order. Yet setting policy was only half of the battle; the rest of the battle remained to be fought in the diplomatic trenches. The foreign policy for the 1970s was now ready to be put to the test.

## Chapter 3

### Reappraising Values: America's Changing Perceptions Toward European Integration

President Nixon highly valued the relationship between America and its European allies, and vowed to strengthen that bond during his administration. The strength of the transatlantic alliance had been a trademark of American foreign policy since the end of World War II and for the Nixon-Kissinger team there was a great need for those relations to remain strong. While focusing broadly on strengthening American relations with Europe on the whole, particularly by reinforcing and reinvigorating NATO, the Nixon Administration was also mindful of its relations with individual European states. This combination of both strong individual relationships and a collective relationship with Europe can be seen in the United States' policy toward Great Britain and its entry to the EEC. With the chances of British access to the broader, integrated Europe finally seeming likely, the United States was forced to reevaluate its long standing policies of support for integration and the special relationship. New questions emerged about the economic impact further European integration would have upon the United States, and the significance of the special relationship came into play as the administration sought to keep its close ties to the British while emphasizing NATO over the EEC as the vehicle for European strength. From 1969–72, the United States underwent a change in policy, as domestic and international realities pushed the nation to change its perceptions of European integration and Britain's role in that process.

When examining any given diplomatic issue, there are often two sides to the topic—what the administration says publicly and what it privately decides and practices. The issue of America's position on European integration and British entry into the EEC is no different. In the

public eye, the Nixon Administration was keenly aware of the importance of maintaining its longstanding full support for the efforts of European integration, particularly as it pertains to maintaining transatlantic cohesion. For that reason, the president made it clear in his public statements from the outset of his administration that the United States was committed to supporting European integration. In a news conference following his visit to Europe in March 1969, President Nixon stated, “We have also indicated our support of the concept and ideal of European unity. . . . Americans cannot unify Europe. Europeans must do so. And we should not become involved in differences among Europeans in which our vital interests are not involved.”<sup>93</sup> Nixon clearly presented his support for European unity, and stressed the importance of it being a European affair. This statement would typify the President’s public statements throughout the administration. For the Nixon administration, it was time for the United States to pursue a slightly different course from that of its predecessors. It maintained its public support for integration, but the nation would not be the outspoken supporter of the effort that it had been in the past. Nixon realized that American actions had often hindered the progress, rather than helped it.<sup>94</sup> Thus, when Prime Minister Wilson visited the United States in January 1970, President Nixon informed him, “It is in the interests of the United States to have a strong economic, political, and military European community, with the United Kingdom in the community.”<sup>95</sup> Yet, he went on to note, “For the US to play a heavy-handed role would be counter-productive.”<sup>96</sup> Again, the president made clear his firm intentions to be supportive, but to keep his distance from the actual process of expansion and integration. This emphasis on public

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<sup>93</sup> Richard M. Nixon, “The President’s News Conference of March 4, 1969,” in Richard M. Nixon, *Public Papers of the President*, Richard Nixon, 1969 (Washington: GPO, 1969), 180.

<sup>94</sup> Richard M. Nixon, *United States Foreign Policy for the 1970’s*, February 18, 1970

<sup>95</sup> “Minutes of a National Security Council Meeting,” Washington, January 28, 1970, in *FRUS, 1969–1976: Western Europe; NATO*, 112–14.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

support for the European Community through distance would continue throughout the Nixon administration.

The President's policy of distancing America from the actual process of integration was unique to Nixon. This marked one of the first key points in the administration's reappraisal of traditional American foreign policy. Even before the new administration took office, the President and his National Security Advisor had set their policy for Europe. One of the tenets of this new foreign policy approach was to "make clear that we will not inject ourselves into intra-European debates on the form, methods, and timing of steps toward unity."<sup>97</sup> As Lundestad has observed, this marked a significant departure from previous policy in that the new administration was abandoning the American position of unqualified support for supranationalism within Europe. In the public eye, the administration used this policy to show that the United States valued its European allies but knew that they must be in charge of their own affairs. In reality, this was evidence of the new "ambivalent" attitude of the United States toward the entire process of European integration.<sup>98</sup> The foreign policy team of the Nixon administration was quickly coming to the realization that supranationalism could be more harmful to the United States than previous administrations had been willing to concede. Thus, Nixon and his advisors were careful to publicly situate the United States as a supporter of a united Europe that independently charted its own course toward integration.

Yet despite the initial public support, there was always some reserved caution in the American position. The Nixon administration, like those before him, recognized that the further integration of Europe into an independent entity would have a significant impact upon the United States. A State Department posture statement prepared in advance of the 1970 NATO ministerial

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<sup>97</sup> Kissinger, *White House Years*, 88-89.

<sup>98</sup> Lundestad, *Empire by Integration*, 100.

meeting acknowledged these challenges. The statement clearly read, “We recognize that as Europe moves toward greater economic unity, various problems will be posed for the United States and third countries in the short run.”<sup>99</sup> Having acknowledged the likelihood of problems, the question was then whether the benefits would outweigh the costs. To answer that question, Washington focused on two key aspects—the political implications and the economic implications. It would be these two uncertainties that occupied the time and attention of those members of the NSC and State Department officials examining American policy in the private discussions on American foreign policy. While the Nixon administration publicly announced its support for European unity, the deliberations on the implications of this longstanding policy would soon begin to change the tenor of the conversation behind closed doors.

From the earliest days of European unity, the political implications were far less worrisome to the United States and generally more positive than the economic implications. This mentality largely continued throughout the Nixon administration. The promotion of political cooperation among the members of the European Community and Western Europe on the whole had been one of the organization’s main goals from its inception. The European Commission and the internal structure of the EC were the first steps taken in that direction. Furthermore, these institutional arrangements were continually evaluated and reassessed as this young intergovernmental organization made steps toward enhanced cooperation. With the expansion of the community becoming a real possibility by the summer of 1970, the EC approved a proposal put forth by Belgian diplomat Etienne Davignon that called for the creation of a consultative mechanism to discuss foreign policy. One of the unique aspects of this new foreign policy

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<sup>99</sup> Posture Statement, Office of Atlantic-Political Economic Affairs to Public Affairs Advisor, Bureau of European Affairs, June 12, 1970, File B.1a US/POL 3, Records Relating to European Integration, 1958–1974, RG 59, National Archives.

coordination effort was its inclusion of the EC applicant states prior to their accession.<sup>100</sup>

Another step taken by the EC was the meeting of the Eurogroup on defense burden sharing in the fall of 1970.<sup>101</sup> These initiatives represented a step forward in the politicization of the EC. As Henry Kissinger observed, “Noteworthy is the fact that the new political consultations are linked to the Community framework, which does augur for expansion of the Community’s competence beyond purely economic affairs.”<sup>102</sup>

“Noteworthy” moves toward greater political union were significant for the United States, since the expansion of the European Community had direct political implications. Yet there were two different aspects of these new realities. The first was the positive ways in which closer political union would help the United States. In a report prepared by the State Department’s Bureau of European Affairs in 1972, these political implications of European unity were brought to the forefront. While noting that the current expansion of the EEC and its necessary focus on the economic union had distracted the organization from its efforts at political coordination, the Bureau of European Affairs noted, “Conceivably, the process of European political cooperation may lead to early development of European views on foreign policy and defense issues.”<sup>103</sup> The formation of a distinct Western European view on these issues made the United States optimistic that Western Europe would serve as a magnet, attracting Eastern Europe to the West.<sup>104</sup> Commonly known as the “magnet theory,” this belief in subverting the Soviets by

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<sup>100</sup> Henry Kissinger to Richard Nixon, “Memorandum from the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon,” February 18, 1971, in *FRUS, 1969-1976: Western Europe; NATO*, 244.

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

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>103</sup> “The Global Political Implications and Consequences Arising from Enlargement of the European Community,” Bureau of European Affairs, 1972, File B.5, Records Relating to European Integration, 1958–1974, RG 59, National Archives.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

attracting Eastern Europe to Western democracy and life had long been a key approach to US foreign relations during the Cold War. In this iteration, the State Department acknowledged that it might in the short run increase tension with the Soviet Union and the eastern bloc, but they were confident that in the long run, it would ease relations between Eastern and Western Europe, thus contributing to détente.<sup>105</sup> Key to the success of this magnetic draw, however, was the entry of Britain into the EC. The British entry was important in that “a new balance of political forces [would] exist within the Community that [would] provide a basis for progress toward political as well as economic integration.”<sup>106</sup> Furthermore, the British would “introduce to the Community their own unique traditions and outlook contributing to the democratic, liberal, and outward looking character of the European Community.”<sup>107</sup> The State Department firmly believed that the political impact of European unity could only be as positive as hoped for if Britain were a part of that community. The British were essential to the successful achievement of America’s political goals for European unity.

Yet, for all of the State Department’s hope about the positive impact of European unity on the global political scene, the White House keenly realized that there would also be negative effects of supranational integration. Henry Kissinger was astutely aware of the ramifications of closer integration. Acknowledging the supranational structure of the economic union, he noted, “A politically united Europe was more likely to articulate its own conceptions in other areas [areas other than economics] as well.”<sup>108</sup> This statement by Kissinger aligns closely with the remarks by the State Department about the feasibility of a coordinated European foreign policy, but draws a much different conclusion. For Nixon and Kissinger, the positive effects of closer

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Kissinger, *White House Years*, 390.



political union were not a foregone conclusion.<sup>109</sup> Europe could, as in the case of *Ostpolitik*, develop a policy that was at odds with, and even hindering, the policy efforts of the United States. For Germany to undertake such a policy was a liability to the entire western alliance.<sup>110</sup> Furthermore, as Kissinger observed, the United States was not even totally convinced that *Ostpolitik* would work the way the Germans intended. The whole principle was dependent upon the magnet theory, and the Nixon administration was not sure which magnet was stronger.<sup>111</sup> Such political implications were not welcome moves in the Nixon-Kissinger Foreign Policy plan, and can explain in part why President Nixon was so keen on stressing the importance of Europe developing their own plan of unity without American interference or encouragement.<sup>112</sup>

Despite the consideration of both potential positive and negative results of political union, the United States did realize that such efforts would be slow coming. State sovereignty continued to remain an important factor for the members of the EEC, particularly France.<sup>113</sup> Similarly, as has already been mentioned, the State Department recognized that the efforts toward political cooperation would continue to be secondary, and during these years the attention of the organization was noticeably focused solely on the expansion of the economic union. Furthermore, Kissinger, after making his remarks about the noteworthy steps taken toward cooperation, added, “But this [the function of the organization being as much political as

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<sup>109</sup> Rossbach, 38–39.

<sup>110</sup> Geir Lundestad, *The United States and Western Europe Since 1945: From “Empire by Invitation” to Transatlantic Drift* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 172–72.

<sup>111</sup> Henry Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), 145.

<sup>112</sup> Lundestad, *Empire by Integration*, 102.

<sup>113</sup> “National Intelligence Estimate 20-1-69,” December 4, 1969, in *FRUS, 1969–1976: Western Europe; NATO*, 79-80.

economic] is likely to take some time to develop.”<sup>114</sup> Thus, the various American policymaking offices realized that political implications were of little immediate significance. While they closely followed the progress and seemed optimistic about the results of such political cohesion, there remained cautious expectation for significant change in the near future. This understanding of the political climate and the speed at which it developed was partially responsible for the relatively light focus of the administration on the generally positive political implications.

In contrast to the political implications of European unity and the generally favorable response within the administration to the steps being taken toward closer political union was the administration’s consideration of the economic implications of an expanded European Community. From the earliest mentions of European unity, it was widely understood that the United States would have to give something up in order for Europe to be strengthened. This was not lost on the Nixon Administration. In his 1970 foreign policy address, President Nixon stated, “We recognize that our interests will necessarily be affected by Europe’s evolution, and we may have to make sacrifices in the common interest. We consider that the possible economic price of a truly unified Europe is outweighed by the gain in the political vitality of the West as a whole.”<sup>115</sup> Appealing to the political implications of such, the President made clear that the US was willing to make some small sacrifices in the name of the greater good. This mentality carried over into all statements of American policy toward the EC, as is seen in the government’s 1970 posture statement. Acknowledging the likelihood of problems, American diplomats were instructed to “support the view that the economic and political benefits to us to be derived from

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<sup>114</sup> Henry Kissinger to Richard Nixon, “Memorandum from the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon,” February 18, 1971, in *FRUS, 1969-1976: Western Europe; NATO*, 244.

<sup>115</sup> Richard M. Nixon, *United States Foreign Policy for the 1970’s*, February 18, 1970.

European unity will in the long run outweigh such temporary dislocations as may occur.”<sup>116</sup>

These statements are important in that they show the United States was not averse to any and all sacrifices; instead, the Americans were willing to make concessions if necessary. The extent to which the United States would sacrifice, however, soon became another issue.

As part of the new structure of the National Security Council, individual foreign policy issues were studied and decided through a system of memorandums. The NSC would pass a National Security Study Memorandum (NSSM) authorizing the detailed study of an issue. A study would be conducted and information would be compiled by the various agencies through an ad hoc committee, and a separate review group would examine the findings of that committee. Upon completion of the review, the study would be presented to the entire NSC, outlining the whole range of possible options and a recommendation would be made to the President. That decision was then recorded in a National Security Decision Memorandum (NSDM), which would state the conclusion of the NSC and supply the president with the group’s recommendations and range of options for what the policy of the United States should be on that given issue.<sup>117</sup> The issues of European integration and British accession to the EC were no exception. NSSM 79 was approved on October 13, 1969. It called for “a study of U.S. policy toward U.K. accession to the European Community,” giving special attention to “how these forms [of accession] will affect the economic and political unity of the Community, and their bearing on the United States.”<sup>118</sup> The study called for members of various cabinet level departments to meet and develop a report that would analyze all of the potential economic effects

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<sup>116</sup> Posture Statement, June 12, 1970.

<sup>117</sup> Kissinger, *White House Years*, 38–46.

<sup>118</sup> National Security Study Memorandum 79, October 13, 1969, Nixon Library, Chula Vista, CA, [http://www.nixonlibrary.gov/virtuallibrary/documents/nssm/nssm\\_079.pdf](http://www.nixonlibrary.gov/virtuallibrary/documents/nssm/nssm_079.pdf) (accessed March 3, 2014).

on the United States from exports and tariffs to monetary and agricultural policy.<sup>119</sup> The scope of NSSM 79 was further expanded by NSSM 91, which broadened the focus of the study from solely examining the impact of Great Britain joining the EC to now studying EC expansion more generally and the policy of preferential trading agreements.<sup>120</sup> The administration realized the significance of EC expansion and wanted to formulate the best policy to address the situation.

With authorization from the president, the NSC review process began. Under the leadership of Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs Martin J. Hillenbrand, the ad hoc review committee submitted their findings to Dr. Kissinger in late April 1970. The committee found that the transitional period of expansion would produce only small to moderate costs to the overall industrial exports of the United States. The bigger issue, according to the committee, would be the long-term effects, which would be of the utmost importance but nearly impossible to predict with any accuracy.<sup>121</sup> The other major economic implications for the United States, according to Hillenbrand's committee, were the ability of the United States to maintain its exports to Europe and the negative impact of the EC's Common Agricultural Policy toward US grain exports, which the committee estimated to be somewhere around \$100 million.<sup>122</sup> To counteract these potentially negative impacts, the committee recommended that the United States utilize its rights within the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) framework. By emphasizing the equal rights of each GATT participant, the United States could use existing economic agreements to prevent discriminatory trade agreements and export policies within an

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> National Security Study Memorandum 91, March 27, 1970, Nixon Library, Chula Vista, CA, [http://www.nixonlibrary.gov/virtuallibrary/documents/nssm/nssm\\_091.pdf](http://www.nixonlibrary.gov/virtuallibrary/documents/nssm/nssm_091.pdf) (accessed March 3, 2014).

<sup>121</sup> "Memorandum from the Chairman of the NSC Ad Hoc Group on Europe (Hillenbrand) to the Chairman of the NSC Review Group (Kissinger)," April 27, 1973, in *FRUS, 1969–1976: Western Europe; NATO*, 128-131.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid, 131.

international, legal context.<sup>123</sup> Considering GATT as the main vehicle to ensure America's economic interests were not compromised, the committee recommended three possible options for how to handle the expansion of the EEC, with the first two both relying on GATT. The third option, however, called for less emphasis on GATT and agriculture, instead focusing on consultation between the two organizations and direct appeals to the individual member states.<sup>124</sup> These three options were then forwarded to the Kissinger review group for further action.

The review group expressed many of the same concerns. While noting that the exact cost of economic integration could not be calculated with certainty, the members of the committee—drawn from officials within the State, Treasury, Commerce, Agriculture, Labor, and Defense Departments, as well as the CIA and other relevant agencies—agreed that there was a potential for negative economic impact on the United States. This proved to be the largest point of opposition to British entry in the EC in the early days of policy reevaluation. The Departments of Treasury, Commerce, and Agriculture, among others, vociferously argued against the harmful effects of EC expansion on American imports and exports, both agricultural and otherwise.<sup>125</sup> The extent to which this became public knowledge was soon evident, as Geoffrey Rippon, Britain's lead EC negotiator, met individually with Secretary of Agriculture Clifford Hardin and Secretary of Commerce Maurice Stans in an attempt to dissuade them of the negative economic effects for the United States.<sup>126</sup> Furthermore, the public emphasis upon the negative impacts for American agriculture were such that EC President Franco Malfatti once remarked that the US

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid, 132–33.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Lundestad, *The United States and Western Europe*, 179.

<sup>126</sup> Rossbach, 125.

spoke with two voices—one from the White House and one from the Department of Agriculture.<sup>127</sup> The economic drawbacks could not be ignored by policymakers.

Having thus noted the potential for negative economic effects, the committee's draft recommendations for the president observed that an emphasis on GATT rights had achieved little progress in previous conversations with the EEC over agricultural and economic policies, and accordingly suggested that the president's directive follow Hillenbrand's Option 3.<sup>128</sup> One of the key components of the review group's suggestion, however, was to "stimulate an initiative from the Europeans for some sort of consultative machinery."<sup>129</sup> The group believed that consultation between the two organizations was necessary, but that the president should offer some direction on how to achieve it. The other important aspect of this consultation was that it needed to be a publicly European initiative, despite America encouraging its implementation behind the scenes.<sup>130</sup> The directive was sent to the president, who in turn set a policy.

The new policy, formally stated in NSDM 68, was acutely aware of the economic impact expansion could have. While noting that the first principle of American policy was to continue to support EC expansion, principles two and three both emphasized the economic considerations involved. The second principle stated that the US was willing "to accept some—but not excessive—economic costs as a result of the accession of new members to the Community," while the third expressed the need for conversations with the individual countries of the EC to stress American expectations for European consideration of "the rights and interests of third countries, including the U.S. and the importance of maintaining an equitable system of

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> "Minutes of a National Security Council Review Group Meeting," May 13, 1970, in *FRUS, 1969–1976: Western Europe; NATO*, 134–146.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid, 144,

<sup>130</sup> Ibid, 144–145.

multilateral trading rules.”<sup>131</sup> NSDM 68 further stated that, to help achieve these goals, the US should encourage an EC initiative for consultation. If the EC failed to do so, the US should suggest an initiative of its own.<sup>132</sup> Having set an explicit policy for how to deal with the challenges of European integration and further EC expansion, the Nixon administration had clearly shown that economic concerns posed a potential problem for American support of this major issue.

Nixon’s reluctance for full support would not soon abate. In his 1971 foreign policy report to Congress, President Nixon further clarified where his administration stood on the issue of EC expansion and integration. While acknowledging that the US and Europe had fundamental common interests, he stopped short of stating that the two bodies had entirely common interests, opting to use the word “most” instead.<sup>133</sup> He then continued, “For years, however, it was believed uncritically that a unified Western Europe would automatically lift burdens from the shoulders of the United States. The truth is not so simple. European unity will also pose problems for American policy, which it would be idle to ignore.”<sup>134</sup> These problems, as Nixon outlined them, included many of the issues that had been of concern since the early days of the administration—restrictions on agricultural trade and preferential trading agreements. The president argued that it was in the best interest of the global economy for the two political spheres to resolve these issues as quickly as possible, focusing on “fundamental rather than tactical purposes.”<sup>135</sup> The president went on to again mention the possibility for further US-EC consultation, which had recently begun at a low-level, but as before, the initiative must be from

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<sup>131</sup> “National Security Decision Memorandum 68,” July 30, 1970, in *FRUS, 1969–1976: Western Europe; NATO*, 179.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>133</sup> Richard M. Nixon, *United States Foreign Policy for the 1970’s*, February 25, 1971.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

Europe. Thus, the American perception of EC expansion continued to remain largely the same—supportive but very concerned and skeptical.

One answer to the challenges posed to the Americans by European integration was to strengthen America's commitments to Europe in other ways that would allow the United States to continue its influence, and advance its "empire by invitation."<sup>136</sup> The obvious vehicle to achieve this goal was NATO, and the president wasted no time in advancing his plans to strengthen the alliance organization. The emphasis on NATO was based on several key ideas. First and foremost, despite the general opinions of the administration about European political and economic integration, Nixon believed that "a coherent strategy of European defense, today and as far into the future as I [Nixon] can see, will require mutual support across the Atlantic."<sup>137</sup> Despite his preference for independent moves toward integration, Nixon fundamentally believed in transatlantic defense and diplomacy. Similarly, Nixon believed that "NATO was a forum in which [the United States] could get action."<sup>138</sup> As opposed to the beliefs of the American Permanent Representative to the European Community Robert Schaetzel that the EC consultations scheduled to begin in 1970 would be of little overall effect, Nixon trusted that NATO would allow him to effect positive change in a direction favorable to the US.<sup>139</sup> With these ideas in mind, Nixon and his team got to work. At the first NATO ministerial meeting of his administration, held April 10, 1969, the president set forth three proposals for future activity:

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<sup>136</sup> For further discussion of the concept of "empire by invitation" see Geir Lundestad's essay "Empire by Invitation?" which originally appeared in the *Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations Newsletter*, 15 (September 1984), 3-21.

<sup>137</sup> Richard M. Nixon, *United States Foreign Policy for the 1970's*, February 25, 1971.

<sup>138</sup> Memorandum from the President's Assistant for Urban Affairs (Moynihan) to President Nixon," July 1, 1970, in *FRUS, 1969-1976: Western Europe; NATO*, 175.

<sup>139</sup> Memorandum of Conversation, from US Mission to the EC to the Bureau of European Affairs, December 10, 1970, File B.1a US/POL 3, Records Relating to European Integration, 1958-1974, RG 59, National Archives.



1) regular meetings of the Deputy Foreign Ministers to discuss long-range problems facing the alliance; 2) the creation of a political planning group; and 3) the creation of a committee to address the “challenges of a modern society.”<sup>140</sup> The North Atlantic Council discussed these proposals at two meetings in May, responding favorably to the third proposal and negatively to the first two.<sup>141</sup> The Committee on the Challenges of Modern Society began meeting in December.<sup>142</sup> This was a step in the right direction according to the administration, but it was far from the end. Other issues loomed large within the NATO alliance for both the United States and Europe.

The most pressing issues were strategy and troop presence. Nixon, Kissinger, and the Defense Staff, led by Secretary of Defense Melvyn Laird, all believed that the NATO strategy of flexible response was inadequate. Initially developed by Robert McNamara during the Kennedy-Johnson years, flexible response meant having adequate conventional forces to fight for ninety days following an attack, with the understanding that other means of conflict resolution would end the battle before the ninety days had expired.<sup>143</sup> For the new administration, this policy posed several problems. The first was financial. Conventional defense with ground troops was more expensive than a nuclear-based defense policy. The NSC staff estimated that it would cost \$12 billion dollars a year to continue its defense positions.<sup>144</sup> The costs were further complicated by Congressional pressure pushing for cuts to the defense budget. The Mansfield Amendment, for instance, was an effort in the Senate to reduce US troops in Europe by fifty percent in

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<sup>140</sup> “NSSM 43,” in *FRUS, 1969–1976: Western Europe; NATO*, 58–59.

<sup>141</sup> “Memorandum From the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon,” June 2, 1969, in *FRUS, 1969–1976: Western Europe; NATO*, 65.

<sup>142</sup> “Memorandum from the President’s Assistant for Urban Affairs (Moynihan) to President Nixon,” July 1, 1970, 175.

<sup>143</sup> Kissinger, *White House Years*, 391–92.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid*, 392.

1971.<sup>145</sup> The financial and domestic pressures were further complicated by pressure from the allies in NATO. Despite American efforts encouraging burden-sharing, the White House acknowledged that there was no evidence to believe such burden-sharing on the Europeans' part was likely. Furthermore, any effort to withdraw troops would have been viewed by the allies as proof that the United States was not committed to the defense of Europe. Similarly, adopting a new strategy that favored increased conventional defense would cause the allies to question the United States' role as nuclear deterrent.<sup>146</sup> Surrounded with challenges from both sides, the administration was faced with no option but to reaffirm the existing policy of flexible response, despite their personal dislike of the policy.<sup>147</sup>

Reaffirming the policy of flexible response then had to translate into action. NSDM 27 announced that the United States would maintain its existing levels of forces in Europe in the immediate future. This commitment to existing troop levels was intended to show the European leaders that the United States was serious about the alliance and its commitment to the defense of Europe.<sup>148</sup> This insistence on maintaining troop levels in Europe assumed an even more significant role in light of congressional opposition. In the case of the Mansfield Amendment, the president himself held a meeting with former government officials and military officers to discuss the Senate proposal. In the meeting, he encouraged everyone to remind the senators of the importance of supporting NATO. Despite the ultimate hopes of the United States to reduce forces and achieve détente, the president cautioned those in the meeting that “unilateral

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<sup>145</sup> “Minutes of a Legislative Interdepartmental Group Meeting,” May 12, 1971, in *FRUS, 1969–1976: Western Europe; NATO*, 266, n2.

<sup>146</sup> Kissinger, *White House Years*, 392–93.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 393.

<sup>148</sup> “Paper Prepared in the Department of State and the National Security Council,” January, 1970, in *FRUS, 1969–1976: Western Europe; NATO*, 106–08.

withdrawal was not the way to do it.”<sup>149</sup> The United States could not appear weak on NATO. To prevent its European partners from forming such an impression,, the United States took other steps to strengthen and reinforce the alliance. Defense efforts were upgraded “through the modernization of conventional forces” and steps were taken to improve NATO as a “mechanism for political consultation.”<sup>150</sup> The Nixon administration had made its policy choice clear. The EC was not America’s preferred organization of cooperation and action with Europe; NATO was.

All of these policy decisions had significant implications for American relations with its transatlantic allies. The Nixon administration’s reappraisal of European integration almost immediately alarmed leaders all across Europe. By the middle of 1970, many within Europe were questioning the United States’ position on EC enlargement. According to the UK’s Deputy Chief of the Mission to the EC, Kenneth Christofas, every member of the European Commission and all of the permanent representatives to the EC had asked him about the United States’ “true” position on the EC, and many of them had directly warned him that the US position was not as supportive as many believed.<sup>151</sup> While Christofas noted that he did not give any credibility to the argument made by those at the EC and defended America’s support, that European leaders were questioning American support shows the extent to which relations were deteriorating. This growing distrust of the United States by its closest allies only continued to grow as America kept emphasizing the problems European integration posed for the US. After touring Europe in early-November 1971, Secretary Laird reported to the president that, “it was very evident that doubt

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<sup>149</sup> “Memorandum for the Record,” May 13, 1971, in *FRUS, 1969–1976: Western Europe; NATO*, 276.

<sup>150</sup> “Information Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs (Hillenbrand) to Secretary of State Rogers,” November 15, 1971, in *FRUS, 1969–1976: Western Europe; NATO*, 323.

<sup>151</sup>Memorandum of Conversation, from US Mission to the EC to US Embassy in London, October 25, 1970, File B.1a US/POL 3, Records Relating to European Integration, 1958–1974, RG 59, National Archives.

and uncertainty are setting in rapidly in Europe in reaction to recent initiatives in foreign and economic affairs, as well as in reaction to the rhetoric emanating from the Congress.”<sup>152</sup> He went on to explain this mentality and its origins. “Europeans see US initiatives, like our new China policy, . . . as abrupt course changes. They have been caught by surprise. Surprise has led to conjecture about additional course changes which might directly affect them.”<sup>153</sup> Recent actions had even caused them to call into question the United States’ commitment to not withdraw troops in Europe, and the Germans in particular feared that the US might strike a deal on Mutually Beneficial Force Reductions (MBFR) with the Soviets without consulting Europe at all. Secretary Laird’s appraisal of relations was most worrisome.

Laird was not the only American official to view matters this way, though. Without knowing the details of the memo from Laird to Nixon, Assistant Secretary Hillenbrand was preparing a report of his own on the state of US-European relations for Secretary Rogers. A foreboding message was evident from the memo’s start. “This memorandum . . . addresses a problem of increasing concern: European loss of confidence in the United States. While we have had crises of confidence before, they have not been of the same severity or depth.”<sup>154</sup> Hillenbrand noted the steps taken by the US to strengthen relations with Europe, including strengthening of NATO, increased consultation with the EC, support for EC expansion, and work toward a reduction of tensions. Yet, “in spite of these constructive demonstrations of our strong and continuing interest in Europe, it has become increasingly clear that we are entering a difficult

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<sup>152</sup> “Memorandum from Secretary of Defense Laird to President Nixon,” November 9, 1971.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>154</sup> “Information Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs (Hillenbrand) to Secretary of State Rogers,” November 15, 1971, 322.

if not crucial period in our relations with that area.”<sup>155</sup> As evidence of this lack of confidence, Hillenbrand noted that the French newspapers regularly discuss the “isolationist fever” running rampant in America, while Germany was advocating its own version of détente—*Ostpolitik*—because they feared that America would withdraw from Europe.<sup>156</sup> While Hillenbrand went on to suggest possible remedies to the solution, it appears that those suggestions fell on deaf ears. According to a telegram from NATO Ambassador David Kennedy to Secretary Rogers, America’s European allies had become concerned about the United States’ defense commitments to NATO.<sup>157</sup> Kennedy went on to state, “Most important, and in large measure overriding everything else, there is concern regarding new direction US policy will take toward Europe.”<sup>158</sup> Kennedy’s letter of November 1972 bears striking resemblance to the remarks of Hillenbrand and Laird a year earlier. Despite having three years of warnings about the state of European relations, the fact of the matter remains—relations between the United States and Europe had been directly, and negatively affected by the American reappraisal of its policy on European integration.

One might ask, however, just how far this deterioration of relations went in regard to America’s relations with its closest ally, the United Kingdom. As was observed in the previous chapter, President Nixon desired to maintain a close, special relationship with the British. In a meeting with the British Chancellor of the Exchequer Roy Jenkins in May 1969, the president argued “that recent developments in Europe [*i.e.* the resignation of De Gaulle] made even more

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<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 323.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 323–24.

<sup>157</sup> “Telegram from the Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to the Department of State and the Department of Defense,” November 29, 1972, in *FRUS, 1969–1976: Western Europe; NATO*, 346.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*

imperative the maintenance of a common ground between the U.S. and the U.K.”<sup>159</sup> That Nixon desired to strengthen this relationship, particularly in the face of political uncertainties—as the expansion of the EC would be—should come as no surprise. Henry Kissinger famously asked, “Who do I call if I want to call Europe?”<sup>160</sup> The facetious tone of Kissinger’s remark reveals the administration’s beliefs that it was impossible to negotiate with Europe on the whole. Instead, Nixon and his staff preferred to negotiate directly with the individual states. In this context, the special relationship can be seen as the logical outgrowth of skepticism toward European integration. By insisting on handling negotiations on disagreements arising as a result of EC expansion through personal communication with individual heads of government rather than with the EC as a whole, the special relationship was just the environment Nixon desired in order to prevent American interests from being overlooked.<sup>161</sup> Yet, by the end of his first year in the White House, the special relationship seemed to be moving toward obscurity and insignificance in foreign affairs.

As a component of the NSC’s study of British membership in the EC, a National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) was produced, analyzing the relationship between the US, Europe, and the Soviet Union. The findings of this report are telling for the status of the special relationship. The report noted that since the end of World War II, “the UK has sought to play a multiple role as a junior partner and principal advisor to the US, as the interpreter of Western Europe to the US and of the US to Western Europe, and as the spokesman of a multiracial

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<sup>159</sup> “Memorandum of Conversation,” May 1, 1969, in *FRUS, 1969–1976: Western Europe; NATO*, 958.

<sup>160</sup> This quote is universally attributed to Henry Kissinger, though the exact reference of the remark is unknown. Kissinger himself is not entirely sure the remark originated with him, but he takes credit for it. <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/kissinger-says-calling-europe-quote-not-likely-his>

<sup>161</sup> Lundestad, *The United States and Western Europe*, 181.

commonwealth with global interests.”<sup>162</sup> Yet, despite efforts to wear multiple hats, the NIE concluded that it was now “impossible for the UK to sustain the varied and often contradictory positions inherent in these roles.”<sup>163</sup> This left Britain with a choice to make concerning future policy—a choice that appeared to leave the special relationship behind. The NIE stated, “The ‘special relationship’ with the US has lost much of its psychological hold and in any case no longer confers upon the UK any indispensable benefits.”<sup>164</sup> Such a state of affairs seemed likely to doom Nixon’s attempts to revitalize and strengthen the special relationship; yet Nixon continued to try. He maintained cordial relations with Prime Minister Wilson, and upon Prime Minister Heath’s election, President Nixon made clear his intentions to maintain close communication and a special relationship. As has already been seen, though, Nixon’s offer to maintain the special relationship was countered by Heath’s cooler, more limited “natural relationship.”<sup>165</sup> This statement should have alerted the president of things to come. In the very same conversation where Heath discussed his affinity for “natural relationship,” he went on to affirm the Britain had a desire to play a “world role.”<sup>166</sup> For the British, the only way to play a role in world affairs was to do so as a member of Europe, not as a bedfellow of the United States.<sup>167</sup> Heath would make this explicit in future conversations with his American counterpart. Speaking in December 1970, some six months after taking office, Heath informed Nixon “that Britain would not make any concessions to the United States’ view prior to going into the

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<sup>162</sup> “National Intelligence Estimate 20-1-69,” December 4, 1969, in *FRUS, 1969–1976: Western Europe; NATO*, 80.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>165</sup> Heath, *Course of My Life*, 472–73.

<sup>166</sup> “Memorandum of Conversation,” October 3, 1970, in *FRUS, 1969–1976: Western Europe; NATO*, 986.

<sup>167</sup> “National Intelligence Estimate 20-1-69,” December 4, 1969, in *FRUS, 1969–1976: Western Europe; NATO*, 80–81.

Common Market, partly because they did not want to appear to be an American Trojan Horse.”<sup>168</sup> He went on to state, “We can best defend your interests inside the Common Market and should not pay a price to you before we get in,” to which Nixon responded, “The problem is what price you are going to have to pay to get in.”<sup>169</sup> Clearly tension was mounting between the two leaders. The question of priorities had come to the forefront, as Heath made it clear that the special relationship was less important to his government than British entry. No relationship, no matter how significant it had once been, would stand in the way of Britain’s return to the world stage as a member of Europe.

Other American actions would continue to damage the special relationship as America reexamined its policy toward Europe. As has been noted, the British were among the many European states hesitant concerning détente. Heath began questioning whether the US was serious about its commitment to Europe. Concern developed to such an extent that Hillenbrand’s assessment of European relations paid special attention to the case of US-UK relations. Referring to it as the “so-called ‘special relationship,’” Hillenbrand remarked, “we find the Prime Minister [Heath] stressing that it is fortunate that Britain is moving toward Europe at a time when the US is becoming increasingly concerned with deep-seated problems at home and abroad.”<sup>170</sup> That Heath was emphasizing its move toward Europe and distancing itself from the United States is a telling signal of the state of the special relationship. Yet, for all of the negativity focusing on the special relationship, one area of policy consistently remained special—nuclear cooperation, which remained close throughout the Nixon years. The US was Britain’s main supporter of its

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<sup>168</sup> “Memorandum of Conversation,” October 3, 1970, in *FRUS, 1969–1976: Western Europe; NATO*, 998.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid*, 999.

<sup>170</sup> Information Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs (Hillenbrand) to Secretary of State Rogers,” November 15, 1971, 323.



Super Antelope missile improvement program during the initial stages. While being careful to not commit to assistance for the duration of the nuclear development program, the American support for the British initiative was largely the result of an enduring bilateral nuclear cooperation.<sup>171</sup> Thus, what emerges with regard to the special relationship by 1972 is a complex picture. The relationship was far from special in many ways, as the two parties sought different, incompatible goals with regard to political and economic policy. Regular communication and nuclear cooperation, however, left a glimmer of hope that the special relationship was not dead.

The years 1969–72 mark a significant time period for American foreign policy toward Europe. The Nixon administration and his staff undertook a comprehensive reappraisal of its previous support for European integration. Acknowledging that America's once unlimited support for European unity was no longer an adequate policy approach, public support soon took a qualified position. America continued to support integration and expansion, but it must be European-led. Furthermore, support was far more limited as the potentially economic implications began to outweigh the positives of political union in the minds of government officials, particularly in the minds of those in the Departments of Agriculture, Treasury, and Commerce who fought against the State Department's insistence on political union as a positive. Thus, instead of granting unlimited support for European integration, the United States turned its attention to strengthening NATO, an organization that would allow continued American influence over important transatlantic issues. Despite its public reaffirmations of its commitments to Europe, the United States found itself in a troublesome environment. Domestic and foreign policy decisions had caused many of the European states to lose confidence in the United States. Even Great Britain—America's special ally—began losing confidence, calling the

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<sup>171</sup> "NSDM 124," July 29, 1971, in *FRUS, 1969–1976: Western Europe; NATO*, 1020–21.

very nature of the special relationship into question. America had certainly changed its perception of European integration, but not without Europe changing its perception of America.

## Chapter 4

### **Making the Move: British Preparations for EC Entry, 1969–72**

While the United States was busily analyzing the cost of European integration for American strategic and economic interests and determining how to approach the issue, significant conversations were happening across the ocean, as similar questions were being raised within the halls of Britain's House of Commons. MPs from both sides of the political spectrum hotly debated the implications of Britain joining the EC in terms of Britain's role in the world, trade and industry, agriculture, and economic policy, to name a few. The debate raged inside the chambers of parliament and in the meetings of committees, yielding far from a universal consensus on the issue. The debate over British membership in the EC, however, is representative of a broader change occurring in global politics. As has already been demonstrated, the 1970s ushered in a new era in international relations as economics, foreign policy, and the rise of additional powers converged to yield a unique environment in the global Cold War. Facing an ally in the United States that appeared to be backing away from Europe, an economy that was struggling, and a former empire that placed increasing demands on the state, the United Kingdom had to decide what type of role it wanted to play on the world stage going forward. That decision would be forged only through hundreds of hours of intense debate, spanning weeks, months, and years. Yet, what emerges from this process is one clear realization—something had to change if Britain was to truly be a global power. The UK was poised to make a move.

The story of UK's candidacy to the European Community as told in chapter one ended with General de Gaulle's death knell to EC negotiations over British entry in December 1967.

Despite the decision of the Six to end negotiations, the British did not withdraw their application. The Wilson government wanted to join the EC and Common Market, and was going to “patiently keep its application on the table and avoid going up side roads.”<sup>172</sup> Wilson firmly believed that the “UK [was] on [the] main road, faced with a large road block, but this would not last forever.”<sup>173</sup> The road he spoke of was his country’s integration with Europe, securing Britain’s place once again within the world, while the roadblock was none other than General de Gaulle himself. Yet, when Prime Minister Wilson expressed these sentiments to President Nixon at the end of February 1969, he had no idea just how quickly that impediment to British entry would pass. Just two months later, Charles de Gaulle would resign the presidency of France, and Georges Pompidou would take the helm.<sup>174</sup> The new president ushered in a new era in French politics—that of Post-De Gaulle France. The United States and UK were both keenly aware of the significance of this change in leadership. Pompidou expressed a willingness to change the “Gaullist foreign policy” in “both style and substance where the new team judges desirable.”<sup>175</sup> One of the most notable changes was his “less emotional, more businesslike approach to British entry to the Common Market.”<sup>176</sup> This new approach meant removing the longstanding French veto of British accession, which was seen as “important and could in the long run result in both British entry and meaningful U.K.-French cooperation in European problems.”<sup>177</sup> This significance was not lost on Harold Wilson. The prime minister viewed Pompidou as “solid but

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<sup>172</sup> “Telegram from Secretary of State Rogers to the Department of State,” February 28, 1969, in *FRUS, 1969–1976: Western Europe; NATO*, 950.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>174</sup> Young, 98.

<sup>175</sup> “Response to NSSM 60,” October 29, 1969, in *FRUS, 1969–1976: Western Europe; NATO*, 483.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*

unimaginative and lack[ing] de Gaulle's flair."<sup>178</sup> To Wilson, Pompidou was a man willing to make sacrifices on certain issues in order to achieve policy victories in areas that he regarded most important. Wilson told Nixon that, "If British entry into the Common Market was the price that was necessary to get his agricultural accepted, Pompidou would be willing to pat it though he would prefer not to."<sup>179</sup> This change in the French government made Wilson hopeful again about the prospects of British entry into the EC. After acknowledging Pompidou's willingness to accept British entry into the EC, Wilson informed Nixon that "talks on British entry will start in the first half of this year [1970]."<sup>180</sup> Yet, the change in France was not all that caused Wilson to be hopeful of Britain's prospects; a leadership change had also recently occurred in Germany. In late-September 1969, West Germany elected the Social Democrat Party to a majority in the *Bundestag*, elevating Willy Brandt to the chancellorship.<sup>181</sup> Wilson and the British saw this change in leaders as "very favorable."<sup>182</sup> Calling him an "honest and subtle and much less tricky" man than former Chancellor Kurt Kiesinger, the British prime minister said that Brandt "may hold the pistol of agricultural policy to the French head."<sup>183</sup> He went on to note that as a result of French fears of Germany, "Britain may thus be back to its historic role of being solicited by the second strongest country on the Continent as a counterweight against the strongest one."<sup>184</sup> Wilson's hope for a return of Britain to its historic place of prominence within Europe and the

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<sup>178</sup> "Memorandum of Conversations," January 27, 1970, in *FRUS, 1969–1976: Western Europe; NATO*, 971.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>181</sup> "Memorandum from the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon," September 29, 1969, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XL: Germany and Berlin, 1969–1972* (Washington, DC: GPO, 2007), 83.

<sup>182</sup> "Memorandum of Conversations," January 27, 1970, in *FRUS, 1969–1976: Western Europe; NATO*, 971.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, 972.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*

world appeared to be coming true. The prospects for British entry into the EC had never looked better to Wilson.

Despite the prime minister's desire to see Britain into the EC, and his optimism for the future, he was not to be the man to lead the United Kingdom into Europe. Domestic tensions increased, and a combination of economic and foreign affairs helped bring about a change in government in June 1970. The Conservative Party and its leader Edward Heath assumed the mantle of leadership. Having campaigned on visions of Britain's future within the world and within Europe, the Heath administration saw its election as a mandate from the people of the UK in support of its plans to restore the nation's prominence within Europe.<sup>185</sup> Heath's plan for Europe was to first and foremost resume negotiations. In advance of the election, Heath was careful not to make any broad promises about entering the EC out of concern for the cost to Great Britain. He promised merely to enter into negotiations, "no more, no less."<sup>186</sup> This was a promise Heath was confident he could keep. Having visited Paris and Berlin in May 1970 as a function of his role in the shadow cabinet, the new prime minister had become convinced of the same great prospects for entry that Wilson had. While acknowledging that some issues did remain that would make entry a bit slow, he knew that negotiations would at least be a reality.<sup>187</sup> Most importantly, though, Heath acutely understood that the issue of British entry into the EEC was one that was well beyond his control as prime minister; it was an issue that he knew belonged to Parliament. Only with parliamentary support could Britain enter into full negotiations, and only with parliament's approval could the United Kingdom enter the EEC and ratify the accession treaty. For this reason, during a BBC election forum Heath promised the

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<sup>185</sup> Heath, *Course of My Life*, 360–63.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid*, 363.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid*, 361–62.

people of Great Britain, “We will report the whole time to the country through Parliament what is going on in the negotiations. At the end when they see what has been negotiated, Parliament can judge completely whether it is in the interests of the country to go into the Common Market or not.”<sup>188</sup> Heath and his government had made promises to the people. Having been elected on those promises, the new government must soon get to work fulfilling them if it hoped to advance its vision for Great Britain’s future.

The first opportunity to begin the negotiation process occurred just days after the Heath government took office. The UK, Denmark, Norway, and Ireland (all of whom had applied for EEC membership), were invited to a meeting of the Six on June 30, 1970 to discuss the negotiation process. At that meeting, the government’s cabinet minister tasked with entry into the European Community—the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Lord Geoffrey Rippon—outlined the plans for negotiation. The British wanted negotiations to move as quickly as possible, focusing only on matters essential to entry.<sup>189</sup> Lord Rippon concluded his opening remarks in much the same way Edward Heath did in 1963—with complete affirmation of Britain’s whole-hearted support for European unity. He stated, “I have said enough today to show you that, like their predecessors, the British government is determined to work with you in uniting Europe in new spheres. . . . Our wish to join you derives from the sentiment which, as Europeans, we all share and from the idea we have of the part which our Continent should play in the world.”<sup>190</sup> In light of this desire to move quickly toward unity, and emphasizing the European spirit within which the negotiations would occur, the British government accepted an

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<sup>188</sup> Ibid, 362.

<sup>189</sup> Cabinet Paper: Membership in the European Communities,” June 23, 1970, *The Cabinet Papers, 1915–1984*, The National Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, United Kingdom.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

offer by the Six to begin negotiations at a bilateral Ministerial meeting on July 21.<sup>191</sup> The July 21 meeting discussed mostly the procedural components necessary for full negotiations to begin. While little of substance came from the meeting, Lord Rippon had been given considerable discretion by the Cabinet to act in accordance with what he saw as the best interests of the British and was authorized to inform the EEC ministers of the UK's acceptance "in principle [of] the common agricultural policy of the EEC."<sup>192</sup> By establishing an acceptance to most of CAP at the initial ministerial meeting, the British were attempting to make the way easier for the future of negotiations. An acceptance in principle would allow them to focus merely on components of CAP rather than the idea of agricultural regulation on the whole. Yet, this meeting would only lay the groundwork. The real negotiations between the two parties began in October 1970.

The negotiations between the UK and the EC illustrate an interesting dynamic. Some have argued that UK entry was a guarantee in 1970, while others have argued that failure was still a distinct possibility, as it had been in 1963 and 1967. Christopher Lord, a British political scientist specializing in the study of the European Union, argues, however, that neither of these positions is entirely accurate. According to Lord, the negotiations were in fact most likely to succeed, but there was a legitimate give and take between the Six and the UK as the negotiations helped shape the very nature of the community they hoped to create moving forward. The "conceptual prism through which each attempted to make some sense of a complex and uncertain problem" impacted these negotiations in a profound way.<sup>193</sup> Approaching the negotiations in such a manner reflects the importance of the negotiations for each party involved, in terms of

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<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

<sup>192</sup> "Conclusions of a Meeting of the Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street, SW1 on Thursday, July 16, 1970 at 10:30 AM," July 16, 1970, *The Cabinet Papers, 1915–1984*, The National Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, United Kingdom.

<sup>193</sup> Christopher Lord, *British Entry to the European Community Under the Heath Government of 1970-74* (Brookfield, VT: Dartmouth Publishing Company, 1993), 78.



building support for the agreement at home and preserving national interests. All of the states involved, particularly France and Great Britain, came to the table with distinct ideas of what mattered the most and what they hoped to achieve. These priorities and interests would prove problematic for genuine progress in the early months of negotiations.

The main issues hindering negotiations from the time they began in late-October 1970 were Britain's contribution to the EC budget, Commonwealth Sugar Exports, New Zealand's Dairy Imports, and the use of Sterling as a reserve currency. In terms of budgetary commitments, the British favored a longer, eight-year transition period, over which time the annual contribution would gradually increase from three percent to the full amount prescribed by the treaty. The French, however, favored a shorter transition period in which the British would begin by paying their initial share of the community's GNP, twenty-one and a half percent. While the other five members of the EC were willing to compromise, France continued to hold the hard line, making it seem as if negotiations were soon to stall.<sup>194</sup> Thus, in an attempt to prevent negotiations from stalling, the other five states suggested shifting the negotiations to the related issues of New Zealand dairy products and Commonwealth sugar. The switch proved to be of little use, however, as the French insistence on cessation of New Zealand dairy imports within five years, and the halving of sugar imports at twice the price were simply unacceptable to the British. When the five suggested a compromise closer to what the British actually hoped to achieve, it was met with quick French resistance.<sup>195</sup> Despite having made little progress on the substantive matters of entry into the Common Market, Lord Rippon announced in March 1971 that he and the British government hoped for a conclusion of negotiations by May. The British, from the outset, had been committed to a quick negotiation over essentials, preferring to work out less

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<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, 68–69.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*

important issues and specifics once in the EC.<sup>196</sup> The French, however, again caused the issue to slow down. Pompidou and his government became insistent upon solving the issue of sterling liabilities before the British could enter. Since the sterling pound was an international reserve currency and the British government held large balances, this issue was inherently complex. The British knew it would take months to resolve these questions at the rate negotiations had been going, and their hopes of entry into the EC would be doomed by more failed negotiations.<sup>197</sup> With this in mind, Heath took matters into his own hands. Negotiations could not continue stalling.

Heath had learned from his past experience as head of the British delegation during the 1963 negotiations, and was keenly aware that “the barrier to a successful outcome was political, not technical, and could therefore be removed only by agreement at the highest level.”<sup>198</sup> Thus, after months of planning between British Ambassador to France Christopher Soames and Pompidou’s private secretary Michel Jobert, the two European statesmen Pompidou and Heath announced on May 8, 1971 that they would be meeting for a summit in Paris at the end of the month to discuss the status of negotiations and attempt to resolve the disagreements between the two states. The announcement of this head of government meeting had almost immediate effect. At the Brussels ministerial meeting held May 11-12, progress was made on the issues of sugar, agriculture, and tariff quotas, as all parties were determined to use the ministerial meeting as a precursor to a successful summit. With progress now seemingly underway, Heath eagerly anticipated the meeting with Pompidou and the hope that it provided for successful entry. Upon arriving in Paris, Heath immediately met the French President. For his part, Pompidou wasted no

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<sup>196</sup> Ibid., 69–70.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

<sup>198</sup> Heath, 366.

time in their first one-on-one session; as far as he was concerned, the British could only join the EC if a “historic change in the British attitude” occurred.<sup>199</sup> Pompidou firmly believed that the addition of Great Britain would enhance and strengthen the EC, but only if the British underwent a fundamental change in their alliance orientation. Heath knew what this meant. He assured the French premier that “there could be no special partnership between Britain and the United States, even if Britain wanted it, because one was barely a quarter the size of the other. Through Europe, on the other hand, such a partnership was possible within a Community applying the same rules and working to shared principles.”<sup>200</sup> Heath made his position clear. The French feared a United Kingdom in the EC that was merely a puppet of the United States, but Heath reassured Pompidou that the British were willing to sacrifice its special relationship with the United States (which he seemed to believe was not a genuine relationship in the first place) in order to join Europe. First and foremost, the British were committed to Europe. Over the next two days, Heath would continue to hammer this point home with his French counterpart. He saw his primary task as convincing the French of Britain’s genuine desire to join Europe.<sup>201</sup> Through twelve hours of negotiations and conversations, the two men discussed the various issues that divided them and what it would take for them to agree upon terms of entry. What emerged was a spirit of negotiation and compromise and a new appreciation for the interests of the other. Perhaps nothing summarizes the Paris summit better than Pompidou’s closing remarks at the joint press conference at the summit’s end. He stated:

Many people believed that Great Britain was not and did not wish to become European, and that Britain wanted to enter the Community only so as to destroy it or to divert it from its objectives. Many people also thought that France was ready to use every pretext

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<sup>199</sup> Ibid., 370.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> Andrew Scott, *Allies Apart: Heath, Nixon and the Anglo-American Relationship* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 39–40.

to place in the end a fresh veto on Britain's entry. Well, ladies and gentlemen, you see before you tonight two men who are convinced of the contrary.<sup>202</sup>

This statement from Pompidou shows just how far the negotiations and conversations had come. The "historic change in the British attitude" that Pompidou felt necessary for the British to enter the EC had indeed occurred, actually long before that meeting on May 20. The Heath administration had already made a commitment to join Europe when it campaigned in the 1970 parliamentary elections. When Heath was able to convince the French of that genuine change, the road to accession got much smoother.<sup>203</sup>

Coming off of the successful summit with the French, the British entered the June negotiations with a renewed vigor. That attitude met its match in the French counterpart. President Pompidou sent a delegation to Brussels with instructions to "water down" their demands and dogmatic positions.<sup>204</sup> This allowed the negotiations to come to a quick conclusion. In the end, the British accepted an agreement to establish their budgetary commitments at eight and sixty-four hundredths percent initially, increasing to eighteen and one half percent over five years. They also negotiated a settlement on the issue of New Zealand dairy products that would allow access to eighty percent of its butter quotas and twenty percent of its cheese quotas, all of which was approved by the government. In terms of sugar exports, the negotiating teams came to an agreement that the member states of the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement found acceptable.<sup>205</sup> The only remaining point of contention was the issue of British sterling. On this point, the French were willing to make some concessions on when this issue was to be decided.

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<sup>202</sup> Georges Pompidou, May 21, 1971, in Heath, 372.

<sup>203</sup> Scott, 39–40.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid., 373–74.

The British agreed to a “gradual run down of official sterling balances after our accession.”<sup>206</sup>

The French interpreted this as a step in the right direction, and accepted the British offer to work out the details of the monetary policy after accession. With that, negotiations had been concluded. While the terms of negotiation were less than either Britain or France had ultimately hoped for securing, Christopher Lord argues that the final terms allowed both the French and British to feel that they had achieved their goals in negotiating.<sup>207</sup> The compromise terms were acceptable. Just how acceptable, however, was for Parliament to decide.

Edward Heath had made it clear from the beginning that the decision to enter Europe was not one for him or his cabinet to make, but the people through their representatives in Parliament had to be polled. Timing, however, was not on the side of Heath and his government. By June 1971, public opinion had become increasingly hostile to British entry in the EC. According to a May 1971 Gallup poll, less than one-fourth of England’s citizens favored entry into the EC. Even more troubling for the government, though, was that the survey found that some fifty-nine percent actually opposed British accession to the Common Market.<sup>208</sup> The situation did not look much better in Parliament. Wilson and his Labour Party were firmly opposed to British entry in the EC according to the terms the Heath government had negotiated. Some 125 Labour MPs were ardent opponents, and in the event that the Labour Party were to formally declare its opposition to British entry as a component of party ideologies, party leaders felt confident that only thirty to sixty of the 285 Labour MPs would vote with Heath or abstain.<sup>209</sup> Furthermore, a poll taken by London’s *Sunday Times* in May found that approximately seventy Tories and

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<sup>206</sup> Ibid., 375.

<sup>207</sup> Lord, 92–93.

<sup>208</sup> Intelligence Note 39, from Bureau of European Affairs, June 15, 1971, File ECIN 6 UK, Records Relating to the United Kingdom, 1962–1974, RG 59, National Archives.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

roughly thirty to forty members of Heath's own Conservative Party were opposed to entry.<sup>210</sup> Facing limited public support and a sizeable opposition in the House of Commons, the Heath government made what it felt to be the best decision—not to rush the vote. They released a White Paper on July 7 outlining the terms of the negotiation and officially stating the government's position on the issue and its reasons for support. Instead of then voting on the whole issue before the summer recess, which began in early August, Heath opted to hold a debate over the White Paper only by the end of July. This decision allowed Heath and his cabinet to sure up their position and strengthen their base within Parliament.<sup>211</sup>

Debate over the government's white paper proved to be filled with rhetorical fireworks and intense arguments. The White Paper—which also appeared in a short version—stated, “Her Majesty's Government is convinced that our country will be more secure and our people and our industries more prosperous if we join the European Community than if we remain outside.”<sup>212</sup> This basic premise was the main point of contention during the debate—as both sides sought to prove or disprove the idea that Britain would be better served within the rest of Europe. When discussion began on July 21, the Prime Minister announced that this “exploratory debate” was the first step in finalizing a process that had been ten years in the making.<sup>213</sup> Heath stressed the importance of industrial and economic factors, security and defense factors, and political factors as the main reasons the United Kingdom should join the rest of Europe, and concluded that the government had been able to secure the best terms possible, making the entry of the UK into the

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<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>212</sup> “The Historic Decision: Short Version of the Government White Paper,” July 1971, <http://www.th-eu-nit.com/downloads/TheHistoricDecision.pdf>.

<sup>213</sup> *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 5th ser., vol. 821 (1970–71), col. 1452–54 (United Kingdom).

EEC a real possibility.<sup>214</sup> The opposition soon began to raise objections, and the Leader of the Opposition, former Prime Minister Harold Wilson, was among the most vocal. Yet, much of what Wilson said in his initial remarks was political pandering, intended to undercut the position of the government. For the Labour Party, the entire move toward Europe was seen as a domestic strategy being orchestrated by the Conservatives to retain power.<sup>215</sup> This mentality is reflected in Wilson's opposition and his attempts to show that he had only favored entry under the most favorable terms to the British.<sup>216</sup> Wilson ultimately concluded that the terms agreed to by the Conservative government were in fact not acceptable, particularly on the issue of New Zealand dairy imports, citing as evidence the New Zealand Labour Party's opposition to the agreement, despite the acquiescence of the country's government to the measures.<sup>217</sup> Yet, perhaps most telling of Wilson's remarks during the debate is the extent to which this issue, like others, became a matter of party politics, showing the shortcomings of the opponent rather than the true best interest for Britain. Wilson ended his speech by discussing how Heath's economic prescriptions to spur recovery had failed, prompting the government to turn entry into the EC as the only means by which Britain could succeed in becoming a strong nation again. Wilson set himself in clear contrast to this alleged wrong path by reiterating that strong policies from a strong government would solve this problem and make Britain as strong outside the EC as it would inside.<sup>218</sup> This was truly at the heart of the issue for Wilson and the opposition.

Debate over the white paper raged on for four days. The two sides continued to debate the pros and cons of membership, the motivations for membership, and the broader question of

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<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1454–61.

<sup>215</sup> *Lord*, 105–13.

<sup>216</sup> *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 5th ser., vol. 821 (1970–71), col. 1469–95.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*

how Britain should move forward to assume its former place of prominence on the world stage. The two continued to vehemently disagree over the terms of the negotiation and whether they were acceptable. Yet, for all of their bickering, the opposing groups were not as diametrically opposed to the terms, as the debate record may make it seem. In the final remarks of the entire white paper debate, the Conservative Home Secretary Reginald Maudling described the real situation aptly. “Everyone knows perfectly well, as is evidenced by Ministers of the previous Government who know most about these things, that these are the best terms that any government could have expected to get. If they are now saying that the terms are not acceptable, the entire enterprise of trying to enter themselves was bogus from the start.”<sup>219</sup> Maudling’s point is quite telling. Wilson and his government knew what terms were possible. They were aware of the challenges and difficulties faced in negotiations. They knew that better terms could not have been achieved, and certainly could not be achieved by going back to the negotiation table. The British deal in 1971 was the best set of terms the UK had seen, and any arguing over the terms themselves was largely a matter of British political fighting. With the debate on the White Paper concluded, the stage was set for a show down in October when the full question was put to the floor.

As October neared, Heath and his Conservative party began gearing up for the fateful vote. Fully aware of the significance of this vote for the future of Great Britain, Heath went to great lengths to ensure the vote would be successful. After consultation with the Conservative Party’s Chief Whip, the decision was made to have a free vote. Fully aware that there were those in every party who both supported and opposed British entry, a free vote would allow each MP to cast a ballot according to their own beliefs rather than their party’s official stance. Heath was

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<sup>219</sup> *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 5th ser., vol. 822 (1970–71), col. 165 (United Kingdom).



determined to take advantage of any and all support he could get.<sup>220</sup> When the debate opened on October 21, 1971, the momentous importance of the decision was felt throughout the chamber. Heath recalled feeling “the tremendous weight of responsibility as [he] stood at the despatch box. No Prime Minister in time of peace [had] ever asked the House to take such a positive and historic decision as [he] was asking it to do that night. The world was watching Britain to see whether Parliament would decide that Western Europe would move along the path to real unity.”<sup>221</sup> While Heath’s own perspective on this climax is perhaps a bit self-glorifying, it does show the significance of the debate. The question being decided by parliament in October 1971 was a question about more than the future of Great Britain; it was about the future of Europe and the Western world on the whole. This made the debate even more intense and hotly contested.

Sir Alec Douglas-Home formally put the question of European membership to the house at 4:00 PM, October 21, 1971. He moved, “That this House approves her Majesty’s Government’s decision of principle to join the European Communities on the basis of the arrangements which have been negotiated.”<sup>222</sup> The foreign secretary went on to state in his defense of the position that after all of the steps taken by parliament (*i.e.* the debates during the preceding decade over British membership in the EC), the reputation of the UK “as a nation for reliable dealing would be looked upon, either in Europe or in the world,” in a negative light if the House were to decide not to go forward and enter the EEC.<sup>223</sup> Home went on to explain in great detail the role Britain would play within the EC, paying special attention to its safeguards of sovereignty and the economic benefits and implications—both of which would be significant

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<sup>220</sup> Heath, 379–80.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, 380.

<sup>222</sup> *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 5th ser., vol. 823 (1970–71), col. 912 (United Kingdom).

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 914.

issues in the debate. In fact, the issue of sovereignty became a key issue for many in the Labour Party, as they equated the Conservative's lack of discussion about it in the White Paper as evidence of a tremendous loss for Britain.<sup>224</sup> As was seen during the White Paper debate, the discussion over British entry into the EC was inherently about Britain's role in world affairs. When viewed in this light, the issue of the state's political sovereignty becomes a major point of contention. But the economic implications of British membership, also addressed during the summer, reemerged in this discussion. Perhaps the biggest contention revolved around two competing white papers that had been circulated in recent years. Wilson's Labour Government had issued a white paper on British EEC membership in early-1970 when negotiations resumed. In that document, the Labour government's estimate of the economic costs to the UK was far higher than the one subsequently suggested in the Conservative government's own white paper from July 1971. Since the two documents came from the two opposing parties, the question was whether either one has miscalculated or had simply instrumentalized the issue. This discrepancy between the two assessments would essentially create a stalemate between those in favor of entry and those opposed to it.<sup>225</sup>

The debate raged on for six long days, often occurring for extended periods of time at once and running until the late hours of the night and into the wee hours of the next morning. Over the course of the debate, more than 200 MPs wished to speak on the issue of British entry in the EC, with the list growing each day. After three days, the Speaker of the House had only been able to call sixty-nine of the 255 that wished to speak.<sup>226</sup> Yet despite the length and extent of the debate, few new points were brought up. Many MPs who spoke on the topic addressed

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<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 976–80.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1016–22.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1480.

concerns expressed by others, while some discussed minor points relevant to how entry would help or hurt their particular constituency—depending on their perspective.<sup>227</sup> And yet for all of the heated disagreements and great numbers of MPs desiring to speak, the two largest figures in the House of Commons—the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition—were largely silent throughout most of the debate. It was only on the last day that Harold Wilson and Edward Heath rose to speak. When given the opportunity, Wilson repeated many of the same points he had made during his White Paper debate speech—there was not full support for entry among the citizens of the UK, the agreements on sugar and New Zealand exports are not adequate, and the economic costs to Great Britain upon entering the EC (namely through CAP). Wilson contended that while his government had tried to lead Great Britain into Europe, it had been on a commitment to acceptable terms. For him and many within the Labour Party, the terms of negotiation secured by the Heath Government were simply not acceptable and would be detrimental to the UK.<sup>228</sup>

The final words, however, belonged to the Prime Minister. At 9:30 PM, Heath approached the despatch box and began his defense for membership in the EC, directly responding to the points raised by Wilson. Concerning the economic arguments presented, Heath noted that the most important economic matter was whether the UK would be in a position to influence economic decisions in the future, a position he believed was only possible within the EC.<sup>229</sup> Concerning the terms, Heath noted that they had been previously discussed at great lengths and were “better than anyone thought possible when the negotiations began,” a point that

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<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1513–44.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 2080–2106.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 2206.

was “widely recognised in Europe.”<sup>230</sup> The Prime Minister continued by stating that many had approached the debate by trying to balance the advantages and disadvantages to achieve certainty about the decision. Heath noted that such certainty was never possible in international affairs, but that the uncertainty should not hinder Britain from moving forward with its membership in the EC.<sup>231</sup> Heath concluded by putting the decision into its broader context, which is where the question truly belonged. British entry into the EC would affect far more than those living in the UK. Its impact would be felt in all of Western Europe and by millions of people across the world. It truly was a question with global implications. That Heath genuinely believed this is evidenced in the final words of the debate. “But tonight when this House endorses this Motion, many millions of people right across the world will rejoice that we have taken our rightful place in a truly United Europe.”<sup>232</sup> With those words, the question was put, and the motion passed by a vote of 356-224.<sup>233</sup> The House of Commons had voted for Britain to finally enter the European Community. The House of Lords responded similarly, with an overwhelming vote of 451-58.<sup>234</sup> The Heath Government had truly won a massive victory in achieving its main foreign policy goal.

With Parliamentary approval, the treaty of accession was formally drawn up between the two parties. On Saturday, January 22, 1972, Prime Minister Edward Heath, accompanied by Sir Alec Douglas-Home, Lord Rippon, former Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, and others, arrived at the Palais d’Egmont in Brussels, where they formally signed the treaties of accession. This was, in many ways, the culmination of a long process toward European integration. This is

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<sup>230</sup> Ibid., col. 2207.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid.col. 2208–09.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid., col. 2212.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid.

<sup>234</sup> Heath, 380.

evidenced through the attendance of two long-time proponents of European unity—former Belgian Prime Minister Paul-Henri Spaak and the architect of European unity, Jean Monnet.<sup>235</sup> For all those involved in the British treaty signing, the day represented a major step forward, but as Heath and his team were well aware, there still remained one final hurdle to jump before the UK was firmly situated within the EC—the ratification of the accession bill.

Opposition within the House of Commons had previously tried to stall the signing of the treaty by introducing a resolution in Parliament on January 20, 1972 that would force the government to produce a copy of the treaty for Parliament to approve before it was signed.<sup>236</sup> The government quickly pointed out that such action was impossible since no treaty can be produced as a binding agreement until it has been signed and given legal authority. Forced to acknowledge the legality of the government’s position, a vote of Parliament acknowledged that the accession treaty would have to be distributed to the House of Commons immediately after its signing for final approval.<sup>237</sup> In light of the mandate to immediately produce the treaty, Lord Rippon informed the House on January 24 that the bill would be printed the following day.<sup>238</sup>

The European Communities Bill (ECB) was a fairly remarkable piece of legislation. Harold Wilson and others in the Labour Party had expected a massive bill that would be easily stalled, thus preventing it from being voted upon; such was not to be the case. The final ECB was a thirty-seven page document that outlined the provisions of the treaty itself and the changes to British law that were necessary to bring the UK into accordance with the Community’s statutes. The bill authorized the House to pass legislation necessary to implement Community policies

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<sup>235</sup> Heath, 381–82.

<sup>236</sup> *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 5th ser., vol. 829 (1971–72), col. 678 (United Kingdom).

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 800–09.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 939–40.

that both directly and indirectly affected internal operations of the UK; specified that “Community law will be superior to other law in this country;” and outlined the specific changes to British law that must be made to fulfill existing Community regulations and policies.<sup>239</sup> The bill, which was approved by the cabinet on January 17, 1972, was introduced in the House of Commons and read for the first of its three times on January 25.<sup>240</sup>

Of the three required readings of the ECB, the second reading was by far of the most importance for the fate of the bill. It was during the second reading, which lasted from February 15-17, that the bill came closest to defeat.<sup>241</sup> Most of the contention during the second reading debate was merely a reiteration of issues discussed in the accession debate. In fact, Lord Rippon responded to the objections raised to the bill by Labour MP Peter Shore by asking, “Does not the right hon. Gentleman realise that all his speech so far is a reiteration of what some other right hon. and hon. Members opposite said during the debate which ended on 28<sup>th</sup> October?”<sup>242</sup> Yet for others, such as Harold Wilson, the primary concern was not the terms of the agreement that had since been debated, but rather the political implications for the UK. Wilson was concerned about what the ECB would do to the political integrity of Great Britain. The brevity of the bill angered him, since he felt such a short bill failed to provide the adequate legislative review needed to enact such sweeping changes to British law. Similarly, he felt that the ability of the Community to change its statutes—and thus change British statutes and laws because of the primacy clause—was a complete surrender of British sovereignty and against all standards of British legislative

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<sup>239</sup> “Cabinet Memorandum: European Communities Bill,” Geoffrey Rippon, January 17, 1972, *The Cabinet Papers, 1915–1984*, The National Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, United Kingdom.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>241</sup> Heath, 383.

<sup>242</sup> *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 5th ser., vol. 831 (1971–72), col. 294 (United Kingdom).

procedure.<sup>243</sup> The issue of sovereignty continued to loom large. When placed within a broader context of where Great Britain stands in the world, then a loss of sovereignty signals that Britain will never be able to independently stand on its own as a world power. These concerns over the surrender of sovereignty, which had been a touchstone of opposition to EC membership from the beginning, had not dissipated because Britain had agreed in principle to join the rest of Europe.

Yet such opposition was not to go without comment from the government; the Prime Minister directly responded to the statements made by Wilson. Concerning the question of sovereignty—which was the essential question of the opposition and was at the heart of Wilson’s claims about the unconstitutionality of the ECB—Heath noted that everyone involved in the debate over European policy had been aware that sovereignty was the question at hand from the very beginning of the process. Joining Europe meant necessarily ceding some of the traditional sovereignty of the state, and in particular changing the way the House of Commons operated.<sup>244</sup> It is this point that bears emphasizing. For Heath, the question of sovereignty was not one to be overly concerned with, although those in his own party who opposed membership viewed the loss of sovereignty as the main reason for such opposition.<sup>245</sup> Heath, Rippon, and other government officials saw sovereignty as the ability to exercise choice and assert one’s opinions. Outside of Europe, those abilities were severely limited.<sup>246</sup> The special relationship with the United States was such that the British could not exercise choice freely when American opinion differed, and its position outside of Europe limited it from making choices of any significance at the continental level.<sup>247</sup> When placed within such a context, the question of sovereignty was not

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<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 639–47.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 743–44.

<sup>245</sup> *Lord*, 102.

<sup>246</sup> *Lord*, 37.

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*

gravely important. For Heath, the challenge moving forward was not to prevent a minor loss of state power but to instead adapt to the changes and use the power of the British government to influence actions not just in Britain, but also in Europe as a whole.<sup>248</sup> This adaptation of sovereignty to making choices that had greater significance placed British sovereignty on a larger, regional—and even global—stage. As Niklas Rossbach argues, that renewed global prominence, after all, was what had always motivated Heath’s emphasis on British entry in the EEC.<sup>249</sup> Yet, Heath knew that despite his defense of the ECB and his response to the question of sovereignty and global prominence, the opposition remained strong. The prime minister thus ended his speech with a threat to dissolve parliament and call for new elections if the House failed to approve the second reading of the bill, whose substance it had already approved the previous October. With Heath’s words fresh in their minds, the house immediately voted to approve the second reading by the slimmest majority of any previous vote concerning British membership in the EC—309-301.<sup>250</sup>

Following the second reading the bill entered the committee stage, where it spent several months. During the committee process, some 200 amendments were considered to the bill, reflecting the opposition within the House. Despite the sheer volume of amendments considered, none of them passed. The ECB eventually made it out of the committee stage after 178 hours of debate. The third and final reading of the bill happened on July 13, 1972. After six hours of debate, Lord Rippon closed with a few words of Lord Salisbury from 1888. “We belong to a great community of nations and we have no right to shrink from the duties which the interests of the Community impose upon us. . . We are part of the Community of Europe and we must do our

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<sup>248</sup> *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 5th ser., vol. 831 (1971–72), col. 744.

<sup>249</sup> Rossbach, 21–23.

<sup>250</sup> *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 5th ser., vol. 831 (1971–72), col. 752–54.



duty as such.”<sup>251</sup> With these words, and a challenge to “walk tall into Europe on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1973,” the question was put and the House of Commons approved the third reading and passed the European Communities Bill by a vote of 301-284.<sup>252</sup> Having been approved by Parliament, the queen gave royal assent to the Bill on October 17, 1972.<sup>253</sup> The matter was finally put to rest; the United Kingdom would become a full member of the European Community on January 1, 1973.

The British efforts to join the European Community were far from smooth. The process had begun in 1961 and only concluded in 1972. The third, and final, attempt alone had been an excruciatingly difficult process. The way was made easier by some political changes in Europe, but the process of entry required sacrificing the special relationship to a large degree and sparked intense debate at home. Parliament spent some forty-nine days from 1971–72 discussing the question of entry into the EC, representing more than 300 hours of debate.<sup>254</sup> The debates in Parliament illustrated just how important the issue of Britain’s place within the world truly was to those within the UK. The question was not just a matter of entering Europe, but how Britain would move forward into a place of prominence. For Heath and the Conservatives, that future was as a part of Europe; for Wilson and the Labour Party, that future could not be achieved by sacrificing British sovereignty. These questions were inevitably tied together, particularly in the mind of Heath, who believed that sacrificing sovereignty was not necessarily a bad thing if it meant gaining increased power to act. In the end, Heath’s vision for Great Britain as a part of Europe won out. Britain’s new role in the world had been decided. No longer were the British

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<sup>251</sup> *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 5th ser., vol. 840 (1971–72), col. 1984 (United Kingdom).

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>253</sup> Heath, 386.

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*, 386–87.

trying to wear multiple hats in the international arena by catering to the US, Commonwealth, and Europe; they were clearly situating themselves within Europe, looking forward to a bright new future and a return to global prominence.<sup>255</sup> Britain had made its move, and only time would tell what that move meant for international relations.

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<sup>255</sup> “National Intelligence Estimate 20-1-69,” December 4, 1969, in *FRUS, 1969–1976: Western Europe; NATO*, 80.

## Chapter 5

### “The Crucial Year:” Full Entry and the Year of Europe

In his 2009 book *Kissinger*, historian Alistair Horne dubbed 1973 “the crucial year.”<sup>256</sup> As Horne observed, “Any which way you looked at it, by any criterion—and this was not peculiarly related to Henry Kissinger’s role in it—1973 was not an ordinary year.”<sup>257</sup> Andreas Killen made a similar argument for the significance of 1973 in his book *1973 Nervous Breakdown: Watergate, Warhol, and the Birth of Post-Sixties America*. For Killen, what separated 1973 from the other years of the decade were Watergate, an American defeat in Vietnam, and a collapsing economy; 1973 was pivotal for the way it changed American culture more than anything else.<sup>258</sup> What Horne understands about 1973 that Killen missed, however, is that 1973 was crucial not just because of how American social and political culture was changed, but because of how American foreign policy was changed. When 1973 began, the Nixon administration was not yet plagued by investigations on Watergate; other issues remained on the forefront that concerned the president and his chief foreign policy advisor.<sup>259</sup> They had made great progress in 1972, and having been reelected in a landslide, the Nixon team was now ready to “continue progress on those fronts while turning to issues that needed more attention,” notably including relations with Europe.<sup>260</sup> The foreign policy of the first administration had made great strides, but they had come with heavy costs. As has already been shown, relations with Europe

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<sup>256</sup> Alistair Horne, *Kissinger: 1973, The Crucial Year* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009).

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>258</sup> Andreas Killen, *1973 Nervous Breakdown: Watergate, Warhol, and the Birth of Post-Sixties America* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2006), 2.

<sup>259</sup> Horne, 5.

<sup>260</sup> Winston Lord, quoted in Horne, 4.

were, at best, strained and deteriorating by 1973. As Nixon observed in his 1973 Foreign Policy Report to Congress, “European unity which we had always encouraged, was raising new issues in Atlantic relations.”<sup>261</sup> Everyone in the administration agreed; something needed to be done to repair transatlantic relations.

While the United States was busily trying to figure out how to repair its strained relations with Europe, the Europeans were adapting to the new realities of an expanded Community. The EC had grown from six to nine, and with that new challenges emerged. The more unified Europe was becoming more important as an entity of its own. The traditional relationship with the United States now took on greater significance as the economic and political power of an integrated Europe leveled the playing field between the two to the greatest degree since the end of World War II. These new challenges and politics of community expansion acutely affected the United Kingdom. They created a new framework through which the British would have to act in foreign policy; navigating the delicate balance of community membership and the special relationship would be no easy task under the best of circumstances. American efforts to improve relations with Europe would only further complicate matters. By December 1972, the Foreign and Commonwealth office had concluded, “1973 is going to be a busy and difficult year for US/Europe relations in all their aspects.”<sup>262</sup> If the special relationship was going to survive what had already become a perilous situation, 1973 would have to see an end to deteriorating relations. With both the United States and Europe trying to figure out how to move forward in

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<sup>261</sup> Richard M. Nixon, *Foreign Policy for the 1970s*, May 3, 1973.

<sup>262</sup> “Letter: Overton to Graham,” December 15, 1972, in Keith Hamilton and Gillian Bennett edited, *The Year of Europe: America, Europe and the Energy Crisis, 1972-1974*, Vol. 4, Documents on British Policy Overseas 3, (London: Routledge, 2006), CD-Rom. (Hereafter referred to as DBPO 3, Vol. 4)

their relations with the other, 1973 was bound to bring about significant changes and new policies. Horne was correct; 1973 was most certainly “not an ordinary year.”

On January 1, 1973, Britain formally became a full member of the European Community. The final entry of the UK into the EC was marked with great celebration. For Heath, this was “a wonderful new beginning and a tremendous opportunity for the British people.”<sup>263</sup> To commemorate the cultural significance of British entry as well as the political significance, Heath organized a three-day event featuring a series of performances by actors, poets, and musicians from the UK and Europe, which he entitled “Fanfare for Europe.”<sup>264</sup> Yet, the public fanfare and celebration was merely one portrayal of what British membership in the EC meant. Privately, the government had a new challenge ahead of them. British officials had “to learn to live as members, not as applicants for membership.”<sup>265</sup> This task would be easier said than done. Heath instructed each of his cabinet departments to familiarize themselves with the procedures and policies of the EC, and called upon the cabinet members to set the objectives of their given departments and figure out how to make those objectives work in the complexities of community membership.<sup>266</sup> Beyond the organizational challenges of adapting to membership, “living as members” also meant making changes to foreign policy. As early as mid-December 1972, Heath had expressed concern over speaking to the United States individually about issues where the Community had an express policy. He believed that the only way to ensure the success of an equal relationship between the US and EC was to maintain a united front on European policies, namely in the areas of trade and the international monetary system.<sup>267</sup> Clearly, it would be

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<sup>263</sup> Heath, 394.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*, 394–95.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*, 393.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>267</sup> “Letter: RT Armstrong to Acland,” December 12, 1972, in DBPO 3, Vol. 4.

necessary to alter the existing approach to foreign relations. Speaking freely about any and all issues would no longer be the course of action. These challenges of adapting to new policies at home and abroad would soon come to the forefront.

Changing approaches to foreign policy were not unique to Great Britain; the Nixon administration was ready to embark upon a change of its own. In a 1972 briefing by the State Department, the Secretary's office informed President Nixon, "To carry out US objectives we must get Europe's attention. This might well require a presidential initiative."<sup>268</sup> A presidential initiative is exactly what Nixon and Kissinger had in mind. 1973 was to be the "Year of Europe." The phrase "Year of Europe" began to emerge in American political rhetoric as early as September 1972 to describe American policy aims towards Europe.<sup>269</sup> Yet despite its usage late in 1972, it would not be until early 1973 that any real steps were taken toward implementation of the Year of Europe. The official opening of the Year of Europe occurred at the end of January when Heath made an official visit to Washington to meet with the president. During that meeting, Nixon and Kissinger took advantage of their time with Heath to float the idea of a Year of Europe, or, as Andrew Scott observes, to "test the water without stirring the ocean."<sup>270</sup> Over the course of Heath's visit, the two American statesmen discussed the suspicion and resentment felt in the US toward the EC and expressed hope that a solution could be achieved through mutual cooperation of the two longtime allies.<sup>271</sup> This hope for improved Atlantic relations led by a coordinated Anglo-American cooperation was a calculated move. Kissinger later recalled: "That we should choose Britain for the first of these consultations was natural; it was the essence

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<sup>268</sup> Briefing Book, from Executive Secretariat of the Department of State, c.1972, The European Community, Briefing Books, 1958–1976, RG 59, National Archives.

<sup>269</sup> "Letter: BL Crowe to Archer," March 12, 1973, in DBPO 3, Vol. 4.

<sup>270</sup> Scott, 150.

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*, 149–50.

of what was still called the ‘special relationship.’ For generations successive administrations had synchronized their moves with London, especially over the Atlantic Alliance.”<sup>272</sup> Nixon and Kissinger felt that the special relationship was still an important part of American-European relations. Positive relations with Europe would only be successful if the United States continued to have a uniquely close ally within Europe. Unfortunately for the American hopes, Heath did not share their feelings. He “preferred a leading position in Europe to an honored advisory role in Washington, and he did not consider the two functions compatible.”<sup>273</sup> Given his desire to distance himself from the United States, it should come as no surprise that he was hesitant to accept the American vision of a revived Atlantic Alliance. Instead, the British increasingly felt deeply skeptical toward the success of an overarching plan to resolve the existing transatlantic issues.<sup>274</sup> The United States had tested the waters with its closest ally and had found them to be cool.

Despite the reserved initial response from the British, the United States decided to move forward with the Year of Europe on a grand scale. In a speech to the Associated Press on April 23, 1973, Henry Kissinger catapulted the Year of Europe into the global spotlight. That address not only defined the administration’s transatlantic approach, but also formally cemented the phrase in the vocabulary of American foreign policy. In that speech, Kissinger announced that a new era had emerged in European-American relations; the experiences of World War II had been replaced by a revitalized Europe and competing national identities. As a result, he advocated a renewal of the commitment between the US and its allies in the form of a new “Atlantic Charter” that would coordinate the policies of the two groups. The national security advisor went on to

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<sup>272</sup> Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 140.

<sup>273</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>274</sup> Scott, 150.

express America's continued support for European unity and its commitment to the defense of Europe.<sup>275</sup> Having received a less than desirable response to the initiative from the British, Kissinger left it to historians to discern why he and Nixon decided to move forward with the speech. Geir Lundestad and Thomas Schwartz, argue that the speech represented a genuine effort on the part of the administration to improve relations with Western Europe.<sup>276</sup> Such motives for the speech are indeed likely, since the administration had expected the initiative to be a resounding success. As Kissinger observed, "Neither Nixon nor I expected controversy. We thought we were ushering in a period of creativity in the Atlantic partnership."<sup>277</sup> Other scholars, however, such as Andrew Scott and Robert Dallek, believe that the speech was a calculated move intended to distract from the gathering storm of Watergate.<sup>278</sup> Yet regardless of which intention Kissinger had when he delivered the speech, one thing is certain—what he actually achieved with his remarks was very different than what he had hoped.

The speech had come largely as a surprise to America's allies. The European capitals had received only limited notice of Kissinger's intent to announce the Year of Europe initiative in his speech at the AP editors' luncheon, and the administration had requested the European governments give "strong public backing" for Kissinger's proposal.<sup>279</sup> As Daniel Möckli observes, the EC member states felt the initiative had been announced without adequate consultation, and came at a particularly difficult time for Europe. The Community had just

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<sup>275</sup> Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 152–53.

<sup>276</sup> Lundestad, *The United States and Western Europe*, 182–83; Thomas Schwartz, "Legacies of Détente: A Three-Way Discussion," in *Cold War History* 8.4 (October 2008): 520.

<sup>277</sup> Henry Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), 152.

<sup>278</sup> Scott, 144–45; Robert Dallek, *Nixon and Kissinger: Partners in Power* (New York: Harper Collins, 2006), 474–76.

<sup>279</sup> Daniel Möckli, "Asserting Europe's Distinct Identity: The EC Nine and Kissinger's Year of Europe," in Thomas Schwartz and Matthias Schulz edited, *The Strained Alliance: U.S.-European Relations from Nixon to Carter* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 197.



finished its first round of expansion and had recently increased its efforts to implement the economic and monetary union, as well as to foster enhanced European political cooperation.<sup>280</sup> Thus, the EC was preoccupied with its own affairs, limiting its ability to fully address Kissinger's proposals. Furthermore, the timing problem was further exacerbated by developments at home. Ehrlichman and Haldeman, Nixon's two top aides, resigned just a week later in the midst of the quickly developing Watergate scandal.<sup>281</sup> Watergate would continue to plague the success of the Year of Europe, as even those in Europe who were sympathetic to the American initiative were less likely to reach out to the beleaguered and scandal-plagued Nixon administration.<sup>282</sup> The timing of Kissinger's speech could not have been worse.

Poor timing was the least of Kissinger's worries, however. In his speech, he had made some unfortunate statements for the future of American-European relations. The first of those statements concerned the outlook of the two powers. In what he felt was a good formulation of the different perspectives of the US and Europe, Kissinger stated, "The United States has global interests and responsibilities. Our European allies have regional interests. These are not necessarily in conflict, but in the new era neither are they necessarily identical."<sup>283</sup> The implications of Kissinger's statement were clear; he had relegated Europe to the status of a regional power, in contrast to the global power of the United States. Such an approach to Europe's place within the world is only logical, however. As was discussed in Chapter Two, one of the fundamental differences between the United States and Great Britain—and Western Europe more broadly—was that the US saw the geopolitical landscape transitioning from a bipolar to a tripolar world, while the UK and the rest of the continent saw the development of a

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<sup>280</sup> Ibid., 198.

<sup>281</sup> Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 153.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid., 154.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid., 153.

multipolar world. Such a statement was sure to attract criticism from across the Atlantic. The second misstep Kissinger made in the minds of the European heads of government was concerning support for European integration. In his speech, Kissinger stated that the United States did not view European unity as an end in itself, and would continue to support it as “a component of a larger Atlantic partnership.”<sup>284</sup> By relegating European unity to the role of another aspect of transatlantic relations, Kissinger confirmed what many Europeans had long known—the United States did not truly support European unity because it threatened both the existing order of the transatlantic alliance, as well as the nature of global geopolitics.<sup>285</sup> Thus, since the Nixon administration genuinely believed that Europe’s role in the global Cold War conflict was within the Atlantic alliance while Europe saw the expanded EC and détente as opportunities to position itself as an independent global actor, it is of little surprise that Kissinger would quickly come to regret this statement.<sup>286</sup>

Initial European responses to the Year of Europe speech quickly began to emerge in the foreign offices, embassies, and capitals across Atlantic region. One of the first countries to respond was West Germany. The United States had a tense relationship with West Germany, both at the state and personal levels. Nixon and Kissinger had been wary of West German Chancellor Willie Brandt for some time because of his *Ostpolitik*. Kissinger noted that Brandt was “the European statesman whose policy made [Nixon] most uneasy and whose personality

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<sup>284</sup> Henry Kissinger, “The Year of Europe,” Address before the Annual Meeting of the Associated Press Editors at New York, April 23, 1973, *Department of State Bulletin* 68 (1973), 595.

<sup>285</sup> Fabian Hilfrich, “West Germany’s Long Year of Europe,” in Schwartz and Schulz, 241.

<sup>286</sup> Möckli, 196. (Möckli’s essay addresses the issue of conflict along the lines of competing conceptions of world power in greater detail.)

was perhaps most incompatible with his own.”<sup>287</sup> Furthermore, Nixon believed that Brandt was deliberately trying to undermine the strength of the Atlantic Alliance because of his bias against the United States.<sup>288</sup> With such uneasy relations and suspicions about the other, it is of little surprise that initial responses from West Germany were far from warm. In a telegram to the German Foreign Office, West German Ambassador to the US Berndt von Staden noted that Kissinger’s speech, while enthusiastically affirming the transatlantic alliance, fell far short of supporting European integration.<sup>289</sup> Furthermore, Staden, like others in Europe, felt that the US was now trying to apply linkage to their dealings with Western Europe by announcing such a comprehensive plan for solving the problems in transatlantic relations.. Staden went on to note the speech reflected America’s “yearnings for the situation of the 1950s and 1960s . . . when the United States possessed undisputed supremacy, when Western Europe did not appear as a competitor, was accordingly dependent, and asked for little say in the matter but instead left the leadership role to the United States without question.”<sup>290</sup> Staden’s critical appraisal of the Kissinger speech was reflective of the larger West German mentality. Just a week after the address, on May 1, Willy Brandt arrived in Washington to meet with President Nixon. In this meeting, the German chancellor took a sharp, matter-of-fact approach. He had an agenda that he was prepared to discuss, which he quickly moved through. To Kissinger, a participant in the meeting, Brandt appeared clear in his purpose—he had come to settle nothing in regard to transatlantic affairs.<sup>291</sup> The German leader argued that he felt no need to discuss all of the broad issues that Kissinger had raised in his speech—a reference to the German disdain for an

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<sup>287</sup> Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 155.

<sup>288</sup> Ibid.

<sup>289</sup> Hilfrich, 241.

<sup>290</sup> Berndt von Staden to German Foreign Office, April 26, 1973, quoted in Hilfrich, 241.

<sup>291</sup> Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 156.

American comprehensive strategy of linkage. Brandt was also careful to avoid mention of the Atlantic Charter Kissinger had proposed, an omission that the German press hailed as a success for the diplomacy of Brandt.<sup>292</sup> Yet, most significant for the future of transatlantic relations and the Year of Europe was what Brandt had to say about the future of negotiations. He informed the president that the European heads of government no longer spoke merely as representatives of their own countries but also as representatives of the EC. He stated that he was not there “as the spokesman of Europe, but definitely as a spokesman for Europe.”<sup>293</sup> The meaning was clear. Dealings with European leaders could no longer be as simple as they once were. The political implications of European integration were beginning to be felt in Washington. Ultimately, West Germany’s response to the Year of Europe speech reflected disagreement with the policy, and showed that the problems of alliance relations were not easily resolved. If any progress were to be made, it would have to happen between the two groups on the whole.

Yet the Germans were far from the only European country to view the Year of Europe with hesitation; the French were intensely skeptical of the American initiative. Within the French government, the American proposals for comprehensive reevaluation of the Atlantic Alliance were viewed as an imperial effort to subordinate Europe, block the efforts of French leadership in the EC, share the burden of European defense without sharing any of the responsibilities, and to reincorporate France into NATO.<sup>294</sup> Yet, the United States had developed a good relationship with the French president, and Nixon, Kissinger, and Pompidou all wanted to maintain the quality of their relationship. In a meeting in mid-May between Kissinger and Pompidou, the French president tackled the issue of deteriorating relations head on. He discussed some of the

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<sup>292</sup> *Ibid.*, 156–57.

<sup>293</sup> Willy Brandt to Nixon, May 1, 1973, quoted in *Ibid.*, 157.

<sup>294</sup> Möckli, 202.

concerns he had about the state of relations, particularly in regard to détente, but was much less concerned over Kissinger's statement about global and regional interests than other European leaders had been. Despite having a constructive dialogue, little more than talk came from the meeting.<sup>295</sup> Two weeks later, Nixon and Pompidou met in Reykjavik, Iceland to further discuss the Year of Europe. It was at that summit that tension would fully characterize the American-French relationship. The night before the summit began, on May 30, Kissinger discussed the matter with the now French Foreign Minister, Michel Jobert. It was during that meeting that Kissinger realized the hopes he and Nixon had brought to Reykjavik were to be dashed. Jobert raised the points that Pompidou had not discussed during his conversations with Kissinger—the true concerns the government had about the Year of Europe. The French minister also accused the United States of using the summit as a move to gain political ground in the US-Soviet competition, since a meeting with Brezhnev was scheduled for a few weeks later.<sup>296</sup> The meeting between Pompidou and Nixon would fare no better. Pompidou stated that “only the Americans could invoke a Year of Europe; For France, every year was *the* Year of Europe.”<sup>297</sup> Pompidou also flatly rejected the idea of a new Atlantic Charter and further attempted to suggest strategies for consultation that he knew the British and Germans would not support, thus stalling the American initiative.<sup>298</sup> The summit at Reykjavik ultimately ended with nothing but French refusal of every American proposal.

What of the British, though? Surely America's longtime ally with whom the Year of Europe began would be more supportive of the American overture to Europe than the other major powers had been. Initially, it appeared as if the British might in fact positively welcome

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<sup>295</sup> Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 167–170

<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.*, 173–74.

<sup>297</sup> Georges Pompidou, quoted in *Ibid.*, 178.

<sup>298</sup> *Ibid.*, 178–79.

the American initiative. The Foreign Office issued a statement in which it acknowledged that the speech was certainly important and had been meant constructively by Kissinger. They noted that Her Majesty's Government would study the issue further, and discuss it with their European allies, a move Kissinger interpreted to mean they were deferring to the French.<sup>299</sup> In formulating a course of action, Cabinet Secretary Sir Burke Trend further analyzed the speech for Heath. Trend acknowledged that while the speech presented many positives, it also made some concerning statements about the subordination of European economic interests to American political interests and increased defense spending in NATO.<sup>300</sup> Yet, Trend, a personal friend of Kissinger, recommended that Heath not rebuff the American proposal, since such actions might lead to a resurgence of American isolationism. Trend also recommended that the British only issue its support for an Atlantic Charter that was intentionally vague and broad, as it would be difficult for Europe on the whole to agree to anything specific.<sup>301</sup> Heath resented the entire approach, though. In his memoirs, he criticized the very concept of a Year of Europe. "For Henry Kissinger to announce a Year of Europe without consulting any of us was rather like my standing between the lions in Trafalgar Square and announcing that we were embarking on a year to save America!"<sup>302</sup> The discrepancy between Trend's recommendations and Heath's own disdain became apparent when Heath undertook his first effort to coordinate a response with the European allies in late-May through a meeting with Pompidou prior to the Reykjavik summit. The two statesmen determined that there was no need for a US-European summit to discuss an Atlantic Charter, and resolved to not rush into drafting any such document. Furthermore, the summit once again showed where Edward Heath's true loyalties now stood—with Europe. At

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<sup>299</sup> "Minute by Overton," April 27, 1973, in DBPO 3, Vol. 4.

<sup>300</sup> "Minute: Trend to Heath," May 2, 1973, in *Ibid.*

<sup>301</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>302</sup> Heath, 493.

many points in history, when a British prime minister spoke of Anglo-American relations and used the word “us” as Heath did recalling the Year of Europe, it would have referred to the United States and Great Britain; for Edward Heath, though, the “us” was almost always Europe. Thus after six weeks, and consultation with all of the major Atlantic players, Kissinger lacked support for a new Atlantic Charter and had received less than favorable response to the initiative on the whole. As Alistair Horne observes, “At the end of May, Kissinger’s earthshaking pronouncement on the Year of Europe had fallen a bit like the proverbial pregnant pole-vaulter.”<sup>303</sup>

With the Year of Europe quickly falling flat on its face, a result neither Kissinger nor Nixon anticipated, and with Watergate continuing to take attention away from the president’s foreign policy actions, the administration decided to take the next step. Since the Europeans had not submitted any draft of what a new Atlantic Charter might look like, Kissinger had the American version of the document drawn up; in fact, he had two different versions drafted—one long, complex State Department draft and a shorter, more contentious document prepared by his staff. When Michel Jobert arrived at San Clemente at the end of June, Kissinger gave him both drafts. Jobert refused to read them while at the meeting, but promised to read and study them, and if he found them acceptable, move the dialogue into a multilateral consultation with the EC.<sup>304</sup> A few weeks later on July 12, Kissinger made a similar opening to the Germans by meeting with German Foreign Minister Walter Scheel. In that meeting, Kissinger asked Scheel to evaluate the two drafts and turn them into a formal declaration, which Scheel agreed to do within a few weeks.<sup>305</sup> Meanwhile, the two drafts were sent to the British on July 8, but not before

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<sup>303</sup> Horne, 115.

<sup>304</sup> Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 183–85

<sup>305</sup> *Ibid.*, 185–86.

Jobert had caused added strain to the Anglo-American relationship. In early July, before the drafts were sent to the British, Jobert had inquired of the government what they thought about the American drafts. When the British denied any knowledge of them, Jobert accused them of conspiring against France with the United States and claimed that surely the US had shared the documents with their special ally, Great Britain. Since the US had not yet sent the documents, Jobert's stunt proved only to worsen already tense relations with the UK.<sup>306</sup> The situation would further deteriorate, however, when Jobert informed Kissinger on July 16 that neither draft was acceptable. After the French rejection, the German foreign minister never returned the drafts.<sup>307</sup>

Kissinger remained somewhat hopeful for a new Atlantic Charter and successful Year of Europe when the Nine gathered for a meeting in Copenhagen to discuss the American initiative on July 23—exactly three months after Kissinger's speech. During their meeting, the EC foreign ministers discussed the previous bilateral communications that had occurred between the US and individual countries and acknowledged the need for multilateral consultation in the future. Concerning a draft statement on US-European relations, the ministerial council rejected the Nixon-Kissinger plan for an approved draft by September and a final communiqué that would be released at the conclusion of an Atlantic summit when Nixon visited Europe in November.<sup>308</sup> The driving force behind these objections was Jobert and the French government. Jobert favored not acting until 1974, but in the face of objections from the British and others, he compromised and agreed to allow the community's political directors to draft a list of key principles and concerns for the ministers to consider when they met again in September.<sup>309</sup> When the draft was completed, the Danish foreign minister—the chair of the foreign ministers' council and EC

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<sup>306</sup> *Ibid.*, 187.

<sup>307</sup> *Ibid.*, 186–87.

<sup>308</sup> "Tel 1531 to Washington," Alec Douglas-Home, July 24, 1973, in DBPO 3, Vol. 4.

<sup>309</sup> *Ibid.*; Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 188.



representative—would deliver the draft statement to the US, consider the American response to the draft, and relay the American thoughts to the rest of the ministers, at which point the process would begin again.<sup>310</sup> Thus, the decisions of the EC foreign ministers appeared to “put the Year of Europe on ice for two more months.”<sup>311</sup> From Nixon and Kissinger’s perspective, the only substantial product of the meeting was delay.

The Copenhagen meeting had more severe consequences than just delay, however. Kissinger firmly believed that the European proceedings at Copenhagen could not have been more detrimental to the overall objectives of the Year of Europe. The EC ministers had turned “the European-American dialogue into an adversary proceeding.”<sup>312</sup> Laying the blame at the feet of Michel Jobert, the United States felt as if the EC had taken “refuge in procedure.”<sup>313</sup> The Europeans seemed more committed than ever to use the structure of the EC mechanisms to prevent any significant progress. Kissinger was irate over the entire situation. In a conversation with his long-time friend Sir Burke Trend, he expressed these thoughts most directly. He informed the British secretary that an antagonistic relationship was developing between the US and Europe, which would bring with it painful consequences. Furthermore, Kissinger felt that the Danish foreign minister—whose name he did not even know—was nothing more than a “messenger boy,” and that “the Europeans should not assume that the US Government would be prepared to negotiate with the Danish Foreign Minister.”<sup>314</sup> The very act of negotiating with an unknown foreign minister “was totally incompatible with the relationship which the US had had

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<sup>310</sup> Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 188.

<sup>311</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>312</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>313</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>314</sup> “Record of Meeting: Kissinger/Trend,” July 30, 1973, in DBPO 3, Vol. 4.

with the major European powers.”<sup>315</sup> The United States was deeply resentful of the changes to communication this procedural approach represented. The extent to which this affected transatlantic dialogue was evident in a letter from Edward Heath to Richard Nixon on July 25. In it, Heath informed the president that, from now on, all bilateral communication between the US and individual EC member states would be shared among the entire Community. There would no longer be confidential bilateral discussions between the US and Europe.<sup>316</sup> These challenges to communication seemed to doom everything Nixon and Kissinger had hoped to achieve. As Kissinger recalled, “Europe had responded to the Year of Europe initiative with a procedure in which those who talked with us were not empowered to negotiate while those who could have negotiated with us no longer had the authority to talk.”<sup>317</sup> When the US realized full implications of the Copenhagen meeting, it abandoned all hope for the successful conclusion of its transatlantic initiative. In his meeting with Burke Trend, Kissinger bluntly stated, “The Year of Europe is over;” any additional progress would have to come from the Europeans.<sup>318</sup>

Britain’s new membership within the EC, the Year of Europe, and the subsequent European response all had profound implications for the special relationship. Just because Heath had achieved membership in the European Community, it did not mean his foreign policy focus could change; Europe was to remain his foremost consideration. Britain had undergone a reorientation of priorities. Heath was willing to sacrifice the special relationship if it meant the UK could become a leader in Europe. As a result, the new “cornerstone of his foreign policy concept” became Anglo-French relations, not Anglo-American relations.<sup>319</sup> Heath had spent too

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<sup>315</sup> Ibid.

<sup>316</sup> Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 189.

<sup>317</sup> Ibid.

<sup>318</sup> “Record of Meeting: Kissinger/Trend.”

<sup>319</sup> Möckli, 201.

much time and effort convincing the French that the British were not an American “Trojan horse in the EC” to take any chances on the Year of Europe.<sup>320</sup> As a result, the British premier made his move toward Europe. Heath revoked Burke Trend’s authority to consult with Washington bilaterally as early as April 1973, three months before the decision at Copenhagen.<sup>321</sup> Furthermore, in August, Heath made an overture to Brandt and Pompidou to hold a tripartite summit in which the three states would formulate a common European position.<sup>322</sup> Heath kept moving closer to Europe and further away from the United States.

These British moves were not lost on the Americans. When Nixon began the Year of Europe by meeting with Heath in January, the United States felt an air of mutual cooperation existed in which the British supported the American initiatives; by July, that feeling had dissipated, as even the British were increasingly viewed as adversaries. This new spirit regarding the special relationship is best demonstrated in two communications between the US and UK in late-July: a letter from Nixon to Heath and the aforementioned meeting between Kissinger and Trend. In a response to a letter from Heath about the results of the Copenhagen meeting, Nixon implied recent events seemed to negate the January agreement between the two nations on the importance of the Year of Europe for all parties in the Atlantic alliance. Furthermore, Nixon noted that he found the current debate in Europe “disturbing” and remarked that if he had mistakenly interpreted support from the other heads of government for the Year of Europe, he was willing to wash his hands of the matter, allowing the initiative to instead be handled in “the

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<sup>320</sup> Ibid.

<sup>321</sup> Horne, 118.

<sup>322</sup> Alastair Noble, “Kissinger’s Year of Europe, Britain’s Year of Choice,” in Schwartz and Schulz, 227.

routine channels and forums” as Heath recommended.<sup>323</sup> The overall tone of Nixon’s letter was cool and slightly impersonal. There had been a marked change to the special relationship.

Kissinger’s meeting with Trend was even more pointed than Nixon’s letter to Heath. While Trend was limited in what he could say as a result of the Copenhagen meeting, Kissinger spoke freely and directly. The results of the Copenhagen meeting and the procedure adopted had exposed fundamental problems in the nature of the special relationship as it stood. Kissinger, like Nixon, reiterated that the US had embarked upon the Year of Europe with the understanding that the British would support the initiative throughout. Instead, they found that the British had supported a “procedure [that] was incompatible with the sort of relationship the US had had with Britain in the past, as well as insulting—and the US Government had not even been consulted about the procedure.”<sup>324</sup> Kissinger continued by noting that conversations with the British had never led the United States to conclude that Great Britain could not act without first consulting its allies. If prior consultation was needed, and Britain had informed the Americans of that, a change in British policy after speaking with the other eight members of the EC would have been acceptable to the United States. Instead, Kissinger believed that the British had been talking to him while making deals with the Europeans and not informing the US that any such inter-European communications were even going on. No sharing of thoughts had occurred, and “the US resented this, especially from the British.”<sup>325</sup> Kissinger believed the entire situation was unique. He informed Trend that “a new development in US relations with Britain” had occurred, in that “never before had there been failure at the beginning of a major initiative to keep each

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<sup>323</sup> “Tel 1567 to Washington,” July 28, 1973, in DBPO 3, Vol. 4.

<sup>324</sup> “Record of Meeting: Kissinger/Trend.”

<sup>325</sup> Ibid.

other informed of their thinking.”<sup>326</sup> Ultimately, the biggest issue for Kissinger was not that the British had taken a European view, but that they had refused to talk to the US about major substantive policies until they had first consulted Europe. This marked a significant change, and would “have major consequences for bilateral relations between the US and UK,” since “the US had never treated Britain as just another country.”<sup>327</sup> Kissinger’s assessment of the special relationship was despairing. That the British could have devised policies without any consultation seemed inconceivable to Kissinger if the special relationship were still intact; instead, he felt that London’s policies had led to the relationship “hardly [being] ‘special’ any longer.”<sup>328</sup> Perhaps Alistair Horne has best summarized the state of the special relationship by 1973, writing that British policies, “had made a nonsense of the ‘special relationship’ which leaders going back to Churchill and Roosevelt, Kennedy and Macmillan had worked so hard to enshrine.”<sup>329</sup>

The future of the Year of Europe was despairing. In August, the British again acted without consulting the US by submitting British drafts of an Atlantic Charter to NATO, further illustrating the divide between Europe and the United States and the deterioration of the special relationship.<sup>330</sup> When the Nine finally met again in September 1973, they approved portions of a draft text written by Jobert, that were then sent to the US, which now-Secretary of State Kissinger regarded as nothing more than a copy of the EC declarations of 1972.<sup>331</sup>

When the Yom Kippur War of 1973 broke out, tension further increased between the United States and Europe, as EC members resisted American efforts to broker a UN ceasefire

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<sup>326</sup> Ibid.

<sup>327</sup> Ibid.

<sup>328</sup> Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 189.

<sup>329</sup> Horne, 118.

<sup>330</sup> Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 192.

<sup>331</sup> Möckli, 207.

agreement. Aaron Spelling argues that the British, in particular, found itself in opposition for good reasons—namely its dependence on Arab oil.<sup>332</sup> As relations between the allies spiraled further downward, 1973 ended without a declaration on Atlantic relations, but rather with the “Declaration on European Identity,” which appeared to the US a direct challenge to everything Kissinger had hoped to achieve in 1973. In response, Kissinger increased the direct confrontation of French efforts to steer the Nine away from the US with a counterproposal of his own.<sup>333</sup> Yet as the oil crisis waged on, economic conditions worsened, and a meeting of the Nine in Copenhagen in late December failed to achieve any substantive progress on US-EC relations, the other eight states began to grow weary of French leadership. Ultimately, as Daniel Möckli, observes, “the political identity of the Nine was not strong enough to weather the double challenge of eroding economic solidarity and transatlantic confrontation.”<sup>334</sup> Eventually, these economic and political factors would combine with governmental changes in Britain, France, and Germany to yield an Atlantic Charter in June 1974, but it was a charter far less significant than what Kissinger had hoped for. While many of the goals were eventually realized, the Year of Europe had failed, and had caused more conflict and disagreement than ever imagined.

One must ask, however, what caused this failure? To Kissinger, the Year of Europe “had been drained of its moral and psychological significance by a year of bickering.”<sup>335</sup> Europe’s negative response and concerted efforts to stall the American initiative through procedural mechanisms (which Kissinger genuinely believed was orchestrated by Michel Jobert) had made the failure inevitable by late-1973. Trouble for the Year of Europe was then further compounded

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<sup>332</sup> Alex Spelling, "Recrimination and Reconciliation: Anglo-American Relations and the Yom Kippur War," in *Cold War History* 13:4 (November 2013): 492–95.

<sup>333</sup> *Ibid.*, 210–13.

<sup>334</sup> *Ibid.*, 213.

<sup>335</sup> Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 193.

by the Middle East conflict in the Yom Kippur War, moves toward détente with the Soviet Union, and Watergate. The combination of challenges meant that the attempt for renewing transatlantic relations in 1973 was doomed.<sup>336</sup> Yet, there was blame to be shared. As Andrew Scott observes, Kissinger was as much to blame for the initiative's failure as the Europeans, if not more so. Kissinger had undertaken a major overhaul of transatlantic relations from within the office of national security advisor—a move he himself regarded as challenging—without ever consulting the foreign policy experts in the State Department and only providing scant plans to the allies in Europe.<sup>337</sup> Furthermore, he failed to consider the full ramifications of the effort he had undertaken and what that meant for a newly united Europe. By continuing to advocate a bilateral approach to discussing issues that the Europeans perceived to be multilateral in scope, Kissinger inadvertently pushed Europe closer together, rather than pulling them closer to the United States.<sup>338</sup> Another player, however, must be considered in the failure of the Year of Europe—Edward Heath. Heath's firm resolve to join the EC led him to disregard and cast aside the special relationship. With America out, and Europe in, Heath attempted to further relations with Europe throughout 1973 by appealing to Britain's Europeanism. Yet, as Katherine Hynes argues, he failed to gain the support of his fellow European leaders and in doing so failed to achieve his foreign policy goals while isolating his closest ally. By situating himself so clearly within Europe and disregarding the special relationship, Heath left the United States without support for the Year of Europe within the EC.<sup>339</sup> Thus, European skepticism toward the American initiative, Kissinger's own missteps in handling the initiative, and Edward Heath's

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<sup>336</sup> *Ibid.*, 729–34.

<sup>337</sup> Scott, 162–63.

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>339</sup> Catherine Hynes, *The Year That Never Was: Heath, and the Year of Europe* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2009), 241.

failed move toward Europe all seemed to have doomed the Year of Europe from the start. In Kissinger's own words, the Year of Europe ultimately became "the year that never was."<sup>340</sup>

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<sup>340</sup> Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 192.



## **Conclusion**

### **The Special Relationship by 1974**

The years 1969–1973 were a turbulent period for American relations with Europe, and most specially the United Kingdom. As new questions concerning worldviews, geopolitical power and influence, European unity, and alliance relations emerged, there was bound to be an inevitable change in the way foreign policy was conducted. That change is clearly seen in the way European integration affected the special relationship. As the Nixon administration became increasingly cautious of a united Europe and the pro-European Heath continually moved closer to the continent, the special relationship changed in profound ways. The personal closeness that once characterized the interactions between American presidents and British prime ministers was replaced with a marked coolness and suspicion. The primacy that the special relationship was accorded in Britain was subjugated to closeness with Europe first and foremost. Consultation between the two states on all major policies, something that had long been an unquestioned practice, suddenly yielded to multiple channels of private communications that were not shared with each other. Kissinger eventually came to believe that the special relationship was “hardly special” anymore.

Yet for all of the strain placed on the relationship, it is important to note that it was not dead. Cooperation never ceased between the United States and Great Britain, particularly in areas of defense and nuclear security. Similarly, that such open and frank communications—like the one between Kissinger and Trend that seemed so critical of the special relationship—continued to exist is proof that the United States still regarded Great Britain as its principal ally. The United States could not have spoken so freely and openly with many of its allies without

fear of adverse effects. Furthermore, the realities of the international situation by 1974 would spur the alliance and the special relationship into what Henry Kissinger called “one of the best periods of Atlantic cooperation in decades.”<sup>341</sup> Divisions within Europe concerning the feasibility of European unity in the face of energy shortages, economic problems, and political deadlock left the British looking to renew its ties with the United States, having seen that a Europe led by France was not necessarily the best way forward. When confronted with what seemed like selfish ambition on the part of the French and the transatlantic connection stressed by the United States, the British went against the French.<sup>342</sup> Furthermore, relations took another positive turn in February 1974 when Harold Wilson and the Labour party returned to power in the general elections. With Wilson came the “Euro-sceptic and Washington friendly” Foreign Minister James Callaghan, who began to once again reach out to the United States to revive the special relationship.<sup>343</sup> The relationship that had once seemed doomed now was by 1974 headed for revitalization. Had the relationship been completely dead, such revitalization would not have occurred.

That the special relationship was improving by 1974, however, shows that it had in fact reached a dangerous state. Ultimately, one must ask what caused this deterioration in the first place. Who was to blame for the near end of the special relationship? Historians have long attempted to answer this question. For Niklas Roszbach, the answer to who was responsible for the demise is Henry Kissinger. Roszbach argues that Kissinger gradually took control of foreign policy power, and in doing so, began to use domestic distractions, such as Watergate, to advance policies that were fundamentally at odds with British policy, which he contends were aligned

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<sup>341</sup> Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 934.

<sup>342</sup> Scott, 196–200

<sup>343</sup> Noble, 235.

closely to the policies of President Nixon himself.<sup>344</sup> Others suggest that it was not Kissinger or Nixon, however, but the British who were to blame. Katherine Hynes' arguments about Heath's role in the Year of Europe failure extend to her analysis of the entire period. Over the course of political career, Heath had been converted to a full belief in the primacy of Europe. She argues that Heath's failure to achieve his foreign policy goals isolated his closest ally. At the end of the day, Heath was to blame because even when the tactical purposes of European unity failed, Heath continued his pro-European orientation. Ultimately, Hynes concludes that, "Heath's single-handed efforts to reorient British foreign policy amounted to nothing more than a curious anomaly in post-war history."<sup>345</sup> Yet still others reject the claim that it was personality or individual driven. Andrew Scott observes, "the course and shape of relations between London and Washington were determined overwhelmingly by the prevailing patterns of power, both nationally and globally."<sup>346</sup> For Scott, the decline of the special relationship was not the result of either individual, but rather the international political situation with which each country found itself grappling. As Piers Ludlow observes:

When historians endeavour to understand why transatlantic relations became that much more turbulent during the Nixon/Kissinger period than they had been under Johnson, they should seek their answer not simply in the changed attitudes of the American government (vital though these undoubtedly were) but also in a radically different set of conditions in Western Europe. Nixon and his main foreign policy advisor were not just the architects of a new American policy towards Western Europe; they were also compelled to react to an alteration in Western Europe's position, leadership and approach to the Cold War.<sup>347</sup>

Thus, there are three major alternative interpretations of what brought about the decline of the special relationship.

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<sup>344</sup> Rossbach, 123, 158–59.

<sup>345</sup> Hynes, 241.

<sup>346</sup> Scott, 203.

<sup>347</sup> Ludlow, 55.

The question to be answered, however, is which interpretation is correct. The answer is all of them. What these three interpretations fail to see is the degree to which the special relationship declined in a complex arena. To narrow down the decline to a single notable cause is to deny the complexity of the situation. Furthermore, in an attempt to study the issue of Anglo-American relations during this period in a broad light, these analyses fail to see the role European integration played within the decline. European integration is the vehicle that brought all of these factors together. The international climate was such that Nixon, Kissinger, and Heath all began to reevaluate their previous positions. That meant reassessing European unity. When the geopolitical climate led the Nixon administration to conclude unity was a threat, the intricacies of Kissinger and his style of diplomacy emerged within the foreign policy perspective. As Heath moved toward Europe out of what he perceived to be necessity, his stance on European integration inevitably alienated him from the United States. No other single foreign policy issue affecting the United States and Europe affected the special relationship in the way that European integration did, for in many ways, it was a totalizing change. Thus the effect of European integration on the special relationship was to expose the complex geopolitical and personal relationships of the early 1970s in such a way as to nearly destroy the longstanding closeness of the United States and Great Britain.

For all of this talk of decline, one must ask what can be learned from the special relationship and the changes seen from 1973 to 1974; several important points emerge that will aid in one's understanding of American relations with its allies. As Barbara Keys argues in her article "Henry Kissinger: The Emotional Statesman," when dealing with international relations,

particularly during the Nixon-Kissinger years, personalities matter.<sup>348</sup> Kissinger described Nixon's relationship to Heath as "that of a jilted lover who has been told that friendship is possible, but who remembers the rejection rather than being inspired by the prospect."<sup>349</sup> He went on to state that despite having a personal affinity for Heath, he was "the most indifferent [British political leader] to the American connection and perhaps even Americans individually," as well as the "most difficult British head of government we encountered."<sup>350</sup> Nixon and Kissinger, of course, were certainly unique personalities as well. Kissinger's style of diplomacy was partially responsible for the failure of the year of Europe, while it was Nixon's paranoia and secrecy that led to Watergate, ultimately ending his presidency prematurely. The combination of Heath and Nixon proved to yield a personality conflict that hindered relations. That personalities were involved in the quality of relations is evidence in that relations began to improve when Wilson was elected in February.<sup>351</sup> The same can be said of other relationships between America and its allies. Those with whom leaders have closer personal relations tend to be closer allies.<sup>352</sup>

Even more significantly than personality, however, is the understanding that America's relations with its allies are affected by the individual states' perceptions of their interests and broader geopolitical circumstances. The biggest reason the special relationship suffered and nearly collapsed in the years 1969—1973 was because both the United States and Great Britain

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<sup>348</sup> Barbara Keys, "Henry Kissinger: The Emotional Statesman," in *Diplomatic History* 35, no. 4 (September 2011): 609.

<sup>349</sup> Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 141.

<sup>350</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>351</sup> Scott, 198–99.

<sup>352</sup> Keys, "Henry Kissinger," 593–94. Barbara Keys' main case study in "Henry Kissinger: The Emotional Statesman" is that the close personal relationship between Kissinger and Anatoly Dobrynin was significant to the development of closer relations with the Soviet Union. While the extent to which emotional connection played a role in development of such relationships is arguable, Keys does show that personal relationships at least have bearing on such issues.

found themselves in situations beyond their control. In the United States, nuclear parity with the Soviet Union, the widely unpopular war in Vietnam, and economic challenges to the dollar (coupled with a more powerful European economy) combined to bring about change in American policies. No longer was a strong, economically and politically unified Europe advantageous for America. What had long been seen as a small price to pay for the greater good was now viewed as a large sacrifice for a change that threatened to undermine America's very foundations in the Cold War contest. Meanwhile, economic struggles, commonwealth disputes, and political unrest at home forced the United Kingdom to reevaluate the path toward renewed international significance. In the search for global power, British leaders (both Labour and Conservative) realized that the best option for advancing Britain's geopolitical interests was as a part of Europe, rather than as America's most trusted ally. Thus, in many regards the domestic and international political climates were such that both the United States and Great Britain felt that they must act to preserve what they perceived to be their long-term interests, even if that meant alienating allies.<sup>353</sup> This remains one of the fundamental tenets of American foreign policy and its handling of its relations with its allies.

Thus, upon a final analysis, European integration had a profound impact on the special relationship. Changes within Europe occurred in a broader context of global change. As a result, American support for European unity decreased at the same time that British support increased. With the two states moving in opposite directions, it was only logical that relations would be negatively affected. These changes were further compounded by the emergence of some of the

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<sup>353</sup> The key to this point is perceived interests. At various times in American history, those interests have been perceived differently. For instance, the doctrine of containment and the domino theory were often used during the Cold War to justify American intervention in the Third World along the grounds of America's perceived interests. The case of the War in Iraq and the "coalition of the willing" illustrates the extent to which America will alienate allies for the pursuit of what it perceives to be American interests.

most unique and complex personalities to ever lead the United States and Great Britain. When European integration brought geopolitics and personality together in a totalizing question of the future of each state in the global Cold War—essentially calling into question both domestic and foreign policy actions of the two states—Anglo-American relations rapidly deteriorated. When interpreted in this light and placed within a broader context, the period 1969–1973 is no longer an insignificant period. While certainly one of the lowest moments in the history of the special relationship, and often overshadowed by the relationships between Kennedy-Macmillan and Reagan-Thatcher, the Heath-Nixon relationship reveals much about the nature of the special relationship, and America’s relations with its allies more broadly. To simply dismiss the period under investigation as a low, insignificant moment in the history of Anglo-American relations is to miss a broader paradigm of American foreign policy.

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