

THE LION'S REDEMPTION: DECOLONIZATION, AND THE EVOLUTION
OF BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY IN THE DECADE FOLLOWING THE SUEZ
CRISIS

by

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ABSTRACT

WILLIAM KUNZ. The Lion's Redemption: Harold Macmillan, Decolonization and the Evolution of British Foreign Policy in the Decade Following the Suez Crisis. (Under the direction of Dr. DAVID JOHNSON)

While Britain's withdrawal from Empire has always been seen as a negative, this thesis focuses on the successes in British foreign policy in the post Suez Crisis of 1956 era. By examining how Britain's foreign policy in the Middle East and Africa evolved during the late 1950s and into the 1960s this thesis argues that this period should be honored, not seen as a defeat. By relying on primary sources, this thesis demonstrates that Harold Macmillan's foreign policy pivot ensured that Britain made the best policy decisions available and ensuring a lasting influence in the Middle East and Africa.

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DEDICATION

To H.M. and C.W.

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INTRODUCTION

The British Empire was the dominant global power for centuries prior to the 1956 Suez Crisis. George Macartney famously described Great Britain as "this vast empire on which the sun never sets, and whose bounds nature has not yet ascertained."¹ The two World Wars set in motion the destruction of the British Empire, both because of the loss of life and treasure in the fight against Germany and Japan and because the defeats suffered by Britain shattered the myth of British invincibility. Yet the "official mind," the upper echelon of British policymakers, continued to carry the shared belief that empire was beneficial to Britain, regardless of party affiliation. Whether financier, industrialist or parliamentarian, these men believed the empire to be beneficial. Despite the World Wars, the "official mind" refused to let these setbacks change their worldview and the attempt to keep the empire in place remained a central feature of British policy. Finally, in 1956 the imperial mind learned the consequences of those imperial remnants.

The Suez Canal Crisis of 1956 is often seen as an outright negative for Britain by modern historians. Britain came up with a perfidious backdoor plan, with France and Israel, to retake the Egyptian nationalized canal, and disobeyed its global superpower and bankroller, the United States. After the military invasion of Egypt, the United States quickly took control of the situation through the United Nations and humiliated Britain on the world stage by excluding Britain in the peacekeeping force sent to Egypt to end hostilities. While this event was no doubt an embarrassment for Britain, the Suez Crisis did have positive effects on British foreign policy in the wake of the Crisis in the Middle

¹ George Mccartney (1773). *An Account of Ireland in 1773 by a Late Chief Secretary of that Kingdom*. p. 55.; cited in Kevin Kenny. *Ireland and the British Empire*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) 72.

East and Africa. The historiography of British foreign policy demands that the benefits of the Suez Crisis be researched and reevaluated. Such a reevaluation will add insights to the scholarship on the Suez Crisis. The Suez Crisis played a positive role in changing the British public's perception of the British Empire, causing it to realize the days of Britain's superpower status were over. Britain started to shed many of its colonies as it refocused its economic goals toward Europe instead of on the Commonwealth and empire.

This thesis will track the foreign policy changes Prime Minister Harold Macmillan initiated as soon as he took the helm in January of 1957. These changes have often been seen as a retreat of Empire by a vast majority of historians. Historians perpetuated the idea that the Suez Crisis has only brought about decline for Britain. This perpetuated concept has led Harold Macmillan's achievements in foreign policy in the decade after the Crisis to be overlooked. My thesis will show that these changes in foreign policy, championed by Harold Macmillan, were crucial for Britain both economically and diplomatically in the post Suez era. By highlighting these changes Macmillan made from the Levant to Africa, this thesis argues that Britain was able to apply the lessons learned from the Suez Crisis to their soon to be independent colonies. Historians for too long have lamented that the Suez Crisis only brought about an end to Empire and that nothing worthwhile came from the Crisis. By examining archived documents from Macmillan's Papers, to Iain Macleod's interviews, and British intra-government papers it is clear Macmillan was able to take Britain from a colossal embarrassment at Suez, to a revamped foreign policy that no longer focused solely on

keeping the Empire. This should be celebrated as a crowning achievement, not condemned as weakness and the death of empire.

Harold Macmillan

Harold Macmillan was born in 1894 to Maurice Macmillan, of the famous Macmillan publishing house, and Helen Belles, an artist and socialite, from Indiana.² This half British, half American parentage helped him later relate to his American counterparts in politics. He had an unorthodox upbringing due to illness keeping him out of college. This early illness led to Macmillan becoming a hypochondriac later in life, and he was tutored at home until ready to attend Balliol College, Oxford where he excelled as a student. Macmillan's college years were interrupted by the Great War; Macmillan served as a grenadier. After Oxford, Macmillan both worked in the family business and entered politics.³ He rose through the ranks of political power steadily carrying various positions going from a seat in the House of Commons in 1924 to Defense Minister by 1954, Foreign Secretary the next year, and in three years' time to Prime Minister.

Historians and former leaders supported Harold Macmillan. Allister Horne in his biography of Macmillan writes, "No Briton had received such top billing on his death since Winston Churchill; and, with rare exceptions, almost all of it was favorable, kindly and nostalgic."⁴ Even his ardent opponent, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, hailed Macmillan as "a very remarkable man and a very great patriot," also saying "He was unique in the affection of the British people."⁵ President Reagan said, "The American

² Nigel Fischer *Harold Macmillan*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1982), 2.

³ D.R. Thorpe *Supermac: The Life of Harold Macmillan* (Kindle ed.), (London: Chatto & Windus, 2010), 2467.

⁴ Alistair Horne *Harold Macmillan Volume II: 1957-1986*, (Viking: New York, 1989) xi.

⁵ Alistair Horne *Harold Macmillan Volume II*, xv.

people share in the loss of a voice of wisdom and humanity who, with eloquence and gentle wit, brought to the problems of today the experience of a long life of public service.”⁶ Outlawed African National Congress president Oliver Tambo sent his condolences and in reference to Macmillan’s famous speech, said, “As South Africans we shall always remember him for his efforts to encourage the apartheid regime to bow to the winds of change that continue to blow in South Africa.”⁷

Like many leaders, Macmillan had critics. Reflecting on his time in Parliament, Macmillan said “Some few will be content with the success they have had in the assassination of their leader and will not care very much who the successor is...They are a band that in the end does not amount to more than 15 or 20 at the most.”⁸ In a now famous day in British politics, July 13, 1962 which was known as “the night of the long knives”, an obvious reference to Nazi Germany in 1934, Macmillan dismissed one third of his cabinet members. This drew substantial criticism. Macmillan was accused of having acted hastily and of being ungrateful in sacking his party's most loyal officials.⁹ Macmillan resigned a short time later, citing ill health, but the reality was that Macmillan’s time was over and he took up a position at Oxford University where he seldomly engaged in politics, with one lone exception, advising Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher on some aspects pertaining to the British invasion of the Falkland Islands.

⁶ Martin Fletcher “World pays tribute to Stockton – Death of former Conservative premier”(31 December 1986), *The Times*

⁷ IBID

⁸ Anthony Bevens, 'How Supermac Was "Hounded Out of Office" by Band of 20 Opponents', *The Observer*, (1 January 1995), p. 1.

⁹ Graham P Thomas, *Prime Minister and Cabinet Today*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press 1998)

Background

Victory in the Second World War had allowed Britain to cling to its imperial aspirations. While withdrawing from India in 1947, and the Palestine Mandate in 1948, could be seen as the start of a retreat from empire, it was rather a shift of emphasis to Africa and the Middle East. The problem was that British officials had not considered their lack of financial resources. The war had taken a crippling toll on Britain, which relied on United States financial and material support. This lack of fiscal control came to a head when the Suez Canal was nationalized by President Gamal Abdul Nasser of Egypt. The Suez Canal was an exceptionally symbolic place for Britain primarily due its achievement in connecting the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea. This meant their Empire was linked far easier, ships no longer had to go all the way around the horn of Africa to reach India or Hong Kong. The United States warned Britain not to attempt a retaking of the canal, as the Cold War implications at the time could be devastating. Britain decided to invade anyway in late October 1956 with the help of France and Israel. The British invasion of the Canal could not have gone over worse abroad. The United States publicly embarrassed Britain at the United Nations, and Britain further suffered, both financially and psychologically from the debacle.

For years the British government hid the extent of the Suez collusion. French historians first discovered that Prime Minister Anthony Eden had arranged for top secret meetings with French and Israeli officials in order to plan a joint mission. When these facts were revealed the Macmillan government remained silent. British historian Hugh Thomas, through interviews with Eden's cabinet members, detailed how the foreign secretary at the time, Selwyn Lloyd, travelled to France to negotiate the agreement,

known as the Sevres Protocol. Eventually, a BBC television series that ran ten years after the Crisis held the first (on the record) interview with participants of the Crisis, who further detailed the British efforts in Suez. Anthony Eden until his death maintained he was only trying to preserve peace in the Middle East but eventually Israeli Prime Minister David Ben Gurion authorized the release of the Sevres Protocol for publication thus proving Britain's intent and malice.¹⁰

Historiography

The relevant historiography pertaining to my arguments relies on important works by exceptional historians. Falling within the fields of diplomatic and political history, the historical methodologies used within the historiography relating to this topic are not wide ranging, but there are some surprises. The historiography for post Suez British Policy evolved in two major phases which are the pre Empire document phase and the post empire document phase. The reason for these two phases is simple. The British Government did not release documents related to the end of Empire until the early 1990's. Each historian within these phases has relied on unique angles to their work. Within these works several themes emerge. An example of pre Empire document release would be P.S. Gupta's *Imperialism and the British Labour Movement, 1914-1964*, a well written work that examines the Labour Party's role in the end of Empire. The book has a Marxist theme towards Britain and empire, and it suffers from the fact that it was written in the pre document phase. After the World War II era Gupta's work struggles because he of a lack of sources on the subject. Historian Stephen Howe's *Anticolonialism in British*

¹⁰ Scott Lucas, *Britain and Suez: The Lion's Last Roar*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 1-2.

Politics: The Left and the End of Empire, 1918-64 uses the same Marxist theme as Gupta relied on towards the end of empire in Britain, but because Howe wrote his work in 1993, his sources are stronger. Howe examines different attitudes and activities relating to colonial issues by British anti-Empire groups as well as general members of the public during the years of decolonization. The book interprets the shifting ways in which more general ideas about imperialism and nationalism developed, changed, and expanded during these years. Much like Gupta, Howe also examines the left wing of the Labour Party, as well as groups outside it, including the Communist Party and other left-wing groups against empire. Howe's major takeaway is that in the Labour Party, and among the rising middle class, anti-imperial sentiment reached an unprecedented level in Britain, providing the means whereby anti-imperialism became a main-stream sentiment.

In a similar vein, but written in the post Empire document release, Bernard Porter's infamous *The Absent Minded Imperialists* argues that the majority of Britons, lower and middle class, did not care for empire nor wanted its continuance. Porter highlights anti-Empire views in the post-World War II years, parliamentary calls for Indian self-government as early as 1939, as well as highlighting that the Suez Crisis' failure to impact the British public's perception of Empire. There were no calls in the street by the British public to fight Egypt with all Britain's might because of the public's disinterest with the idea of imperialism abroad. Porter highlights the theme of the "official mind" writing that it finally came to realize after the Suez Crisis, that the public did not care for Empire anymore.¹¹

¹¹ Bernard Porter, *The Absent Minded Imperialists: Empire, Society, and Culture in Britain*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 318-319.

Furthering the “official mind” theme in the post empire document release Frank Heinlein’s *British Government Policy and Decolonization 1945-1963: Scrutinising the Official Mind* examines policy makers’ evolving reactions towards empire and decolonization between 1945 and 1963. Heinlein writes more on how political concepts shaped British policy with decolonization and largely neglects events. This is markedly different with this thesis’ approach of tying the event at Suez to shifting British foreign policy.¹²

Guy Laron’s *Origins of the Suez Crisis* examines the correlation of Suez and its relationship to future decolonization, much like this thesis, but not only Britain but for France as well. Laron also analyses the collapse of the imagined new European third bloc, designed to stand up against the Soviet Union and the United States. Laron believes the Suez Crisis forced Britain to attempt to join the European Common Market and integrate with Europe.¹³ While an important work to the origins of the Suez Crisis and some insight into the Crisis itself, I seek to expand past this timeframe to establish how some of these economic factors played into post Suez diplomacy and policy in Britain.

David Carlton’s pre document release *Britain and the Suez Crisis* offers exceptional insight into the crisis and its long-term effects. Carlton points out that in the immediate aftermath of the crisis the Suez Group, which was made up of Conservative MPs (Tories) who, I would consider part of the official mind, had finally gotten the message. As a result, Macmillan had little difficulty in pursuing policies that greatly sped up decolonization.¹⁴ Expanding on the role of the Suez Crisis in reshaping the

¹² Frank Heinlein, *British Government Policy and Decolonisation: Scrutinising the Official Mind*, (London: Routledge, 2002), 6-7.

¹³ Guy Laron, *Origins of the Suez Crisis*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), 188.

¹⁴ David Carlton, *Britain and the Suez Crisis*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1988) 106-107.

official mind, historian Robert Skidelsky wrote, “The Tories’ concept of their post war imperial responsibilities rested upon the illusion of power. Once that illusion was shattered, little remained of that concept: the way was opened to joining Europe.”¹⁵ Skidelsky argues that once the official mind realized that Britain was no longer a global super power, European integration was the only acceptable path forward.

In another pre document release book, Brian Lapping’s *End of Empire*, argues heavily about what Suez meant for Britain and decolonization. Lapping describes the aftermath of Suez as “Two months after the debacle Anthony Eden, sick and ruined, resigned...Harold Macmillan who succeeded him, continued to speak like an imperialist, but promptly set in train a major reduction of Britain’s defense commitments and soon dismantled what remained of the Empire...The Suez operation wrote finis not only to the British Empire but to all the empires of western Europe.”¹⁶ Lapping argues how the Crisis negatively impacted France and their struggle with Algiers. The diplomatic relationship with France in the aftermath of Suez is an aspect of British political history that needs additional scholarship.

In the opposite vein, and in the post empire document release, arguing against Suez’s role having to do with a shift in decolonization, G.C. Penden argues the process had already begun prior to Suez, and that Suez did not contribute to Britain’s decision to shed imperial possessions. Penden argues that the treasury demanded a move away from Empire and that the Foreign Office, Commonwealth Office, and Commonwealth

¹⁵ Robert Skidelsky, ‘Lessons of Suez’ in Vernon Bogdanor and Robert Skidelsky, *The Age of Affluence, 1951-1964*, (London: Macmillan, 1970), 188-189.

¹⁶ Brian Lapping, *End of Empire*, (London: Granada Publishing, 1985), 277.

Relations Office did not want Empire to end as rapidly regardless of the Suez Crisis.¹⁷

While Penden's journal article is well written and provides insight into policy-makers decisions regarding empire and decolonization, this thesis will show that Suez did in fact have a direct role in decolonization for the better of Britain.

John Darwin, one of the preeminent British historians of empire, wrote on the Suez Crisis and its consequences for decolonization both in the pre and post document release phase. In the post document release phase work *Unfinished Empire*, Darwin portrays the Suez Crisis as a downright failure and disaster for Britain. For one, Darwin seems to suggest that Anthony Eden's motives were not clear when he took this disastrous course of action.¹⁸ But it seems quite obvious if one simply looks at how Britain was carrying on with Empire in the aftermath of World War II. The Empire was still conceivable and in fact viable and necessary in the eyes of Britain's official mind and even amongst a sizable segment of the British population. The war had pushed Britain to the edge financially, and it was relying on United States monetary support to rebuild and continue to operate as an effective global power. Economic problems forced the British policymakers to commit to Empire. To claim Eden's motives were unknown seems oblivious to the facts of Britain's situation.

Likewise, Darwin's assertion that Macmillan wanted to continue with the empire after the Suez Crisis does not make sense in the context of Macmillan's actions.¹⁹ Less than three years removed from the Suez Crisis, and after ceding colonial control of

¹⁷ G.C. Peden, "Suez and Britain's Decline as a World Power", *The Historical Journal* Vol. 55, No. 4 (December 2012), 1073.

¹⁸ John Darwin, *Unfinished Empire: The Global Expansion of Britain*, (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2012), 361.

¹⁹ Darwin, *Unfinished Empire*, 362.

Ghana, Malaya, Cyprus, and Nigeria, Macmillan gave the defining speech on the end of empire in South Africa. Macmillan famously stated “The wind of change is blowing through this continent and whether we like it or not, this growth of national consciousness is a political fact. We must accept it as a fact, and our national policies must take account of it.”²⁰ This speech, and decolonization actions throughout Africa in the aftermath of the Suez Crisis reflect Macmillan’s desire to shift drastically away from empire and join the European Common Market. The days of empire were over; Macmillan realized with Suez what the future held for Britain and decided to make European integration a priority, not continue on with empire.

In John Darwin’s pre document work *The End of the British Empire: The Historical Debate*, Darwin finds the overall impact of the Suez Crisis’ role in ending empire to be negligible to Britain’s future going forward. Darwin writes that the significance of Suez was far subtler and that the Suez Crisis did not have a decisive role in ending empire.²¹

Methodology and Structure

Where this thesis will branch out from these existing works is by creating a broader picture of the foreign policy adjustments Britain made after the Suez Crisis as well as highlighting the positive aspects that the Crisis brought about, which historians have overly neglected. The first chapter will cover British foreign policy in the Levant following the end of the Suez Crisis. This chapter will highlight the new course of action

²⁰ Harold Macmillan, *Pointing the Way 1959-1961*, (London: Macmillan Press, 1972), 156.

²¹ John Darwin, *The End of the British Empire: The Historical Debate*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1991), 70.

Britain carried out in the Levant region and Britain's shift away from an aggressive imperialist policy.

Chapter two will explore the decisions made in Africa in regard to British foreign policy, the contentious battle Prime Minister Harold Macmillan held with the leader of Nyasaland, and the struggle to have Imperialist leaders come to terms with the British new world order. The chapter will show how Prime Minister Macmillan was able to depart empire specifically in Africa and show that Britain from henceforth would take more of a backseat role to the United States.

The methodological and theoretical approach will be straightforward and in the same vein as similar works on the Suez Crisis such as Porter and Heinlein. Part diplomatic history and part political history, this thesis will examine a multitude of source material, primarily British, to show the Suez Crisis had such a pivotal role in ending the British Empire and the Crisis' positive effects. I will try to avoid the pitfalls of a highly dramatic narrative structure with this thesis as that would be detrimental to both the argument and the source material.

The papers of Harold Macmillan were pivotal to this project as his writings alone show the evolution on British policy. Iain Macleod's biography was equally as important as his role in re shaping British foreign policy in Africa cannot be understated. Foreign Commonwealth Office records and parliamentary debate records were also useful to this work as they showed how British officials both at home and abroad not only viewed the crisis, but empire itself.

CHAPTER I: THE AFTERMATH OF CRISIS: BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY IN THE LEVANT AFTER SUEZ

Repairing the Damage

In the immediate aftermath of the Suez Crisis, two things were clear. First, Anthony Eden could not carry on as Prime Minister. His miscalculations during the Suez Crisis greatly harmed Britain's reputation on the world stage and nearly irretrievably damaged the Anglo-United States relationship. This harm was so bad that in a letter dated November 22, 1956, toward the end of the Suez Crisis, former Prime Minister Winston Churchill, pleaded with President Eisenhower not to let Suez come between the two countries' special relationship and to not allow "Anthony's action in Egypt [to] let our whole civilization flounder."²² Churchill also expressed great fear that if the relationship were heavily damaged the USSR would gain the upper hand, especially in Africa, and if that happened, Western Europe would be at the mercy of the USSR.²³

Churchill's letter clarified the geopolitical underpinnings of the post-Suez world. The Cold War formed the environment for all important foreign policy decisions during these decades. Churchill's famous 1946 iron curtain speech explicitly stated "I do not believe that Soviet Russia desires war. What they desire is the fruits of war and the indefinite expansion of their power and doctrines...I am convinced that there is nothing they admire so much as strength, and there is nothing for which they have less respect

²² From Winston Churchill to President Eisenhower dated 22, November 1956, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Macmillan dep. C. 917, Fol 256-257.

²³ From Winston Churchill to President Eisenhower dated 22, November 1956, OBL, MS Macmillan dep. C. 917, Fol 256-257.

than for weakness, especially military weakness.”²⁴ Equally important was Britain’s desperate desire to repair the damaged “special relationship.”

This letter suggests that even in November 1956 it was clear that Eden’s position as Prime Minister was no longer sustainable. Eden had defied United States wishes to not invade Suez, directly lied about it to Eisenhower, and created an international crisis. For these reasons the United States had decided these offenses were unforgivable and Prime Minister Eden had to go.

Three weeks later, the United States government’s desire for a new Prime Minister became apparent in a cable exchange between R.A. Butler, leader of the House of Commons, and Harold Macmillan, Chancellor of the Exchequer. Macmillan discussed a conversation he had had with United States Secretary of the Treasury, George Humphrey. The American had promised that the United States would provide all possible assistance to restructure Britain financially but there were conditions. Humphrey spoke in the language of a businessman. Macmillan, whose family owned a prestigious publishing firm, well understood the language in which Humphrey spoke. Macmillan asked Humphrey "Don't you trust the board?" referring to Humphrey speaking in a business-centric style throughout this telegram. Humphrey considered the upper echelon of the British cabinet to be a Board of Directors in a business that the United States was financially re-structuring. Humphrey cryptically replied, “Well, since you ask me, I think it would be as well if we could deal as much as possible with the directors.” Macmillan took this to mean that Humphrey only wanted to deal with Butler or Macmillan and the

²⁴ “The Sinews of Peace (‘Iron Curtain Speech’)” Winston Churchill March 5, 1946, <https://www.winstonchurchill.org/resources/speeches/1946-1963-elder-statesman/the-sinews-of-peace/>

Americans wanted nothing to do with Eden, who had directly lied to Eisenhower in the weeks in October and November 1956.²⁵

This conversation and backdoor channeling between the United States and Britain was happening unbeknownst to Prime Minister Eden who was recuperating in Jamaica from the health crisis he had suffered as a result of the Suez turmoil. During his absence, he left the country in Butler's and Macmillan's hands, but they quickly usurped power with Macmillan coming out on top. Prime Minister Eden returned from Jamaica on December 14, 1956 confident he was still in charge, and his premiership could continue. Sadly, his hostile reception by the House of Commons, especially by the Conservative back benchers, sealed his fate. A few weeks later on January 9, 1957, Prime Minister Anthony Eden quietly resigned, refusing to admit to the collusion and deception that he and his cabinet took part in leading up to and during the Suez Crisis.

Second, the Suez Crisis forced the British government to accept that the United States, not Britain, was the dominant global power. As Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan quickly sought to reestablish and normalize the damaged diplomatic relationship. In January 1957, President Eisenhower took the initiative to arrange a conference between the two powers in Bermuda. He explained the delay in scheduling this conference by stating that he wanted the newly appointed Prime Minister Macmillan time to rally his government and letting the Suez dust settle.²⁶

British policymakers understood both the importance of the meeting and the agenda of repairing the Anglo-United States When Sir Alan Lennox-Boyd, the Minister

²⁵ To RAB Butler from Harold Macmillan dated 13th December 1956, OBL, MS Macmillan dep. C. 917, Fol 275-276.

²⁶ To Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Selwyn Lloyd from Prime Minister Harold Macmillan dated January 22, 1957, OBL, MS Macmillan dep. C. 919, Fol. 15-17.

of State for Colonial Affairs, requested to use the meeting to push back against American anti-colonial attitudes towards British foreign policy, Harold Macmillan's response showed his awareness of Britain's situation; "I think it would be a mistake to ask that 'Colonialism' should figure as a specific item on our agenda. I would not wish to appear to be adopting a purely defensive posture about this."²⁷ Macmillan clearly understood that after Suez, Britain could no longer expect American support for its imperial policies: Britain was now clearly second to the United States and needed to follow, not lead.

Harold Macmillan's opening statement at the Bermuda Conference, held between March 21 and 23, shows great awareness and humility towards the Eisenhower government. No longer did Britain wish to be standoffish on the world stage and instead took a cooperative approach towards their closest ally. Macmillan immediately understood that Britain held a new role, one that was under the United States:

The balance of power changed so quickly; so difficult to grasp...I believe Britain- I know my government- will be for staying in the game and pulling our weight. That is why I welcome full restoration of confidence and co-operation between our two countries ... Powerful as you are I don't believe you can do it alone. You need us, for ourselves, for Commonwealth, and as leaders of Europe. But chiefly because without a common front and true partnership between us I doubt whether the principles we believe in can win... [discussion about Nasser and the Canal] Let me be frank again: your government and many of your people think we acted foolishly and precipitately and illegally. Our government and many of our people think that you were too hard on us and rather let us down. Well that's over-spilt milk...I hope you will do everything you possibly can: by pressure on Nasser, by cajoling Hammarskjold, by bribery of Nasser if necessary (only I hope you might consult with us as to what particular form this might take, so as not to be too embarrassing for us) to get a Canal settlement, short

²⁷ From Alan Lennox-Boyd to Minister of State for Colonial Affairs from Macmillan dated February 25, 1957. OBL, MS Macmillan dep. C. 919, Fol. 29-30.

and long, especially regarding dues which we can claim as reasonable, if not quite what we would like!²⁸

Macmillan's words show that he thought three things were important for Britain going forward. First, Britain was still a major power broker. Second, the United States still needed Britain to lead Europe and as a trusted ally. Third, both the United States and Britain should move on from the Suez Crisis but at the same time still be wary of Nasser and his growing influence in the Middle East.

From all accounts, the Bermuda Conference was a total success for Britain. In a telegram on March 25, 1957 to Lord Privy Seal R.A. Butler, Macmillan recapitulated the events and Britain's successes: "The Americans have been rather apologetic about their position...The personal relations between myself and the President have been established upon a level of confidence which is very gratifying."²⁹ This cable shows that in Macmillan's eyes, Britain had come away from Bermuda with a win. Macmillan's half-American parentage had helped further his relationship with Eisenhower. Former Prime Minister Anthony Eden looked down upon Americans, so to have Macmillan gain Eisenhower's trust was a pivotal moment in re-establishing the Anglo-American relationship.

The joint statement made by the two countries after the Conference demonstrated major points of agreement. Britain was to become an integral component of Europe. Britain finally cajoled the United States into some involvement in the Baghdad Pact, the defensive organization for promoting shared political, military, and economic goals

²⁸ Prime Ministers Notes for Bermuda Conference Opening Statement dated March 1957. OBL, MS Macmillan dep. C. 919, Fol. 41-44.

²⁹ To Lord Privy Seal RAB Butler from Macmillan dated March 25, 1957, OBL, MS Macmillan dep. C. 919, Fol. 38.

founded in 1955 by Great Britain, together with Turkey, Iraq, Pakistan and Iran. The pact was similar to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization., The main purpose of the Baghdad Pact was to prevent communist incursions and foster peace in the Middle East.³⁰ As the United States had initially been hesitant to join, for Britain to gain American support was a victory for its proponents. Finally, the United States would provide Britain with nuclear missiles. While Britain agreed to follow United Nations' dictates on financial reparations to Egypt and British troop withdrawal, overall Britain secured a victory in Bermuda.³¹ Britain repaired relations with its most important ally, and even got the United States to be apologetic in the process thus giving Britain a major success at the conference.

³⁰ The Baghdad Pact (1955) and the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), <https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/lw/98683.htm>, accessed December 2, 2017.

³¹ *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1957: Containing the Public Messages, Speeches, and Statements of the President, January 1 to December 31, 1957*, United States Government Printing Office: Government Printing Office, 1999, 210-211.



Image 1: Map of the Levant in 1955 ³²

³² Aeronautical Chart and Information Center, U.S. Middle East Countries: Syria, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Jordan, Saudi-Arabia. [St. Louis, MO: Aeronautical Chart and Information Center, 1955] Map. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2013593015/>. (Accessed November 19, 2017.)

The Levant

With Anglo-American relations repaired, a new era of foreign policy could begin: an era in which Britain was still a major world power and remained the dominant power in western Europe, but simply not *the* world power anymore. The evolution of British policy in the Levant is an exceptional example of how Britain, under the steadfast leadership and vision of Harold Macmillan, came to settle into its newfound role, clearly having learned from the Suez disaster. This section will focus on several countries within the Levant: Cyprus, Egypt, Muscat and Oman, Lebanon, and Syria. The reason for these countries selection is due to their evolution in foreign policy, or in Egypt's case lack of evolution, in the immediate aftermath of Suez. By examining these specific countries it is evident of the immediate foreign policy shifts Macmillan enacted. The foreign policy changes in the wake of the Suez Crisis were remarkable because Britain was able to drastically shift its foreign policy in such a short time. The following sections will track these policy changes chronologically and separately for each country.

Cyprus: "An Embarrassment"

During 1955 unrest gripped the British Administred Island of Cyprus. Because the British wanted to make the island a military headquarters for Middle Eastern operations, Britain proved reluctant to grant Cyprus independence. In 1950 eighty percent of the population of Cyprus was ethnically Greek; the remaining twenty percent was Turkish. The concept of *enosis*, the reunification of Cyprus and Greece, remerged during this time. An independence group known as Ethniki Organosis Kyprion Agoniston, translates as (National Organization of Cypriot Fighters), or EOKA claimed to speak for the Greek Cypriots. Archbishop Makarios III, the de facto leader of the Greek Cypriots, and future

first President of independent Cyprus was closely tied to EOKA,. On August 20, 1955, Greece submitted a formal petition to the United Nations requesting the right of Cyprus to self-determination. In response, in late 1956 the colonial government enacted anti-sedition laws to bar pro-Greece demonstrations Because the British presumed Archbishop Makarios to be a part of the violent movement towards independence, the colonial administration arrested Makarios and exiled him to the Seychelles islands in March 1956.

When Macmillan became Prime Minister, he quickly sought to resolve the situation in Cyprus peacefully. In a cable sent to top members of his Cabinet on March 25, 1957, he labeled Makarios' exile an embarrassment.³³ Macmillan held two convictions regarding Cyprus. First, Macmillan believed that Makarios should be freed but only if the Archbishop denounced violence. Second, for the time being, there was no need to inform the Americans about the intricacies of Britain's Cyprus decisions, at least until the Bermuda Conference was over.³⁴ Macmillan feared that if the British government were to inform the Americans that they were about to free Makarios, the United States might try to use that as leverage.³⁵

When Markarios was released from exile, he was barred from entering Cyprus so he sailed to Athens to a hero's return. In a telegram to Prime Minister Macmillan, Eisenhower expressed enthusiasm for Macmillan's decision to release Makarios and promised all possible support to ensure the action would yield positive results.³⁶ The

³³ Prime Minister Harold Macmillan to Lord Privy Seal, Colonial Secretary, and Lord President, dated March 25, 1957. OBL, MS Macmillan dep. C. 917, Fol 467.

³⁴ UK Delegation Bermuda to Foreign Office from Prime Minister to Home Secretary, dated March 22, 1957. OBL, MS Macmillan dep. C. 917, Fol. 445.

³⁵ Colonial Secretary Alex Lennox Boyd to Prime Minister Harold Macmillan dated March 23, 1957, OBL, MS Macmillan dep. C. 917, Fol. 462.

³⁶ From President Eisenhower to Prime Minister Harold Macmillan dated March 30, 1957. OBL, MS Macmillan dep. C. 917, Fol. 476.

American President's positive response clearly indicated that Macmillan's new path for Britain had the full support of its closest ally. At home, one of the old guard imperialists, was far less enthusiastic about Archbishop Makarios' release. Robert Gascoyne-Cecil, the 5th Marquess of Salisbury, Lord President of the Council, and Leader of the House of Lords, resigned rather than continuing to serve in a government that had freed an accused terrorist.³⁷

Macmillan's diplomacy and his realization that Britain lacked a strong basis to hold Makarios is a brilliant example of statesmanship and Macmillan's newly minted approach to foreign policy. In a cable sent a year after Cyprus gained independence in 1960, to Foreign Secretary Iain Macleod (who would later be quite pivotal in dealing with the decolonization of Africa), Macmillan mentioned that French President Charles De Gaulle had asked Macmillan for advice in dealing with Algeria and France's violent clashes with the growing nationalist movement, because of Macmillan's successful handling of Cyprus.³⁸ Macmillan's drive to keep keeping Britain a dominant global power and also score diplomatic points demonstrates his strong desire to shift further away from the traditional Conservative mindset that had dominated the pre-Suez Crisis era. The Marquess of Salisbury's resignation shows how some members of Parliament could not move past the old imperial way, but under Macmillan a new era had begun: one which would be dominated by a close relationship with America and the beginning of the end of Empire. Except for the military base that Britain retained, Cyprus no longer

³⁷ Bobbety, as he was nicknamed, wrote a very cordial letter to Macmillan expressing gratitude and friendship in resignation, and preferred not to critique the government in the House of Lords over Cyprus. To Prime Minister Macmillan from Robert Gascoyne-Cecil, 5th Marquess of Salisbury, dated March 29, 1957. OBL, MS Macmillan dep. C. 917, Fol. 479.

³⁸ Prime Minister's Personal Minutes. Telegram to Foreign Secretary Iain Macleod from Prime Minister Harold Macmillan. OBL, dated January 6, 1961. MS Macmillan dep. C. 358, Fol. 124-125.

acted like they were on the verge of becoming the next Nasser like state so for the time being the problems had been avoided. However, in Egypt, matters would be dealt with quite differently regarding President Nasser.

Egypt: Exerting Pressure

President Nasser's defiance regarding the Suez Canal unleashed a great fear for Britain, namely that Egypt would turn to Russia and communism and that other leaders, or revolutionaries, in the Levant would follow the example of Egypt and challenge the western powers. The Bermuda Agreement called for Britain to adhere to the United Nations' disciplinary measures over their role in the Suez Crisis. Britain however, remained defiant of the agreements measures well into 1957. In a letter to now former Prime Minister Anthony Eden dated April 28, 1957, Prime Minister Macmillan expressed how the Suez Canal problem reached a new crisis due to Nasser blocking British ship use of the canal. Macmillan elaborated that these problems in the Middle East were vital to the western world, because if the Middle East fell to communism, the Russians would gain ground. Macmillan makes mention that Britain was regaining support from both the American public and more members of the government. Macmillan concluded that he would keep the pressure on President Nasser and try and prevent the Americans from giving Nasser more money.³⁹

This private sentiment on pressuring President Nasser would be echoed a month later in a note from Macmillan to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Peter Thorneycroft. In the note, Macmillan wrote of trying to figure out how to stay stern on Nasser but also expressed willingness to keep negotiating for future use of the Suez Canal and trade with

³⁹ To Anthony Eden from Macmillan dated April 28, 1957. OBL, MS Macmillan dep. C. 917, Fol. 343-345.

Egypt. Macmillan wrote that Britain will “keep the maximum pressure on Nasser, while ensuring that the Americans do not get the idea that we are giving in and therefore relax their own pressure.”⁴⁰ The “giving in” referenced the fact Britain would adhere to the United Nations judgement against them and remove the troops they landed in Egypt during the Suez Crisis that remained past the initial Crisis. However, Britain did not wish to tip their hand to the Americans that they were ready to remove the troops quite yet, as American pressure on Egypt held more weight than British pressure on Egypt. Part of what Macmillan was struggling with during these tense negotiations with Egypt was to try and minimize British financial losses as much as possible.

Britain took a near catastrophic political and economic hit due to the Suez Crisis, and with the United States now as Britain’s financial backer, any pound saved would be a good thing. Macmillan echoed this sentiment in a telegram to Peter Thorneycroft. Macmillan stated “In view of the halt, if not break-down, in Rome talks (Public British negotiations with Egypt) I think we shall not be able to avoid any longer making some plan to meet the private losses in Egypt.”⁴¹ Macmillan, two months after the Bermuda Conference, finally came to accept the fact that Britain would have to lose money in Egypt over the Suez Crisis. Macmillan still felt that they were in a position of power to negotiate their total withdrawal from Egypt, and hopefully save face internationally.

As late as September 1957, Britain continued to put as much pressure on Nasser as possible. Sir Pierson Dixon, the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to

⁴⁰ Prime Ministers Personal Minutes, Copy of a Note to the Chancellor of the Exchequer Peter Thorneycroft from Prime Minister Harold Macmillan dated May 23, 1957, OBL, MS Macmillan dep. C. 917, Fol. 498-501.

⁴¹ To Chancellor of the Exchequer Peter Thorneycroft from Prime Minister Harold Macmillan dated May 31, 1957, OBL, MS Macmillan dep. C. 917, Fol. 502-504.

the United Nations, relayed a telegram to Prime Minister Macmillan a conversation he had with United States Secretary of State John Foster Dulles. The conversation related to the American Treasury blocking sixteen million dollars of Egyptian money held by the United States. Dulles wondered whether the money should be released. Sir Dixon felt it would be resented in England to release the money, but if the money were to be released, the west would have to get something in return. Secretary Dulles agreed and said he instructed the United States Treasury to further block the release.⁴²

What is fascinating about this exchange is that it showed the special relationship returned to its Pre-Suez strength, and that Britain planned to keep the maximum pressure on President Nasser even after the crisis ended. While Macmillan saw Cyprus as a chance to pull back it seemed he could not do so regarding Egypt, either due to the embarrassment over the British loss at Suez or unwillingness to let Nasser get much breathing room with his newly found role as the figurehead of rebellion against the west. Britain had to admit defeat on the world stage and try their best to negotiate somewhat reasonable terms to start using the Canal again, but Britain still had plenty of means to exert power to try and keep Nasser in check.

Muscat and Oman: Volatility

In the late summer of 1957, the Middle East became increasingly volatile due to Nasser's newfound influence over the region. In Muscat and Oman, a British protectorate, the Sultan faced rising nationalist threats. As early as late July, Macmillan and Eisenhower began scheming to solve the growing threat. For both leaders, the solution was a good

⁴² For Prime Minister Harold Macmillan from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the United Nations Sir Pierson Dixon dated September 24, 1957. OBL, MS Macmillan dep. C. 917, Fol. 517.

relationship between the Sultan of Muscat and Oman and King Saud of Saudi Arabia. Macmillan indicated this would be the key to offering greater peace in this part of the world.⁴³ Macmillan felt the Sultan's army was weak because it previously relied on British troops for support, but in this situation Macmillan wished to act again with [limited] RAF support. Macmillan thought Nasser encouraged this trouble and felt that Nasser wanted to use the occasion to make difficulties for both the United States and Great Britain.⁴⁴

In the subsequent correspondence, Macmillan asked for Eisenhower to abstain from a military intervention vote on Oman and Muscat at the UN. Macmillan's phrasing indicates that he hoped that the newly renewed Anglo-American relationship did not become damaged again.⁴⁵ In other words this was an important issue for Britain, and if the Americans voted against Britain's wishes regarding this vote, Macmillan would be upset. Eisenhower promptly replied that the United States would comply at the United Nations, appreciating Macmillan's care for the special relationship.⁴⁶ Macmillan's next reply offers a great insight into what Macmillan had learned from the Suez Crisis. Namely that diplomacy comes first, action comes second. "Many thanks for your prompt reply about Oman. You will of course realize that anything which may make the Sultan of Muscat feel that doubts are being cast on the essential unity of Muscat and Oman will make it almost impossible to get him to accept the idea of a meeting with King Saud. Both of us, I think, believe that direct negotiations between them is the thing to work

⁴³ Edited by E. Bruce Geelhoed and Anthony O. Edmonds, *The Macmillan-Eisenhower Correspondence, 1957-1969*. (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) 75.

⁴⁴ Harold Macmillan to President Eisenhower dated July 22, 1957. OBL, MS Macmillan dep. C. 919, Fol. 181.

⁴⁵ To Eisenhower from Macmillan, dated August 17, 1957, OBL, MS Macmillan dep. C. 919, Fol. 195.

⁴⁶ To Macmillan from Eisenhower date August 18, 1957, OBL, MS Macmillan dep. C. 919, Fol. 196.

for.”⁴⁷ These words showed Macmillan’s clear desire to avoid conflict, which coming less than a year after Suez was quite remarkable.

These words from Macmillan also showed a clear understanding of Britain's new standing in the world and how they would have to act on the world stage. Britain no longer desired to rush into military action right away, unlike Suez, and instead wished for the Sultan to attempt to find regional allies instead of using late imperial might. Eisenhower’s reply indicated that he had spoken with Dulles about Muscat and Oman and while they would not vote no at the United Nations, the United States could abstain from the vote to help Britain facilitate quick action.⁴⁸ What is fascinating about the entire exchange between Eisenhower and Macmillan regarding Muscat and Oman is the idea that if Britain received the United States’ permission for potential action in the middle-east, that action was okay. If Britain accepted their status as a client state to the United States, they had free reign to delve into conflicts and crises of their choice even at the military level.

Syria: Rapid Destabilization

In mid-June of 1957, Syria became increasingly unstable due to increasing nationalist tension in the region and Nasser’s continued influence. Much like Egypt, Syria experienced a nationalist wave primarily brought on by Nasser. In a weekly message from the Foreign Offices’ man on the ground in Damascus I.D. Scott, he mentioned the newspapers in Damascus were saying that “the imperialists are trying to divide us...that the U.S.A was bent on a policy of conquest of the Arab World from the inside, its principle agent and

⁴⁷ To Eisenhower from Macmillan dated August 18, 1957, OBL, MS Macmillan dep. C. 919, Fol. 197.

⁴⁸ To Macmillan from Eisenhower (Supplement to Fol. 196) dated August 20, 1957, OBL, MS Macmillan dep. C. 919, Fol. 198-199.

henchman being King Saud.”⁴⁹ These early rumblings of a push toward a new Nasser like state similar to Egypt were clearly rooted in anti-western sentiment. By August 20, 1957, the Foreign Office started informing neighboring Arab countries of the evolving Syrian situation. The Foreign Office described Syria as:

Well on the way to becoming a Soviet satellite and a spring-board for further penetration of the Middle East. We are seriously concerned about these developments. Very little can probably be done about the situation in Syria itself just at the moment. But something can be done to see that the infection does not spread. A) The other Arab countries can show their own support for Syria's most vulnerable neighbours, Jordan and Lebanon, and so demonstrate the solidarity of the non-communist Arab world; B) They can bring to bear on Syria the pressure of general Arab disapproval of Syria's Communist course; and thus not only encourage resistance in Syria, but also, perhaps keep the present regime from going too far down the path of Communism. Her Majesty's Government will gladly give what help they can. But we cannot usefully take the lead. That is for the Arabs, particularly Iraq and Saudi Arabia.⁵⁰

This message explicitly showed a clear understanding that Britain no longer held the power in the Middle East. Britain wished for the Arab countries to deal with the conflict on their own and not involve British troops. While there remained worry about the spread of Communism, no longer did Britain wish to rush into every battle.

Macmillan learned his lesson at Suez, and a less than a year removed from the crisis shifted his government's position to avoid conflict rather than charge head first into it.

In a telegram to Dulles from Macmillan, there was lengthy talk about the growing crisis in Syria and the need to do something. Macmillan expressed significant worry that if Syria falls, so will the entire Middle East to communism. This telegram mentioned

⁴⁹ FO 371/128223, VY 1015/72 Levant Department: Syria, Weekly Letter on Syria, June 20, 1957.

⁵⁰ Assessment of Syrian Situation, dated August 20, 1957, The National Archives Kew, FO 371/128224, VY 1015/98 Levant Department: Syria.

subverting Lebanon and Jordan and turning them towards the west. Macmillan expressed the idea of building up an Arab coalition of states, but at the same time expressed worry that a coalition would anger the increasingly pro-Nasser Syria, who would potentially attack the precious western oil pipelines. There was also talk of potential military operation to drive the communists out of Syria but Macmillan warned if they failed, the neighboring countries would all turn to communism and Iraq might fall. Macmillan floated the idea to potentially use Arab states against Syria instead of western powers invading because Macmillan did not think Russia would invade with their troops in support of Syria. Macmillan expressed the fear that Churchill alluded to multiple times of the Communist threat to the Middle East region and Nasser's growing influence. And as time would go on, that fear would be justified.⁵¹

Soon after, Ambassador Harold Caccia relayed a telegram to Prime Minister Macmillan about a conversation he held with Secretary Dulles. Caccia told Macmillan that Dulles felt that military action was the only way to go in Syria and that the British were more than allowed to be a part of it. However, if they were worried how a Middle Eastern intervention would look on the world stage because of the Suez Crisis, it would be okay to leave it to the Americans to go at it alone. Caccia expressed Dulles' serious fear of communist expansion and worry that the "rot" (of Communism) might spread to the Far East. Caccia duly noted that Dulles also felt he could get American public support on their side.⁵² This mention of American fear of communism in the Middle East was a stark contrast to their lack of support for Britain a year prior in Egypt. Macmillan would

⁵¹ To Dulles from Macmillan dated August 28, 1957, OBL, MS Macmillan dep. C. 919, Fol. 215-220.

⁵² To Macmillan from Ambassador Caccia dated August 29, 1957, OBL, MS Macmillan dep. C. 919, Fol. 228-229.

notice this difference. Dulles was convinced that Britain and the United States must work together to deal with the Middle East problem; that any military action once begun must be pushed through with great success (in other words, no quick withdrawal), and that speed and simplicity are very important elements if the plan were to succeed.⁵³

Macmillan's reply the next day showed both British resolve to be behind the United States' and Macmillan's awareness for Britain to not be in the situation they were in the year before. Macmillan agreed with the plan for Syria but wished for the plans to be drawn up in Washington and not London.⁵⁴ Macmillan had the foresight to not wish to be in a similar situation they faced with Suez by not drawing up any plans for action in London.

The difference between the United States' reaction regarding Britain at Suez versus how they treated Britain regarding Syria became even more difficult to ignore. A fascinating example of the United States' hypocrisy in their reaction to the British over the Suez Crisis showed in their reaction to Syria's potential turn to communism in early September. In a telegram from Ambassador Caccia to Prime Minister Macmillan outlining the United States' idea for action in Syria, the invasion plan was laid out. Essentially nearby country Israel did not have a role in their plans, Israel did not get any foreknowledge that action was about to take place in Syria. Turkey and the three nearby Arab allied countries:

... are to be informed that the US government shared their view of the danger to them of the Syrian situation and thought that any effort to remedy it should be initiated by the Arabs rather than by others. The communication would then indicate that they could count on US assistance in any

⁵³ From Dulles to Macmillan dated September 5, 1957, OBL, MS Macmillan dep. C. 919, Fol. 240-241.

⁵⁴ From Macmillan to Dulles dated September 6, 1957, OBL, MS Macmillan dep. C. 919, Fol. 243-244.

action they took as regards to 1) The United Nations 2) Economic and financial support 3) Armed support if attacked by the Soviet Union or if soviet volunteers intervened in support of Syria. Turkey would be told that it was undesirable for her to initiate action alone in the first instance but that if the Arabs did not move, and if the Turkish government felt impelled to act, then they could nevertheless count on United States assistance in defending them in the above matter.

The telegram from Caccia went on to say that if the Iraqis and Turks floundered in their invasion of Syria the United States would support them. Furthermore, if western oil became threatened the United States would also support action.⁵⁵ The irony of the United States' wishes to use allied countries to invade a communist regime and overthrow it is overwhelming. This plan is near identical in nature to what the British planned to start the Suez Crisis a year prior in using Israel to invade Egypt.

Macmillan did not overlook this irony. In a private telegram to Commonwealth leaders, Macmillan summarized the United States' plan. Macmillan noted the "very robust attitude which the United States government are taking towards this latest extension of Soviet influence. The position is very different to what it was this time last year and I have the feeling that any American policy which is finally developed will not tend towards appeasement."⁵⁶ Macmillan harkened back to Suez and the notion that last fall the United States did not support the idea of action to prevent the spread of communism, but now they approved of action. Macmillan did not call the United States' hypocrites but certainly seemed surprised at the United States' newfound initiative towards using allied nations to invade a communist regime.

⁵⁵ From Ambassador Caccia to PM Macmillan dated September 6, 1957, OBL, MS Macmillan dep. C. 919, Fol. 250-252.

⁵⁶ Outward Telegram from CRO to Mr. Diefenbaker(Ottawa), Mr. Menzies (Canberra), and Mr. Holland (Wellington) from PM Macmillan dated 10th September 1957, OBL, MS Macmillan dep. C. 919. Fol. 271.

Another indicator of British evolution of foreign policy and understanding of their newfound place under the United States is shown in a telegram from Macmillan to Ambassador Caccia telling Dulles that Macmillan told the old commonwealth leaders about the plan with Syria. Macmillan wrote, "So much harm was done at the time of Suez by the fact that we had not consulted the Commonwealth that I have felt it necessary to take this step."⁵⁷ A few days later Dulles messaged Macmillan venting his frustration that the Arab states did not take action against Syria in the region, mainly because they did not want to start a war. He also informed Macmillan that if the Suez Canal closed again the United States would act to open it this time around.⁵⁸

Military action did not occur in Syria via the western powers, nor through their Arab allies, but several conclusions can be drawn from this episode. The United States essentially formulated a plan near identical to what the British did with the French the year before at Suez. The main difference lied in the fact that the United States now held the title of the main superpower in the world. Britain showed clear understanding of this hypocrisy in its message to its Commonwealth members, and while supportive of United States action, Macmillan noticed the level at which the United States previously condemned Britain for the Suez Crisis. For the United States to turn around a year later and attempt the same action is nothing short of hypocrisy. The other aspect that came out of the Syria situation was that Egypt and Syria would join forces to form the communist aligned United Arab Republic or U.A.R. to ward off further western incursions into the Levant. On the other pro-western side, Iraq and Jordan would form the Arab Federation.

⁵⁷ To Ambassador Caccia from Macmillan, dated September 12, 1957, OBL, MS Macmillan dep. C. 919, Fol. 272.

⁵⁸ To PM Macmillan from Secretary of State dated September 16, 1957, OBL, MS Macmillan dep. C. 919, Fol. 285-286.

A similar hypocrisy can be seen in East Asia a year later in the United States overreaction to a territorial dispute over the Chinese island of Formosa, now Taiwan. A series of messages between Secretary Dulles and Macmillan, plainly shows Macmillan's shift away from interventionism. On September 5, 1958, Secretary Dulles outlined the case for action against the Chinese over the small islands off China, explicitly mentioning defending Formosa. He felt that if this region in the far east falls then all around it would fall as well. Dulles also described this as a potential nuclear war.⁵⁹ Macmillan immediately replied showing hesitancy towards action and worried about the risks involving troops.⁶⁰ A week later Macmillan expressed his reservations to his Commonwealth leaders. Macmillan was clearly against the United Kingdom, or any commonwealth nation, using force of any kind to defend the islands off China. Macmillan then immediately told the Commonwealth members that the United States government has neither sought nor received promises of British support in the event of war over the islands.⁶¹

⁵⁹ From Dulles to Macmillan dated September 5, 1958, OBL, MS Macmillan dep. C. 924, Fol. 13-16.

⁶⁰ From Macmillan to Dulles dated September 5, 1958, OBL, MS Macmillan dep. C. 924, Fol. 17-21.

⁶¹ From CRO to Mr. Diefenbaker, Mr. Menzies, Mr. Nash, and Mr. Nehru from Macmillan dated September 12, 1958, OBL, MS Macmillan dep. C. 924, Fol. 32.



Image II: American Soldiers in Lebanon 1958 ⁶²

Lebanon: An American Suez

1958 was possibly one of the most vital and important years in the emergence of nationalist movements in the Middle East. Seemingly, every country experienced a major wave of conflict during this time as Nasser's action against Britain started to be replicated in more countries. Towards the end of Lebanese President Chamouns' term, an insurrection broke out with one side wishing to join the now formed U.A.R. and the other side wishing to remain loyal to the western powers. While Britain did not come off as overly keen to start the conflict, they again showed a willingness to help the United States

⁶² <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2003654381/> , LC-U9- 1472E-36 [P&P] USN&WR COLL - Job no. 1472E, frame 36 (corresponding contact sheet), Accessed December 3, 2017.

potentially invade Lebanon. But having learned their lesson with Suez, they allowed the United States to be the country to send in ground forces.

In mid-May of 1958, the chiefs of staff of the British military met to discuss what would be done in Lebanon. Sir William Dickson, the chairman of the chiefs of staff committee, mentioned at the start of a meeting held on May 13 that any military effort would have to be coordinated with the United States. In the same document, Field Marshal Sir Gerald Templer expressed the fear that inaction in Lebanon could potentially mean Nasser would have free reign to subvert more countries in the Middle East, and that Russia could potentially make similar threats to those they made during Suez. Cabinet Secretary Sir Norman Brook entered the meeting and said the cabinet favored intervention in Lebanon, and all members of the joint chiefs agreed that the United States should play the major military role. Explicitly stated was that “there was no intention that the United Kingdom should take action alone.”⁶³ This sentiment shown by the head of the military branches showed a clear shift in British policy in the wake of Suez. No longer did Britain wish to go at it alone or get involved in every major conflict that came about. While Britain remained worried about the potential effect of both Nasser and Russia in the region, Britain left the United States to initiate the action in the region.

The day after the meeting of the Joint Chiefs, Ambassador Caccia sent Prime Minister Macmillan a telegram regarding Lebanon. Macmillan previously expressed worry that it might look to the Americans that the British were pushing them into a conflict to get into trouble in Lebanon. Caccia reassured Macmillan that is not the case

⁶³ Top Secret Chief of Staff Committee Confidential Annex to C.O.S. (58) 40th Meeting held on Tuesday, 13th May 1958. Kew, National Archives, DEFE 4/107, 1-2.

with United States officials and that British assurances of support were good enough.⁶⁴ In a separate message, Ambassador Caccia discussed a conversation he held with Dulles. Caccia specifically mentioned that the United States worried that Britain was pushing the United States into conflict to be their “tit for tat” for what happened at Suez.⁶⁵ In other words, Dulles felt that Britain could have been setting up the United States to be embarrassed on the world stage in the same manner that Britain received global condemnation over the Suez Crisis. This worry shows clear growth on Macmillan’s part in making sure the special relationship remained as strong as ever, but also shows British growth in their ability to not show the kind of imperial drive to war they previously exhibited at Suez. They had changed their foreign policy so drastically that the United States worried they must be being set up in a revenge scheme over how the United States embarrassed Britain over the Suez Crisis.

In a telegram that discussed a conversation with King Fasal and the Crown Prince of Lebanon, the British made their intention clear that they hoped that Lebanon should not have to appeal to the United States or Britain for military support but if need be, both countries would help. King Faisal indicated he hoped that Iraq would be able to come to Lebanon’s aid, negating the need for Anglo-American support.⁶⁶ By July, the Americans indicated that they did not immediately need British troops regarding Lebanon, but that England could provide political and physical assistance if the United States needed assistance. These cabinet minutes noted that Jordan wanted help from the United States

⁶⁴ For Macmillan from Ambassador Caccia dated May 14, 1958, OBL, MS Macmillan dep. C. 924, Fol. 115.

⁶⁵ Misrepresentation of UK Policy towards intervention in the Lebanon, May 23, 1958, KNA, FO 371/134119, VL 1015/157 Levant Department.

⁶⁶ VA 1015/98 Conversation with King Fasal and Crown Prince. Dated May 18, 1958, KNA, FO 371/134118, VA 1015/98.

and the United Kingdom if things were to go south.⁶⁷ By July 15, United States Marines landed on the beaches of Lebanon and weeks later their peak strength reached 13,300 troops, a few weeks later the United States would start to remove their troops entirely as the situation no longer required United States ground forces.⁶⁸

Conclusions

In the two years following the Suez Crisis, Macmillan took the British in an entirely new direction. A direction historians have not, and do not give Britain enough credit for. This position changed from an action first, words later stance regarding threats, to one of rational foreign policy under Harold Macmillan. The United States felt inclined to either invade, or attempt to get other nations to invade, countries they felt might turn to communism or whose interests conflicted with the west. Britain no longer held the same imperial desires they did pre-Suez. Macmillan learned the lesson of the Suez Crisis and instead allowed the United States to take the lead regarding invasion or action in their old empire. Britain maintained a presence in the Middle East and did not shy away from chances to get involved but there is tremendous hesitancy in comparison to 1956.

Britain's bitterness towards Egypt remained well into 1957. The defeat suffered at the hands of Nasser over the Suez Canal on the world stage seemed unforgivable even to Macmillan. However, Britain immediately remedied the situation in Cyprus, much to the delight of the United States, who noticed the evolution in foreign policy. From Muscat and Oman, to Syria, and even Lebanon, the British government showed a clear understanding of their new role in global politics. Macmillan attempted to let their

⁶⁷ Cabinet Minutes dated July 14-15 1958, OBL, MS Macmillan dep. C. 924, Fol. 139-140.

⁶⁸ William Roger Louis and Roger Owen, *A Revolutionary Year: The Middle East in 1958*, (London: IB Taurus Publishers, 2002) xiv-xv.

regional allies work out their own disputes. Their reservations about entering new conflicts was a complete reversal in policy compared to the Suez Crisis, where they did almost everything in their power to invade Egypt. No longer did Britain cling to the imperial dream. Britain finally understood their role because of the Suez Crisis. Their foreign policy in the two years following Suez in the middle east should be seen as a success and not a sign of failure or decline in British prestige. Britain took the Suez Crisis, a total failure and disaster, and used that to restructure their foreign policy and change it for the better. Now the next set of soon to be former colonial possessions needed to be addressed. The African continent experienced the same wave of nationalism that the Middle East experienced, and Macmillan needed to adapt his new foreign policy to this region.

CHAPTER II: A LIGHT IN THE HEART OF DARKNESS: NEW FOREIGN POLICY IN BRITISH COLONIAL AFRICA

Requiem for an Empire

While the Middle East problems had more or less been handled, Harold Macmillan turned to the growing nationalist movements fermenting in Africa and the worry that this nationalist fervor would lead to newly independent countries turning towards Communism. The rapid end of African colonization was all but apparent by the end of 1959 and Macmillan and his wife, Lady Dorothy Cavendish, the daughter of the 9th Duke of Devonshire, set out on a tour of Africa that started on January 5, 1960 and ended on February 15, 1960. In that five and a half week span they covered 13,360 miles by air, 5,410 by sea, and about 800 by road.⁶⁹

Previously, Ghana was the first domino to fall. On March 7, 1957, Ghanaians raised their new flag in Accra on the polo grounds amid celebrations of their newfound independence.⁷⁰ While the country was independent, Macmillan stated the newly appointed Prime Minister, Kwame Nkrumah, “made it clear that he wished Ghana to become a republic as soon as possible.”⁷¹ Macmillan was accepting of Nkrumah’s position, only saying that it must follow an orderly course. It was here in Accra where Macmillan, at a state reception, gave a calculated but reserved speech to the members of the assembly where he would first utter the phrase “the wind of change is blowing right through Africa”. He stated that because it was so early in his trip “it was not necessary to deal with any of the graver issues; it was chiefly confined to matter of local importance.”

⁶⁹ Harold Macmillan, *Pointing the Way 1959-1961* (London: Macmillan, 1972) 119.

⁷⁰ Trevor Royle, *Winds of Change: The End of Empire in Africa* (London: John Murray, 1996) 150.

⁷¹ Harold Macmillan, *Pointing the Way*, 122.

⁷² Thankfully for Macmillan and his plans to relinquish colonial rule over South Africa, the press did not take notice of his utterance of the “winds of change”.

Macmillan and his wife continued their tour, visiting Nigeria, Lagos, as well parts of the Central African Federation, specifically Northern and Southern Rhodesia (now Zambia and Zimbabwe). These stops enabled Macmillan to see firsthand reactions of Africans and Europeans alike to their newfound, or soon to be, independence from direct British rule. The Macmillan’s then reached South Africa, their most problematic stop. They arrived in Johannesburg on January 27 and received a fitting reception before touring throughout the country, exploring the Bechuanaland Protectorate, the Northern Transvaal, the Rand, Swaziland, Durban, Bloemfontein, and Basutoland.⁷³

As Macmillan notes in his memoirs he was not allowed to meet members of the African National Congress or ANC. The ANC was established in 1912 and was the primary African freedom party. From the 1940s, it spearheaded the fight to eliminate apartheid, the official South African policy of racial separation and discrimination.⁷⁴ It had been banned in 1955, with the leadership and Nelson Mandela arrested and imprisoned on Robben Island. Macmillan felt the security precautions were unnecessary and overdone. Macmillan complained of their effects, but they highlight the tensions which surrounded his stay in South Africa. The significant events that followed took place in Cape Town.

In Cape Town the Macmillan’s were guests of Dr. Hendrik Frensch Verwoerd, the Prime Minister of South Africa and leader of the Afrikaners. In 1948, the Afrikaans party

⁷² Harold Macmillan, 124.

⁷³ Macmillan, *Pointing The Way*, 150

⁷⁴ <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/8309/African-National-Congress-ANC> (retrieved March 24th, 2018)

took over instituting a policy of racial discrimination and white dominance. By the end of Macmillan's first day in Cape Town, he realized how the ideological stance taken by Dr. Verwoerd negatively transformed the country.

I began to realize to the full extent the degree of obstinacy, amounting really to fanaticism, which Dr. Verwoerd brought to the consideration of his policies. Apartheid to him was more than a political philosophy, it was a religion; a religion based on the Old Testament rather than on the New, and recalling in its expression some of the attitudes and even the phrases which had become famous in the Scottish history of the seventeenth century...In a country where there is at least the advantage of being able to enlist the services of an African staff, he refused to have a single African in his house

⁷⁵

Macmillan found that apartheid was more than just a legal system; it was near lunacy, and Macmillan thought of Dr. Verwoerd as a bigot. "Nothing one could say or put forward would have the smallest effect upon the views of this determined man...here it was a blank wall."⁷⁶ Due to these reasons Macmillan decided against informing Dr. Verwoerd of the true intentions of his speech the following day.

A Farewell to Africa

The "Winds of Change" speech occurred at 10:30 am on February 3, as Macmillan addressed both houses of parliament in the historic chamber of the old Cape Colony Parliament. Macmillan presided above the two hundred and fifty audience members including Dr. Verwoerd, the opposition leaders, the speaker of the house, and other officials. The speech, occurring on the fiftieth anniversary of the union of South Africa, referred to by Macmillan as the 'golden wedding of the union', helped further contribute to its significance.

⁷⁵ Macmillan, *Pointing the Way*, 152.

⁷⁶ Harold Macmillan, *Pointing the Way*, 153.

Macmillan started the speech as most foreign dignitaries do, by complementing the host country. He praised the strong economy and industries built in South Africa, as well as the beauty of Durban and the skyscrapers of Johannesburg. Macmillan next turned to Britain's part in the development of South Africa, making sure to remark that two-thirds of overseas investment into South Africa came from Britain and also that one-third of imports and exports to and from South Africa were by way of Britain. Macmillan then thanked the South Africans for their service in both World Wars as well as Korea. Macmillan echoed his personal sentiment because of his own service on the western front in World War I and as a minister to Winston Churchill in World War II.⁷⁷ This glowing introduction served as a soft pillow on which the members of South Africa's parliament fell very hard.

The next portion of the speech took a sharp turn away from the kind candor. Macmillan started the passage with "Ever since the breakup of the Roman Empire."⁷⁸ Macmillan was comparing the British Empire to the Roman Empire which was quite a statement, as Rome had controlled England for nearly four centuries. The British Empire had long surpassed the size of the Roman Empire, this also serves as a nod to Macmillan's classical education upbringing. "One of the constant facts of political life in Europe has been the emergence of independent nations. They have come into existence over the centuries in different forms, with different kinds of government, but all have been inspired by a deep, keen feeling of nationalism, which has grown as the nations have grown."⁷⁹ There are two things worth noting. First, Macmillan acknowledged the

⁷⁷ Harold Macmillan, *Pointing The Way*, 475.

⁷⁸ Macmillan, *Pointing The Way*, 156.

⁷⁹ Macmillan, *Pointing The Way*, 156

emerging nationalism he had been dealing with in the Middle East. Second, this passage was not originally written this way. The original draft began with “many nations are coming to believe in closer association with one another”⁸⁰ This showed that Macmillan wanted the focus to be on Britain. This was not about the French or Belgians, this was about Britain leaving Africa.

Macmillan preceded further saying, “In the twentieth century, and especially since the end of the war, the processes which gave birth to the nation states of Europe have been repeated all over the world. We have seen the awakening of national consciousness in peoples who have for centuries lived in dependence upon some other power. Fifteen years ago, this movement spread through Asia. Many countries there of different races and civilizations pressed their claim to an independent national life”⁸¹ This reflects India’s recent struggle for independence, the spread of decolonization in Africa, and the recent rise of nationalism.

Macmillan continued, “Today the same thing is happening in Africa, and the most striking of all the impressions I have formed since I left London a month ago is of the strength of this African national consciousness. In different places it takes different forms, but it is happening everywhere. The wind of change is blowing through this continent, and whether we like it or not, this growth of national consciousness is a political fact. We must accept it as a fact, and our national policies must take account of it.”⁸² This was a defining moment. Macmillan had brought to Africa a message of decolonization and an end to imperialism. This message compared in stark contrast to the

⁸⁰ Macmillan dep. d. 788, fol. 19r <http://treasures.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/Harold-Macmillans-Wind-of-Change-speech#comments>

⁸¹ Macmillan, *Pointing the Way*, 156.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 156.

official mind and staunch imperialists view on foreign policy. Macmillan proclaimed to the world that Britain would leave South Africa to govern itself, there was no uprising or rebellion. Instead Macmillan decided for Britain's best interest, to leave Africa. Rarely, if ever, in the history of man, does an empire as vast as Britain get the ability to withdraw from a continent on its own terms. However, Macmillan did so with such grace and elegance in his words. The enormity of this withdrawal, as well as the fact Macmillan upended centuries of foreign policy in one speech, cannot be overstated. The leader of a nation decided to leave nations to its subjects, but not before doing a little housekeeping.

The growing threat of communism was also core issue for this speech. He contends there are three main groups: the East, the West, and the undecided nations. "Will these nations be drawn into the communist camp? Or will the great experiments in self-government that are now being made in Asia and Africa, especially within the Commonwealth, prove so successful, and by their example so compelling that the balance will come down in favor of freedom and order and justice."⁸³ This addressed the communist question tremendously. Instead of threatening to cut trade or imports Macmillan asks the question of "do you wish to be free or live in an oppressed system?" The contest for the hearts and minds of the non-aligned nations was a major impetus for extending independence early. Macmillan did not want the African nations to fall into Communist hands.

The next major point in the speech would become the most controversial, and the battle between Macmillan's personal beliefs and Britain's interests would emerge. He quotes British Foreign Secretary Selwyn Lloyd who said, "In those territories where

⁸³ Ibid 476.

different races or tribes live side by side the task is to ensure that all the people may enjoy security and freedom and the chance to contribute as individuals to the progress and well-being of these countries. We reject the idea of any inherent superiority of one race over another. Our policy therefore is non-racial. It offers a future in which Africans, Europeans, Asians, the peoples of the Pacific and others with whom we are concerned, will all play their full part as citizens in the countries where they live, and in which feelings of race will be submerged in loyalty to new nations.”⁸⁴

He goes on: “...Frankly there are some aspects of your policies which make it impossible for us to do this without being false to our own deep convictions about the political destinies of free men to which in our own territories we are trying to give effect.”⁸⁵ History has not been kind to Macmillan and his handling of apartheid but why? He made it known that Britain does not stand for racial discrimination and that he felt it to be wrong. Where he takes the most criticism from his handling of apartheid is that he would not refuse to trade with South Africa over apartheid and dismisses the idea of British protests demanding they boycott South African consumer goods.⁸⁶ While dealing with South Africa on the surface might have seemed wrong, Macmillan had to toe a line. He made a massive political decision that had never been done before. How often does an empire leave a country to run and govern itself? Part of leaving a country to run itself is to let them handle their business the way they want too. Macmillan clearly felt very strongly against the issue of apartheid and denounced it. But the idea of giving up

⁸⁴ Ibid, 158.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 158.

⁸⁶ Ibid, 480.

Britain's whole stake in South Africa economically would have been crippling. He needed to walk the line between his political aspirations and his personal beliefs.

He ends the speech with grace and humility. "I am confident that in another fifty years we shall look back on the differences that exist between us now as matters of historical interest, for as time passes and one generation yields to another, human problems change and fade. Let us remember these truths. Let us resolve to build, not to destroy, and let us remember always that weakness comes from division, strength from unity." This was as elegant a way as any to declare the end of empire in South Africa, and the end of empire throughout Africa that was to come in the following years. This speech did exactly what it intended to do. It declared Britain's withdrawal from Southern Africa, it addressed the issue of communism once South Africa has become an independent republic, and it denounced apartheid as wrong, though most overlook this because Britain refused to sanction any boycotts. Macmillan left his mark on history in the best possible way and without a doubt without this speech Britain's withdrawal from all of Africa eventually would not be nearly as well carried out. This speech in itself saved Britain from a fate similar to what would later happen to France.

Reactions

Immediately following Macmillan's speech Dr. Verwoerd, who by Macmillan's own account seemed "surprised and shocked"⁸⁷, stood up and gave a thank you before delivering an impromptu defense of his policies, putting the case, as he expressed it, 'for justice of the white man'.⁸⁸ Accordingly at a banquet the following day a photo surfaced

⁸⁷ Ibid, 155.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 158.

of Macmillan and Dr. Verwoerd with a chair between them.⁸⁹ It is not known if this was because of the speech or protocol but nevertheless it proves an enduring image of how Dr. Verwoerd took the speech. The parliamentarians in attendance gave the speech a warm reception probably more focused on the praise to their country. In a letter to the United States Department of State the South African government seemed to realize how this will impact their image abroad stating “There is no disguising the fact government will certainly be extremely cool for long time to come. Our action at this time is bitterly resented by government and by great mass of Afrikaner people, who feel we have sold out Whites in order to curry favor with blacks.”⁹⁰

At home *The Times* wrote a middle ground review, not offering praise nor criticism, more a summation of what the speech entailed and echoing the similar warning that if South Africa did not get its affairs in order it might be tempted towards communism.⁹¹ Right wing Conservatives struck back at Macmillan’s leadership by forming the Conservative Monday Club, a British political pressure group comprised of many Conservative members of parliament. They opposed the early departure from Southern Africa and strongly supported white minority rule. The club previously had ties to the Conservative Party but in 2001, due to their overly zealous stance on political and racial views, the Conservative Party denounced the club.⁹²

Two major British voices emerged whom condemned or criticized the speech. Lord Colyton said it came “Twenty five years too early...it precipitated everything from

⁸⁹ Alistair Horne, *Harold Macmillan Volume II*, 197.

⁹⁰ United States Department of State / Foreign relations of the United States, 1958-1960. Africa (1958-1960) pg. 743

⁹¹ The Times (London, England), Thursday, Feb 04, 1960; pg. 11; Issue 54686.

⁹² http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/1607279.stm

Algeria to the Congo.”⁹³ This statement seems incorrect as both Algeria and the Congo were already dealing with turmoil and it was only a matter of time till things got out of hand. The second British figure to come out against the speech was Lord Hailsham. Hailsham felt “It may be that he went too far, if he had gone slower, the results in Africa might have been the same, but at least a lesser cost to human lives.”⁹⁴ This is incorrect as the timing could not have been more opportune for Britain to avoid the violence and bloodshed that happened in India. By preemptively leaving South Africa, and eventually all of Africa, the British avoided having to deal with potential large scale racial violence that would come about in the late 1980’s in South Africa.

Abroad the speech received near universal acclaim. In Canada the *Ottawa Journal* wrote “It could not have been easy for him to ‘stand up in South Africa’s Parliament and tell the authors of racial segregation that Britain would have no part of it...and that ‘No South African listening to these words could be in doubt about them...the speech may well find an honored place in history books of the future.”⁹⁵ President Eisenhower sent Macmillan a letter upon his return from his trip to Africa specifically citing the Wind of Change speech saying “Very frankly, I was especially struck by your masterful address in Cape Town, and your analysis of the forces of nationalism in Africa.”⁹⁶

While this event did not immediately end Britain’s imperial position in Africa it helped to set events into motion that would end British colonialism. Macmillan made it clear to the entire world that Britain no longer held a vested interest in colonial Africa. The same post Suez policy that Macmillan begun in the Middle East would be applied

⁹³ (From an interview with Lord Colyton in) Horne, *Harold Macmillan Volume II: 1957-1986*, 198.

⁹⁴ (From an interview with Lord Hailsham in) Horne, *Harold Macmillan Volume II: 1957-1986*, 200.

⁹⁵ *Ottawa Journal* February 5th 1960

⁹⁶ Macmillan, *Pointing The Way*, 163-164

now to Africa. No longer was Britain going to be the great imperial power, just a great power. In order to further fight against the growing tide of communism Africa had to be left to the nationalist ambitions of the indigenous populations. Macmillan learned however, that speeches were easy to make but enacting policy was a totally different ordeal. If Macmillan's ambition was to be seen through he needed a good colonial secretary. That colonial secretary was Iain Macleod, and through Iain Macleod Macmillan would execute his foreign policy vision of a de-colonized Africa that would steer towards the West and not communism.

The Ground Work

The Middle East showed Prime Minister Harold Macmillan's early prowess at forging a new foreign policy for Britain. After his remarkable tour of Africa and outlining his new vision moving forward, it was time to enact the same style of foreign policy shift. Moving into Africa he again showed his skill at negotiating and leading Britain in a new direction for foreign policy. The Central African Federation, the conflict within the Federation, and Macmillan's response are terrific indicators of the kind of new foreign policy Macmillan championed. Dealing with a staunch imperialist in Sir Roy Welensky, Macmillan showed once again that Britain had moved past its old imperial ways. This new course for foreign policy in Africa should be seen as an extension of what Macmillan started in the Middle East. The aim of the next few sections is to once again show how the Suez Crisis helped reshape British foreign policy for the better, within Africa. Macmillan championed a new path forward, this time going head to head with its own colonial overseers more so rather than revolutionaries.

Towards the beginning of Macmillan's tenure as Prime Minister he had requested a balance sheet that would indicate whether colonies were a liability or an asset. The result was indeterminate. There were too many intangibles and the military and strategic elements were intertwined with the economic. Macmillan, however, made up his own mind and determined these colonies were an albatross and wished to avoid a collision with African nationalism as well as get back in the good graces of the United States.⁹⁷ Maintaining the special relationship with the United States was still a major priority in Macmillan's actions within Africa.

While the Middle East, under President Nasser, fell under a wave of revolutions across the region, Africa had revolutionaries of its own and Macmillan's tactile choices regarding decolonization should be seen as in reaction to pan Africanism than fear of communism and war that prevailed throughout the middle east.⁹⁸ The future president of Malawi, Hastings Kamuzu Banda being chief among them, as well as Kwame Nkrumah, the charismatic revolutionary who would later become the first President of free Ghana. Lord Home, then commonwealth secretary, wrote that Nkrumah saw himself 'as a messiah sent to deliver Africa from bondage' and threatened to become the Nasser of black Africa.⁹⁹ John Russell, the British ambassador in Addis Ababa, used even harsher terms. Russell found Nkrumah to be even worse than Nasser:

In comparison with Nkrumah, Nasser is a pale amateur in the export of African subversion. Nkrumah is the boy for us to watch...Nkrumah is our enemy, he is determined to complete our expulsion from an Africa which he aspires to dominate absolutely...We, being white, cannot hope to fight him openly in Africa. Ergo: we must find blacks who

⁹⁷ Judith Brown and William Roger Lewis, *The Oxford History of the British Empire IV: The Twentieth Century*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) 343.

⁹⁸ Brown and Lewis, *The Oxford History of the British Empire IV*, 346.

⁹⁹ Memorandum by Home, 1 June 1959, FO 371/176507

can; and although it would be counterproductive to damn them with our old colonial kiss, yet surely it is not beyond our ingenuity to find effective ways of affording them discreet and legitimate support.¹⁰⁰

Simply put, Africa had its own charismatic revolutionaries and Macmillan needed to approach the continent just as delicately as he approached the Middle East.

The Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, also called Central African Federation, was a political unit created in 1953 and ended on December 31, 1963, that embraced the British settler-dominated colony of Southern Rhodesia, present day Zimbabwe, and the territories of Northern Rhodesia, present day Zambia, and Nyasaland, now Malawi, which were under the control of the British Colonial Office.¹⁰¹ The aim of the Federation's creation was to create a multiracial society (in contrast with the apartheid of South Africa) and to establish an economically viable unit that would benefit both Europeans and Africans, but the latter would be seen as a reinforcement of white domination. The Federation's structure was a major problem for Britain. The Colonial Office held responsibility for Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland; the Commonwealth Relations Office held corresponding and overlapping responsibilities for the Federation and the self-governing colony of Southern Rhodesia and the two offices of state openly and aggressively hated each other.¹⁰² A key difference in the CAF, in comparison to the Middle East, is the heavy resistance Macmillan faced in the Prime Minister of the Federation, Sir Roy Welensky. Born in 1907 in Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia (present day Harare, Zimbabwe), Welensky would become the driving force behind the creation of the Federation and fought viciously against the concept of black rule in the Federation.

¹⁰⁰ Russell to R.A. Butler, Confidential, 31 Dec. 1963, FO 371/176507.

¹⁰¹ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Federation-of-Rhodesia-and-Nyasaland> (Accessed February 13, 2018)

¹⁰² Brown and Lewis, *The Oxford History of the British Empire IV*, 353.

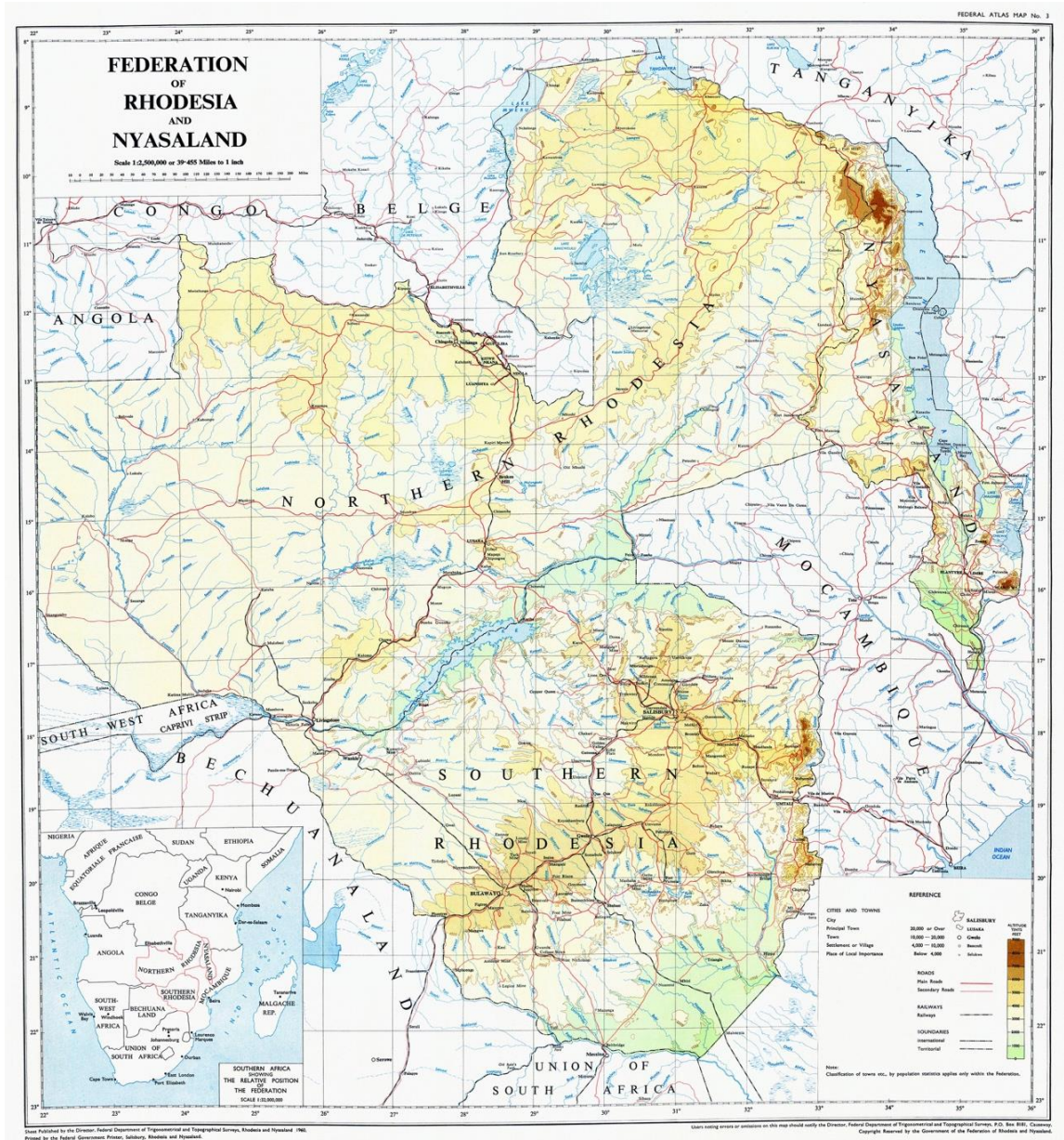
While not as oppressive as South Africa, Welensky did resort to violence to attempt to keep the Federation together and actively pushed back against Macmillan's foreign policy decisions.

In February 1961, as tensions in the Central African Federation started to reach a fever pitch, Macmillan wrote in his diary "We may have a Boston Tea Party (Welensky declaring the Federation independent and seizing the colony of Northern Rhodesia), or an African Blood-Bath (riots all over British Africa), accentuated if Colonial Secretary were to resign...and if he were to resign, I think Government would have fallen. All the younger men in the Party would have gone against us."¹⁰³ These sections will tell the story of how Macmillan was able to avoid both scenarios, with the help of a daring Colonial Secretary in Iain Macleod who played his own risky game to gain as many concessions for the freedom of the Central African Federation. Macleod threatened resignation multiple times. First in February 1960, to secure the release of Hastings Banda in Nyasaland in time to give evidence as a free man to the Monckton Commission inquiring to the future of the Federation. Also In February 1961, over the issue of equal power sharing for blacks and whites in Northern Rhodesia. Finally, in July 1961 to give Jomo Kenyatta, the future first President of free Kenya, freedom. Macleod won each time and without his persistence independence easily would have been delayed for years potentially. Macmillan's backing of Macleod's policy helped to escalate the independence of the Federation, minus Rhodesia which took another sixteen years to resolve. However, by 1964 Malawi and Zambia were free independent countries due to Macmillan and his evolved foreign policy, Rhodesia took another sixteen years to

¹⁰³ Macmillan Diary, 22 Feb. 1961.

achieve independence in 1980, but almost all major British colonial dependencies were able to gain their independence in the wake of the Suez Crisis. Both due to Macmillan and Ian Macleod's steadfast aim to end the colonial system in Africa.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ Brown and Lewis, *The Oxford History of the British Empire IV*, 354.



105 Image III: Map of the Federation of Nyasaland and Rhodesia

105 <http://www.britishempire.co.uk/maproom/rhodesia/centralafricanfederationmap.htm>, Central African Federation Map, 1960, (Accessed February 13, 2018)

The Banda Problem

In April of 1957 Sir Roy Welensky started to lift barriers for African advancement but suspicion on whether or not this would actually make a difference still lingered. While legislation passed advancing African issues such as: making it possible for leading Africans to stay in previously European only hotels, integration of the machinery labor force, opening of the civil service to Africans, and finally allowing Africans to participate in the lottery. While these aspects took steps forward, a bill was brought forward to ban the African National Congress in all of the Federation, Furthermore, only because of mounting pressure did a bill known as the Preventative detention bill get withdrawn. This bill allowed the detention of undesirables for five years without trial.¹⁰⁶

By mid-1959 the Colonial Office feared that “the Federation may simply break up under the mounting pressure of the internal conflict.”¹⁰⁷ Segregation started to be stripped away such as at places like train stations where signs denoting the separate between “Europeans” and “Africans” were being hastily removed.¹⁰⁸ At worst the white Southern Rhodesians would declare independence unilaterally with the support of South Africans, and at best the British hoped that the Federation would become a primary multiracial community that could act as a shock absorber between South African apartheid and the emerging black states in the North.¹⁰⁹ Though if white domination was to be maintained in the Central African Federation, especially by way of force, it was thought that “the whole of the western position in black Africa, even in the territories...which are well

¹⁰⁶ “Sir Roy Lifts Barriers-but Suspicion Still Lingers”, dated April 17 1959, The National Archives, DO 35/7619, doc. 31

¹⁰⁷ ‘Africa: The Next Ten Years’. FO 371/137972, p. 17.

¹⁰⁸ Extract from a Federal Newsletter, dated May 15 1959, The National Archives, DO 35/7619, doc. 33.

¹⁰⁹ William Roger Louis, *Ends of British Imperialism: The Scramble for Empire, Suez and Decolonization* (London: Taurus, 2006) 494.

disposed towards us, will be gravely shaken.”¹¹⁰ Mr. Jasper Savanhu, the only African member of the Federal Government of Rhodesia warned members of the Kitwe chamber of commerce on July 16th that “Nothing can stop African advancement and it is advisable to acknowledge this fact and meet it fully prepared.”¹¹¹ The Central African Federation was about to experience the same kind of change the Middle East previously dealt with.

Iain Macleod attempted to walk a very fine line between self-rule for indigenous peoples and appeasing their soon to be former colonists. Before Banda could be handled, Macleod sought to correct that balance in Kenya. During a succession of constitutional conferences, Macleod brokered and fixed that balance of power during the more delicate transitional phase from British colonial rule to independence. The moment where Macleod’s officials realized his appointment meant a new era for British foreign policy in Africa was never forgotten. As soon as he settled in to his role as colonial secretary he summoned his senior advisors. One of those advisors, Max Webber the head of the East Africa section asked, “What are we hoping to get out of this conference in Kenya?” A long silence fell over the room and Weber prompted Macleod to share his thoughts by suggesting that the time had come for a breakthrough to African majority rule. Macleod simply nodded and with that he set a chain of events in motion to end Britain’s African empire.¹¹²

The issue of the release of Hastings Banda became so contentious that in a private correspondence between Macleod and Macmillan, Macmillan informed Macleod that “if you would prefer to find a new Governor (for Nyasaland) you could count on my full

¹¹⁰ ‘Africa: The Next Ten Years’. FO 371/137972, p. 18.

¹¹¹ Extract from a Federal Newsletter, dated July 16 1959, The National Archives, DO 35/7619, doc. 49.

¹¹² Robert Sheppard, *Iain Macleod: A Biography*, (London: Hutchinson Press, 1994) 168.

support. In other words, I think that the course you recommend is right (expedited release of Banda), but I doubt very much whether you have got in Nyasaland the men to carry it through.”¹¹³ This sentiment by Macmillan shows just how much faith he held in both Macleod and the idea of a radically different foreign policy. No longer would Britain bow to its colonial aspirations and instead embraced change, so much so that governors’ jobs were no longer secure if they stood in the way of rapid change.

By February of 1960, the Southern Rhodesian government spent over five million pounds on African Advancement. This amounted to a quarter of Southern Rhodesia’s entire budget.¹¹⁴ Matters became worse regarding the release of Hastings Banda and they reached their worst point at the end of February with the Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesian Edgar Whitehead writing “I tell you straight that if you release Banda in Nyasaland, Southern Rhodesia will blow up and leave the Federation and I shan’t be able to stop them!”¹¹⁵ These words further show the colonial support did not exist behind Macleod in his endeavor to give freedom to those in the Federation. It was shortly after the Whitehead comment that Macleod threatened his own resignation if Banda’s release became delayed. Thankfully it never came to this as Macmillan acquiesced to his Colonial Secretary. Macleod summed up his contentiousness with Macmillan over this issue very well in an interview he later gave to W.P. Kirkman in 1967.

I think the difficulty with Harold Macmillan in relation to Africa was that he had all the right instincts, as his ‘Wind of Change’ speech showed quite clearly. He was more than prepared for a rapid move to independence-as his appointment of myself showed. But from time to time he

¹¹³ PRO, PREM 11/3075, Macleod to Macmillan, 4 January 1960, Macmillan to Macleod, 29 January 1960.

¹¹⁴ Extract Fortnightly Summary, The National Archives, DO 35/7619, doc. 77.

¹¹⁵ PRO, PREM 11/3076, Home to Macmillan, 20 & 21 February 1960.

wanted, as I daresay we all do, the best of both worlds, he didn't want to fall out with his good friends either at home on Central or East Africa as the case may be. Whereas, I took the brutal, but I think practical view that this was an omelette that you couldn't make without breaking eggs and one couldn't be friends with everybody however much one wanted to do it, while one was pursuing such a policy.¹¹⁶

These words show Macleod understood the nature of his job. Friends would not be made, and people would be upset with the changes Britain would bring to Africa. He held Macmillan's trust to do what needed to be done, despite local colonialists' protests, but Macleod did not take for granted that he became an enemy for doing so. Over the next month tensions remained high with the release date of Hastings Banda secured for the first week of April. Macleod was convinced that Banda, the de facto leader of the majority black people of Nyasaland, could come out of prison and keep the peace but the colonists were not entirely convinced of this. Macleod had reasons to be optimistic. His new Chief Secretary in Nyasaland, Sir Glyn Jones had gone to Gwelo Jail to visit Banda on March 10th and left with Banda being "supremely confident that his influence would result in there being no disorders or breaches of the peace on his release."¹¹⁷ While Macleod had advance knowledge that Banda believed he could keep the peace in Nyasaland, it did not help ease the colonists' worries.

Macleod spent the last week of March in the Federation, arriving in Nyasaland a mere two days before Banda's release date. Macleod met with both the Southern Rhodesian Prime Minister Whitehead and Sir Roy Welensky. Both conversations did not leave Macleod comfortable. Macleod felt Whitehead did not care at all about Dr. Banda,

¹¹⁶ Macleod interviewed by W.P. Kirkman, 29 December 1967 as found in Robert Sheppard, *Iain Macleod: A Biography*, (London: Hutchinson Press, 1994) 199

¹¹⁷ Jones note of a meeting with Banda, 10 March 1960. As found in Shepherd, *Macleod* (London: Hutchinson Press, 1994) 200

although he would use his release to pursue his own demands of Britain. While Welensky and Macleod got on well, Welensky warned him “in the most dramatic terms against what I proposed to do.” Sir Malcom Barrow, the Federal Cabinet Minister from Nyasaland reckoned that “10,000 Africans would be killed in the riots that would follow Banda’s release.” As Macleod himself noted, “this is a sobering reflection to have put to you by a man of Sir Malcolm’s standing, to somebody who had never been in that part of the world before and who didn’t really know what the consequences of the release were going to be.”¹¹⁸

To most this kind of internal pressure could cause one to crack or at least doubt their judgement. Not Iain Macleod. In a correspondence to Macmillan after the release of Banda Macleod states “Until the last moment warnings of disaster continued to be poured upon me. Blantyre was going to be in flames within a few hours’ time and hundreds of people would be killed. I am afraid that very many people here and in Salisbury were waiting to say ‘I told you so’.”¹¹⁹ Macleod never wavered in his conviction and in his interview with W.P. Kirkman he stated “I simply didn’t see how this country could go on as anything but an African country, there were only about 7,000 or 8,000 Europeans there, and whether one liked it or not Banda in jail or out of jail was the unquestioned leader. I remember saying at the time that in jail Banda was a myth, out of jail he would be a man, and I thought that I could deal with men.”¹²⁰ This major hurdle could be handled by someone of Macleod’s political talent and Macmillan’s support.

¹¹⁸ Macleod interviewed by W.P. Kirkman, 29 December 1967; PRO, PREM 11/3076, Macleod to Macmillan, 31 March 1960.

¹¹⁹ PRO, PREM 11/3076, Macleod to Macmillan, 3 April 1960.

¹²⁰ Macleod interviewed by W.P. Kirkman, 29 December 1967. As Found in Shepherd, *Macleod* (London: Hutchinson Press, 1994) 200.

On April 1 Banda received his release from Gwelo jail. The release was a minimal affair unobserved in the middle of the night. The first time Macleod met with Banda came shortly after his release in the Governor's House where they spoke for an hour with Macleod getting along quite well with Banda. The idea of both a public declaration for peace from Banda and a constitutional conference came directly out of this meeting. Though Macleod did not leave his meeting overly impressed by Banda. Macleod advised Macmillan that Banda "will exhaust his appeal pretty quickly for he is a vain and ignorant man...his ideas about constitutions are hopelessly inadequate and naïve and it is hard indeed to see anything but an imposed constitution(by the British Government) emerging from the talks...I am sure his authority will diminish rather than increase."¹²¹ This sentiment may have served to warn Macmillan the kind of person who he would be dealing with, as Banda was due to travel to London soon to appeal for peace and the decolonization of Nyasaland, it should be worth noting that Macleod's prediction was incorrect as Banda remained in power for thirty years.

Banda's release held an immediate impact. Macleod later admitted "Even I was surprised and delighted by the results of Banda's release. It was just as if one had lanced a boil...Everywhere one went in the country one saw clearly a relief of tension, one saw very great happiness amongst the people."¹²² The importance of Macleod's decision to release Banda as quickly as possible and following through with it cannot be overstated. Despite warnings of death, violence, and far reaching political ramifications Macleod followed through. With Macmillan's support, his vision of Britain going forward, and

¹²¹ PRO, PREM 11/3076, Macleod to Macmillan, 3 April 1960.

¹²² Macleod interviewed by W.P. Kirkman, 29 December 1967.

Macleod's determination, they resolved the Banda situation effectively. No longer was Britain looking at men like Banda as the next Nasser. Britain started to look at them as future equals.

The Trouble with Colonists

In July of 1960, the conversations between Welensky and Macmillan were becoming more antagonistic as Macmillan started to broach the ideas of self-determination and black rule. Welensky worried that Macmillan wished to potentially allow countries to split from the Federation but Macmillan reassured Welensky. Macmillan cabled to Welensky that countries would not be granted their immediate independence with African rulers, but that Federation countries were simply being primed to be full Commonwealth members.¹²³ As violence might spread, Welensky and Macmillan began debating if force should be used. In a telegram from Welensky to Macmillan Welensky states how he feels force would be incorrect and look terrible on the world stage if used in Nyasaland. "I dread to think what world reaction would be if our armed forces, yours or mine, had to be used to restore law and order in Nyasaland." At the same time Welensky wanted to expand the police force recruited from within England, and requested for a joint announced force to be stationed in Nyasaland.¹²⁴

In Macmillan's reply, Macmillan stated perhaps they should get Banda on board with a middle of the road course, i.e. constitutional advance. Macmillan did not think this Banda would want this for his people, Macmillan thus prepared for the worst case scenario (revolt), and wanted to be ready to act accordingly. The debate centered on

¹²³Messages between HM and Sir Roy Welensky about the Central African Federation, dated July 1960, OBL, MS Macmillan dep. C. 358, Fol. 9-11.

¹²⁴ Telegram from Welensky to Macmillan, dated July 1960, OBL, MS Macmillan dep. C. 358, Fol. 17-19.

whether Britain should be allowed to bring in troops before the federal government asked for British assistance. Macmillan felt with troops acting together the situation could be controlled and easily defended internationally.¹²⁵ Welensky did not appreciate this and in a harsh reply emphasized that Britain should not be the one to make military or political decisions on the ground regarding Nyasaland.¹²⁶ In a rather worried tone, Macmillan stated in reply to Welensky's harsh telegram that "The whole continent of Africa is in ferment, by reason of the impact of ideas upon its primitive peoples, and because of the way the communists are exploiting them for their own devilish ends. Your country which in normal times could have proceeded along an even course of political evolution is now the focus of all eyes."¹²⁷ Macmillan was worried that events in Nyasaland would occur like Suez, and that the situation needed not get out of control much like in the neighboring Congo. The other aspect of note here is the continued fear of communism infecting the soon to be former colonies. In an urgent telegram to Welensky, Macmillan wrote:

Our foremost concern is to act in agreement with you and in best interests of the Federation especially when things are so difficult in the Congo. We must both be ready to meet any adverse turn of the situation in Nyasaland after the constitutional conference. But I am sure we must not contemplate moving any troops to Nyasaland before the conference or even to make overt preparations for moving them afterwards. Whatever we may think of the prospects of the conference succeeding, it would be fatal to give the impression that we are already preparing for the worst. We want to conduct the conference in such a way that matter

¹²⁵ Telegram to Welensky from Macmillan, dated July 14, 1960, OBL, MS Macmillan dep. C. 358, Fol. 29-30.

¹²⁶ From Sir Roy Welensky to the PM dated July 21 1960, OBL, MS Macmillan dep. C. 358, Fol. 32.

¹²⁷ To Welensky from Macmillan, dated July 22, 1960, OBL, MS Macmillan dep. C. 358, Fol. 33.

do not come to a head at this stage and I think we should be able to achieve this.¹²⁸

Macmillan clearly did not want to give the impression that Britain attempted to interfere with Nyasaland's politics in a heavy-handed show of force. The fact that Macmillan did not wish to have troops present for the upcoming constitutional conference showed a substantial amount of good judgement to avoid the imperialist notions that it would have carried.

On November 16 parliament brought forward the Monckton Commission Report or Report of the Advisory Commission on the Review of the Constitution of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. The Commission concluded that the Federation could not be maintained except by force or through massive changes in racial legislation. It advocated most black African members to be in the Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesian legislatures and giving these territories the option to leave the Federation after five years.¹²⁹

The report had been made available to Welensky before its release and Macmillan already had been in contact with Welensky to try reason with him. Macmillan wrote that continuation of the federation could be a good thing but also stressed that secession could be feasible and a good idea as well. That people had the right to secede and specifically stated that "It is unrealistic to suppose in the middle of the twentieth century that you can hold peoples together by force against their free consent."¹³⁰ To state so specifically that it was unrealistic to attempt to hold together peoples by way of force less than five years

¹²⁸ To Welensky from Macmillan, dated July 21, 1960, The National Archives, CO 1015/2024 doc. 235-236

¹²⁹ Robert Blake, *A History of Rhodesia*, (York: Methuen Publishing Ltd, 1977) 331.

¹³⁰ To Welensky from Macmillan, dated October, 1960, OBL, MS Macmillan dep. C. 358, Fol. 56.

removed from Suez showed the tremendous efforts Macmillan made in reshaping British foreign policy not only in the Middle East but also within Africa.

Welensky, still fuming over the report and its conclusions, replied that Macmillan had “allowed the federation to be sold down the river”.¹³¹ By November Welensky, through Lord Dalhousie Governor General of the Federation, warned Duncan Sandys that if changes in Nyasaland or Northern Rhodesia which would lead to break up of the Federation without prior consultation were approved “we are prepared to defy the British Government and fight if necessary...I am not going to see all that the white man has built up and simply torn down.”¹³² Welensky would not give up on the Federation without literally fighting tooth and nail. Macleod, previously warned that the approach to a popular colonial policy was not feasible, there would be “toil and sweat and tears, but I hope not blood and I hope not bitterness.”¹³³ Macleod was also not immune to sympathy for Europeans in the Federation noting

(They are) Frightened, and it is very understandable that they should be so. A way of life that has seemed utterly safe, remote and secure is now brought suddenly into the frontiers of conflict and for the uncertainty that results they blame the British Government and our policies. But in fact our policies are the only ones that can save them...On the one side to bring the African away from his very real hatred of federation and of Salisbury and Welensky, and on the other to bring the European leaders to an understanding that they can no longer ignore the problems of African advance in their own countries.¹³⁴

This quote shows that both sides had legitimate problems with Britain’s new foreign policy course and harkened back to the earlier quote used by Macleod about

¹³¹ To Macmillan from Welensky, dated October 4, 1960, OBL, MS Macmillan dep. C. 358, Fol. 71.

¹³² PRO, PREM 11/3080, Dalhousie to Sandys, 11 November 1960.

¹³³ Conservative Conference, Scarborough, Official Record, 12 October 1960.

¹³⁴ PRO, PREM 11/3080, Macleod to Sandys, 15 November 1960.

“breaking eggs”. This policy was not universally accepted on both sides, but it became necessary to ensure both Africa’s future as well as Britain’s. A few days after this quote in discussing what could be done regarding a Federal Review Conference, that would hopefully help decide what was to become of the Federation, Macmillan and Macleod met at Chequers to discuss the matter. They found that the two main problems were Welensky thinking it was a matter between him and the Government (British), and second that Welensky ignored the African issue completely. Macmillan and Macleod stressed they did not want an Algeria.¹³⁵ This shows both how Welensky’s contentious effect towards the entire process, and how much Britain learned their lessons at Suez. No longer was Britain solely focused on the white man and British colonial desires. Now the indigenous population was considered, and how best to minimize violence and deaths.

The aforementioned Federal Review Conference did not go as planned. While the invitees were a who’s who of African politicians, both European and African, the only thing the conference did was show the gulf between both sides was bigger than ever. While Welensky had previously claimed he recognized the need for African advancement it was at the Conference where Macmillan would discover, to his amazement, that Welensky had never previously met the leaders of nationalist opinion in the northern territories Banda and Kaunda. The main nationalists wished for either total dissolution or universal suffrage for Africans, both options at the time were out of the question. The conference was marred by walkouts on both sides and delegation members being dismissed and while order would occasionally be restored the Government adjourned the

¹³⁵ PRO, PREM 11/3080, Wyndham note, Macleod and Macmillan 13 November 1960.

conference on December 17 and it never resumed.¹³⁶ Macleod looked back on the Review with a dismissive attitude stating:

It was an exercise that we had to go through but by this time one country(Nyasaland) had become, not independent, but had clearly been shown the door of independence, and I was beginning to move ahead with my plans for a second country, Northern Rhodesia...And so, although I listened gravely, and I daresay I said something from time to time, it was nothing like so important to me as the Conference about Nyasaland that had taken place in 1960(earlier in the year than the Federal Review Conference) and the one in 1961 (Northern Rhodesia) to which I was looking forward.¹³⁷

This Review was not what was most important to Macleod and British Colonial interests. On the other side of the table Welensky, in an impassioned speech to the Conservative Commonwealth Committee spoke in grand hyperbole about how the communists have infiltrated into African politics. Saying, “Whoever wins the struggle in the African continent will win the struggle between east and west.” Convinced that if Britain loses here, they completely lose against communism. “Are we going to give Nyasaland independence today which means giving a few gentlemen hungry for power independence?”¹³⁸ Welensky stated that Macleod was “the most sinister influence in the British Cabinet today.”¹³⁹ And this was merely the rumblings before the storm, with 1961 set to bring the two men into further conflict.

¹³⁶ Horne, 1989, pg. 208-211; Wood, 1983, 848-856; Lapping, 1985, pg. 487-488. As Found in Shepherd, *Macleod* (London: Hutchinson Press, 1994) 212.

¹³⁷ Macleod interviewed by W.P. Kirkman, 29 December 1967.

¹³⁸ Conservative Commonwealth Committee Speech by Roy Welensky, dated December 1, 1960. OBL, MS Macmillan dep. C. 358, Fol. 87.

¹³⁹ Wood, 1983, 857.

“Not the Congo, But Not Algiers”

At the start of the new year Macleod reported to the Cabinet's Colonial Policy Committee that he thought they had come through 1960 rather well. He characterized the change in Africa as “not as fast as the Congo and not as slow as Algiers.” So not overnight change but not a refusal to admit to the nationalist ambitions of the local populations and their demands for independence. He also noted that “all the emergencies that existed in the colonial territories have been ended...and now for the first time for thirteen years there is not emergency in any of the dependent territories...African States have been brought successfully to their independence”¹⁴⁰ It was not all positive for Macleod however, he noted that the risk remained of a ‘Congo’ in Kenya and of an ‘Algiers’ in the Federation. Macleod also notes that “No one has yet succeeded in bringing to independence a state which includes a larger settler population...what the Prime Minister once defined as ‘turning an Empire into a family.’” Macleod was not oblivious to the global pressure on Britain as well, noting “We must also recognize that pressure from the United Nations, now that Belgium and France are dropping out as colonial powers, will increasingly concentrate on us...1961, then, is sure to be a year of drama and decision in the colonial field.”¹⁴¹

Macleod wished to solve the problems in the same way he solved Kenya. Later reflecting that “I wanted, rather following the parallel of Kenya, to get agreement between the Africans and as many Europeans as I could. If possible, of course, all the

¹⁴⁰ PRO, CPC of 1961 1, 3 January 1961.

¹⁴¹ IBID

Europeans, because there weren't really such extreme right-wing Europeans I remember in Northern Rhodesia as there were either in Southern Rhodesia or in Kenya"¹⁴²

In nearby Kenya, in terms of local nationalist leaders imprisoned, the Governor Sir Patrick Renison wavered on the idea of whether to let Jomo Kenyatta free for over a year. Renison regarded him as 'darkness and death' but by August of 1961 even Renison relented and let Kenyatta free. Independence, however, would be a little more difficult to achieve because according to Macmillan, "(Kenya) is more difficult *at home* even than Central Africa...because the settlers were aristocratic and upper middle class and had strong links with the City and the Clubs"¹⁴³ A year later Macmillan still worried. "If we have to give independence to Kenya, it may well prove another Congo. If we hold on, it will mean a long and cruel campaign."¹⁴⁴ In Tanganyika, Colonial Governor Sir Richard G. Turnbull, no relation to Malcolm Turnbull, described African Nationalism as:

A kind of crusade, Tanganyika nationalists are utterly convinced of the justice of their cause and of Banda's cause. It is an article of faith not to be shaken by rational arguments however well presented, and that recent events in the Congo and subsequent bickering between Congo, U.N. and the great powers have created a fear and a resentment of "Colonial" military intervention in Africa, however much that intervention may be justified by events taking place...Any United Kingdom military intervention in Nyasaland will cause a reaction here. Provided Tanganyika nationalists cannot be accused by Nyasaland nationalists of helping the 'oppressors', reaction will be limited to speeches of condemnation, telegrams to the United Nations and so on. But the staging of troops through Tanganyika would, I am

¹⁴² Macleod interviewed by W.P. Kirkman, 29 December 1967.

¹⁴³ Macmillan Diary, 20 Jan. 1961 found in Brown and Lewis, *The Oxford History of the British Empire IV*, 352.

¹⁴⁴ Macmillan Diary, 19 Dec. 1961 found in Brown and Lewis, *The Oxford History of the British Empire IV*, 352

convinced, result in strikes and disturbances and have dire political consequences.¹⁴⁵

This sentiment by Turnbull shows in nearby Tanganyika that African nationalism was sweeping though the continent and having far reaching consequences. For one, the fear that the problems that were facing the Congo were potentially impacting both Nyasaland and Tanganyika. The other aspect that is evident in this passage is Sir Turnbull's approach to this sentiment. Rather than showing force against the nationalist ambitions of the indigenous Africans, he attempted to take Macmillan more tactile approach and shows even the colonialists could be capable of playing this situation correctly.

In Nyasaland at the start of 1961 the situation with Macmillan and Welensky could be described as contentious as they ever had been. In an exchange over Welensky leaking private details of the upcoming Northern Rhodesia Conference to negotiate the future of the Federation, Macmillan wanted the Africans to have parity with the Europeans during these talks but Welensky did not entertain that notion, noting that "the future of my children and grandchildren is at stake here."¹⁴⁶ This kind of sentiment shows how personal Welensky saw this issue. Within the next few weeks things appeared a little bit better with Welensky who relented in his opposition to European-African parity to the Commonwealth Secretary Duncan Sandys, but only after being told to stop his bellyaching over the issue.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ From Sir R.G. Turnbull to Iain Macleod , dated July 23, 1960, The National Archives, CO 1015/2024 doc. 215.

¹⁴⁶ Exchanges between HM and RW, Dated January 26, 1961. OBL, MS Macmillan dep. C. 358, Fol. 135-137

¹⁴⁷ From Commonwealth Secretary for PM, Dated February 4, 1961. OBL, MS Macmillan dep. C. 358, Fol. 146-147.

Macmillan noted in his diary that the Europeans did not really want African advancement in Northern Rhodesia but would accept something provided if it fell short of parity. The Africans sought universal suffrage but would accept parity or a small majority. However, if he were to support the Europeans, he would destroy the African confidence in the British Government and provoke massive unrest in Northern Rhodesia and perhaps the Federation as a whole. The result would be some of his ministers, including Macleod resigning, and the Conservative Party fracturing. If Macmillan solely supported the Africans, he would demolish the faith of the white colonists as well as staunch conservatives. Welensky would then probably declare the independence of the Federation and bring about a coup d'état in Lusaka. If the Northern Rhodesian Governor decided to defend himself, it would mean all out civil war, ministers would resign, and his party again would be divided. Macmillan could see no way out of this.¹⁴⁸

Macleod also felt the same situation have happened if he were to declare Northern Rhodesia an African country run by Africans much like he did for Kenya. Saying, "I have no doubt at all that there would have been bloodshed, there would have been something of a coup by the Europeans in Northern Rhodesia supported by the Europeans in Southern Rhodesia, and the bloodshed that would have followed would have been appalling."¹⁴⁹ This time was especially tough on Macleod, explaining that he "sat appalling hours, I've never worked so hard in my life as we did in those months (early 1961), often to virtually no success at all. I've never seen so many different formulae produced and examined and discarded."¹⁵⁰ It was also at this time in February of 1961

¹⁴⁸ Macmillan, 1973, 309-310.

¹⁴⁹ Macleod interviewed by W.P. Kirkman, 29 December 1967.

¹⁵⁰ IBID

that Macleod also threatened to resign once more over the issues of African advancement.¹⁵¹ With talks over Northern Rhodesia gaining more traction and the idea of African advancement seeming all the more likely, the pressure on Macleod from within his own party grew stronger. Backbencher Robert Turton brought about a motion reaffirming the 1958 agreement in regard to Northern Rhodesia, effectively derailing all of Macleod's efforts. Eventually more than ninety signatures would be added to the motion in what *The Times* would note "Nothing that has happened on the Conservative backbenches in the past three or four years compares in interest, and perhaps significance, with the shot that Mr. Robert Turton and (so far) 67 others sent whistling across Mr. Macleod's bows."¹⁵²

Within two weeks, as talks grew even more strained, the military began preparations in the event of civil war or a coup. As the conference to decide Northern Rhodesia's advancement drew on, delegates grew angrier that no solution had been brought about. The debate centered between how many African officials should be placed in government with the African side arguing for more and the staunch colonists wishing for a minimal amount. But despite Welensky's bluster, Macleod and Macmillan never felt he would ever actually enact a coup. One last major hiccup that occurred was with Lord Salisbury, who was mentioned earlier having resigned in protest over the freeing of Archbishop Makarios. In one of the most infamous attacks on a member of the Government in the history of the house, Salisbury attacked Macleod over his views of the future of Africa accusing him of

¹⁵¹ PRO, PREM 11/3487.

¹⁵² *The Times*, 13 February 1961.

Adopting, especially in his relationship to the white communities of Africa, a most unhappy and an entirely wrong approach. He has been too clever by half...It is not considered immoral, or even bad form, to outwit one's opponents at bridge. On the contrary, the more you outwit them, within the rules of the game, the better player you are. It almost seems to me that the Colonial Secretary (Macleod), when he abandoned the sphere of bridge for the sphere of politics, brought his bridge technique with him. At any rate, it has become, as your lordships know, the convinced view of the white people in Eastern and Central Africa that it has been his object to outwit them, and that he has done it successfully.¹⁵³

This attack showed just how divided the British were on this issue, and even though Lord Salisbury could be considered an ardent imperialist his comments still held weight throughout the Government and public alike. Macleod offered a rebuke saying the difference between himself and Lord Salisbury was a question of the pace of change and that the anxieties of peoples living in Africa were very close to him just as they are to Lord Salisbury.¹⁵⁴ Within the next few months talks advanced to a more realistic level on the future of the Federation with Macleod noting that even the "UFP,(United Federal Party) the white majority party, being willing to play if it were not for the intervention of the Federal Prime Minister(Welensky)."¹⁵⁵ By June 11 Macmillan was commenting that Macleod was determined to defeat Welensky; and Welensky was determined to defeat Macleod.¹⁵⁶ But Macleod would get the last word. Welensky demanded a 60:40 ratio of whites to African majority represented in the Federation Government and it was finally

¹⁵³ House of Lords *Hansard*, 7 March 1961, cols. 306-307

¹⁵⁴ Shepherd, *Macleod* (London: Hutchinson Press, 1994) 227.

¹⁵⁵ PRO, PREM 11/3495, Macleod to Macmillan, 23 May 1961.

¹⁵⁶ Horne, 1989, 394.

rejected in favor of a more balanced approach with a minimum amount of representation in government.¹⁵⁷

Macleod later noted he did not care as much about the details as he did achieving a parliamentary parity a balance of the races.¹⁵⁸ This sentiment shows just how much Macleod, and in correlation Macmillan cared to make sure that Africans had their voices represented within the Federation. As Macleod later recalled about telling Kaunda about the finalized proposal.

When we finally reached harbor, if you can call it that, and we finally tied up the last knots, I asked Kenneth Kaunda to come and see me in my flat at Sloane Court and I told him the details that I was going to give to the House of Commons, I think probably that afternoon. And I said to him in effect, I know this doesn't give you what the Africans got in Tanganyika and Malawi, and indeed, in Kenya. But it does point the way quite clearly for the future. Now you're going to have a very hard job selling this to your party but provided that you are convinced that it is going to be all right in the end, that is to say that you will have a period of, call it what you will, probation... And in the end I convinced Kaunda, who realized the doubts he would have, but saw the future clearly enough, and in effect, he went off to see if he could carry this with his party, thinking that he could.¹⁵⁹

African Conclusions

What Macmillan and his Colonial Secretary were able to do in the Federation, and Africa as a whole, was nothing short of miraculous. Forced by way of international pressure, the changing tide of nationalism, and the desire to differentiate themselves from the Soviets, Britain completely reversed its foreign policy course. Long gone were the Suez style

¹⁵⁷ Shepherd, *Macleod* (London: Hutchinson Press, 1994) 231.

¹⁵⁸ Macleod interviewed by W.P. Kirkman, 29 December 1967.

¹⁵⁹ IBID

approaches that ten years prior could easily have been used to diffuse the situations in the Federation. Rather than provoke violence and cling to their imperial aspirations, Macmillan and Macleod ushered in a new era of foreign policy for Africa. The fact that they were able to withdraw themselves from their colonial territories without a total collapse or civil war is something to be celebrated not looked upon as failure. Within two years the Federation dissolved, and countries ruled by Africans such as Jomo Kenyatta and Hastings Banda came about in their wake.¹⁶⁰ For Welensky, he would hold onto to the imperial dream until Robert Mugabe's rise to power in 1980 where he then retired in Britain to finally die in 1991. He never forgave Britain for pulling out of the Federation.¹⁶¹ Despite Iain Macleod's skilled politicking, the assault by Lord Salisbury would haunt him and he passed over a chance to run for the premiership in 1965. He became Chancellor of the Exchequer when Conservatives returned to power in 1970 but died tragically a month later.

¹⁶⁰ Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (Dissolution) Order in Council, 1963, S.I. 1963 No. 2085, p.4477.

¹⁶¹“ Sir Roy Welensky, 84, Premier of African Federation, is dead” *The New York Times*, Dec. 7, 1991. <https://www.nytimes.com/1991/12/07/world/sir-roy-welensky-84-premier-of-african-federation-is-dead.html> (accessed March 4 2018)

EPILOGUE: YOU NEVER HAD IT SO GOOD?

Harold Macmillan went on to serve for three more years before the Profumo affair. In which his war secretary of state had an affair with a nineteen-year-old would be model, who was also sleeping with a Soviet Naval attaché. This tarnished Macmillan's nearly flawless Prime Minister record due to his lack of due diligence in the matter. The long work Macmillan had put in on the partial nuclear test ban treaty, for which he did not get the credit of which he deserved, as well as the hard grind of fighting an uphill battle with his foreign policy decisions had started to take their toll on Macmillan. In 1963 he became very sick, and with an overall lack of support for leadership of the Conservative party, Harold Macmillan solemnly resigned as Prime Minister while still in hospital. His resignation, delivered to the Queen whom he stated "who's voice was unsteady... and was very upset (in regards to accepting his resignation)"¹⁶²

For the rest of Africa, countries rapidly started to gain independence but not without the struggle Macmillan sought to avoid. Macmillan was saddened by South Africa departing the Commonwealth, writing "the wind of change has blown us away for the time. But peace will come one day, although perhaps after much sorrow and tribulation."¹⁶³ In French controlled Algeria, the Algerians sought independence but the French desperate to hold onto a territory they considered part of their home nation, fought an all-out war until President Charles de Gaulle, having come to power in a coup in 1958, began the painful process of withdrawal. The death toll throughout the eight-year war is

¹⁶² (Harold Macmillan's diaries, unpublished, in Harold Macmillan Archives cited from) Horne "*Harold Macmillan Volume II: 1957-1986*, 565.

¹⁶³ To John Maud from HM, MS Macmillan dep. C. 312 Fol. 57.

estimated around 700,000.¹⁶⁴ Belgium abruptly severed ties with its Congo colony, leading to decades of turmoil. Even former British colonies such as Nigeria and Uganda suffered decades of misrule.¹⁶⁵

As for South Africa, a month after Macmillan delivered his speech the Sharpeville Massacre occurred on March 21st, at the police station in the South African township of Sharpeville in Transvaal (today part of Gauteng). After a day of demonstrations against the Pass laws, a crowd of about 5,000 to 7,000 black African protesters went to the police station. The South African police opened fire on the crowd, killing 69 people. Sources disagree as to the behavior of the crowd; some state that the crowd was peaceful, while others state that the crowd had been hurling stones at the police, and that the shooting started when the crowd started advancing toward the fence around the police station. In present-day South Africa, March 21 is celebrated as a public holiday in honor of human rights and to commemorate the Sharpeville massacre.¹⁶⁶ This reflects greatly on what Macmillan condemned in his speech and shows the racial tensions were at a fever pitch following Britain's withdrawal. South Africa wouldn't see racial freedom or true democracy for nearly three decades following Macmillan's speech.

For Britain the post Suez era led to change, but not decline. Under Macmillan, Britain single handedly revamped their entire foreign policy without the disastrous consequences that befell France. Macmillan championed the shift away from Empire and entangling Britain in conflicts in the Middle East and Africa with an expert approach towards the growing fervor of nationalism. While the French were forced to do battle in

¹⁶⁴ Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, (New York: NYRB Classics, 2006), 538.

¹⁶⁵ Royle *Winds of Change*, 267.

¹⁶⁶ "The Sharpeville Massacre". Time Magazine. 4 April 1960. Retrieved 22 April 2018.

the streets of Algiers, the British organized a retreat in their colonies, beginning the process of leaving Africa permanently, and refusing to engage in conflicts throughout the Middle East. While the Belgians led an overnight exodus from the Congo, Britain worked tirelessly to ensure the Federation would be left in good African hands. This period for too long has been bemoaned and mourned by historians as a period of British decline, but through this thesis it can be and should be seen as an achievement of diplomacy to tectonically shift foreign policy completely and totally in a new direction. A direction that led to countries receiving their independence and autonomy over their own affairs.

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